Abstract

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REPORTAGE IN THE 'THIRTIES

This investigation of the origins and impact of the 'new reportage' in the '30s interrogates the 'dominant tradition' of documentary, i.e. an 'objective' recording of facts and historical events, by reconstructing an alternative 'broken' tradition of radical reporting which was both 'counterfactual' and criticised the status of documents (including photographs and film) as privileged forms of realistic representation.

The implications of Russian Formalist 'defamiliarization' led to an avant-garde 'literature of fact' in the USSR and Weimar Germany, inspired by John Reed's Ten Days that Shook the World, with the potential not only to represent suppressed facts but to subvert 'automatized' concepts, thus challenging official paradigms defining historically significant data and putting the model of reality constructed by dominant ideology under strain, as the work of the LEF group and Egon Erwin Kisch shows. The new reportage was self-consciously mediating and 'bared its devices', often using montage to expose the constructedness of discourses. Hence the thesis maps the growth of a parallel alternative reportage in '30s Britain which did not simply resuscitate the realistic project of Naturalism but built on the Modernist legacy, examining in detail the work of Orwell, Sommerfield, Priestley, and Hanley among others.

The thesis focuses on prose forms of reportage, from individual I-witnessing in articles and autobiographies, to 'participant observation', documentary novels, encyclopaedism, Mass-Observation and photojournalism, outlining the historical and cultural factors which gave reportage literary prominence at the time, as well as issues, such as unemployment, poverty and Appeasement, which it represented. Consequently, it explores the ways and means by which new reporters expressed their awareness of connections between political and cultural representation, in order to question authorized representations of fact and the sanctioned national self-image.
REPORTAGE IN THE 'THIRTIES

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<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>England Speaks</td>
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<td>EW</td>
<td>English Ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTB</td>
<td>Goodbye to Berlin</td>
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<td>JTW</td>
<td>Journey to a War (with W.H. Auden)</td>
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<td>MN</td>
<td>Mr Norris Changes Trains</td>
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<td>DR</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Spanish Testament</td>
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<td>SOTE</td>
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<td>YAC</td>
<td>The Yogi and the Commissar</td>
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<td>CEJL</td>
<td>Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell</td>
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<td>DAOPL</td>
<td>Down and Out in Paris and London</td>
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<td>HTC</td>
<td>Homage to Catalonia</td>
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<td>TRTWP</td>
<td>The Road to Wigan Pier</td>
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<td>OWB</td>
<td>George Orwell: The War Broadcasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>OWC</td>
<td>George Orwell: The War Commentaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDISTW</td>
<td>Ten Days that Shook the World</td>
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<td>MD</td>
<td>May Day</td>
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<td>VIS</td>
<td>Volunteer in Spain</td>
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Miscellaneous:

AIA Artists International Association
AIZ Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung
EMB Empire Marketing Board
FOWFS Federation of Workers' Film Societies
IAH Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe
ILP Independent Labour Party
KPD Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Weimar Communist Party)
LEF The Left Front in the Arts
LBC Left Book Club
M-O Mass-Observation
NUWM National Unemployed Workers' Movement
PAC Public Assistance Committee
PP Picture Post
WFPL Workers' Film and Photo League

(Any other abbreviations will be explained in notes or in brackets in the text.)
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"The true story is vicious and multiple and untrue after all. Why do you need it? Don't ever ask for the true story."

(Margaret Atwood 'True Stories', iii, True Stories (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), p.11.)

"It is because reality itself cannot be recorded that realism is dead. All writing, all composition, is construction. We do not imitate the world, we construct versions of it. There is no mimesis, only poesis. No recording. Only construction."


"They were the Olympians. Man's representatives. Nature - and nurture - they were the lucky ones; they could die and leave a trace; the dust of their bodies formed the roadway of the race. They were the heights he could not tread."

(Lionel Britton Hunger and Love (London: Putnam, 1931), pp.9-10.)

"I am a reporter; God exists only for the leader-writers."

Introduction
The Innocent I-Witness?

Reportage is defined by the OED as the "typical style" of newspaper reporting, but in literary use it has primarily come to denote I-witness writing about contemporary events designed to be more than disposably topical and, hence, aspiring to 'artistic' status. This literary definition assumes that reportage as factual writing has some strategies in common with imaginative writing. Even newspaper reporting is not simply what William Stott in *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (1973) calls "Fiction's Opposite" in both content and form, because as discourses newspaper reporting and fiction are more properly adjacent and often overlapping. However, though the literary definition could indeed serve as standard for pre-Modernist reportage, i.e. as practised by, say, Defoe or Zola, its implicit paradox became self-consciously foregrounded in Modernist-based 'new reportage'. This was the logical consequence both of writers' increased awareness of the experimental possibilities of non-canonical forms and also of the power which the new technological mass-media wielded in their day-to-day construction of global facts. Hence, the problematic interface between fiction and factuality, between literary and non-literary discourse, in British '30s new reportage is one of the most radical of what Valentine Cunningham calls the "terrible border tensions that so pack" the writing of the period and raises fundamental questions about the stability of the conceptual topography on either side.²

The new reportage's relation to documentation, more specifically,
the notion of documentary form, is also complex. Its own history is deeply entangled in the power struggle around what Derek Paget has called the "two traditions of documentary". The first, based on the idea that reality can be recorded objectively, remains dominant in our culture. The second, based on foregrounding questions of mediation and ideological perspective through adapted Modernist techniques, is a radical alternative, but exists only in a broken, culturally-marginalized tradition. Moreover, the politics of these two traditions are themselves entangled with epistemological questions about 'realism' and 'objectivism'.

'Realism' is based on the belief that the objects or 'things' (Latin res = 'thing') of the external world exist independently of consciousness. Where the issue becomes debatable, I would argue, is not over the existence of an objective reality, but how that reality is to be made available to consciousness. The doctrine of 'objectivism' posits that some entirely neutral, value-free language exists through which objective reality can simply be reflected rather than mediated. This apparently common-sense assumption is fallacious, because it denies the constitutive function of language basic to any discourse. As Lakoff and Johnson have shown, the cultural ascendancy of this belief is maintained by continuous reinforcement of the notion that certain kinds of language are rational and non-figurative (e.g. legal, scientific) while others are imaginative and metaphorical (e.g. art, religion). They have demonstrated that it is fallacious because the characteristics of both kinds of language are based on the function of metaphor as "imaginative rationality". Linguistic theory indicates the inherent
figurativeness of representation: in Robert Scholes’s terms, there is no genuine *mimesis*, only *poeisis.* Hence, pre-Modernist realism can be deceptive in appearing to reflect the facts of objective reality and the relationships between them, rather than admitting to in some way constituting them, as Hayden White argues in *The Content of the Form* and elsewhere. This view undermines distinctions between ‘metaphorical’ and ‘ordinary’ language and ‘fictional’ and ‘factual’ discourse. In an absolute sense, no representation of the world – reported or invented – is non-interpretive, because none is unmediated. However, this does not mean to say that differences do not exist between fact and fiction, or that some representations are more accurately interpretative than others. But such complex questions can only be tackled once the idea of a language which simply records ‘things in themselves’ is recognized for the chimaera it is.

If linguistic ‘objectivism’ is a fallacy, it follows that there can be no such thing as an ‘innocent’ I-witness. Any reporting of reality is inevitably refracted through the medium of language and through the ideological subjectivity of the individual reporter constructed within and using language. Angus Fletcher has caught the political paradox of the myth of value-free representation which sanctions the ‘objectivism’ claimed by many contemporary politicians and media-barons: “Today the pretence of fact is figuratively more powerful than the pretence of figuration.” Apparent lack of subjectivity is the most dangerous fantasy, precisely because, in Raymond Williams’s phrase, it is a “fiction about reality itself.” It is imperative, therefore, that we re-examine the theory and practice of what I have
designated the new reportage and its relation to the politically vexed question of documentariness.

Jacques Ellul has stressed the propaganda potential of the modern worship of facts. Accepting them "as the ultimate reality" leads to the misconception they "provide evidence and proof" in themselves, and to the willing subordination of values before them. This has created a compulsion for "a relation to facts, a self-justification" to convince ourselves that by acting in a certain way we are "obeying reason and proved experience." Similarly, Paget notes the hegemonic function of privileged modes of factual representation which have become 'naturalized': "expressed through the full range of economic determinants, [hegemony] interpenetrates the very forms of a culture, permeates a society's very concept of 'common sense', and structures its sense of what might constitute an unproblematical 'reality'." This supports Williams's conclusion that we must recognise "claims to objectivity, neutrality, simple fidelity to the truth ... as the ratifying formulas of those who offer their own senses and procedures as universal".

George Orwell, whose formative period as a literary reporter was in the '30s, certainly valued the power of real experience or "concrete incident" to undermine preconceptions. Yet he also knew that reporting widened the individual's consciousness into a global informational order that was not just real, in the simple, empirical sense, but also symbolic. Jean Baudrillard has described this order as 'hyperreal', because it generates the paradoxical illusion of the "real's hallucinatory resemblance to itself". Orwell was typical of
'30s 'new reporters' in appreciating the paradox that imagination was needed in order to mediate realities, for the individual to realize what facts outside the his/her personal experience would be like. Hence, his remark about the damage "done to the sense of reality by the cultivation of what is now called 'realism'" - which he considered a jargon term not for genuine objectivity, but for the selective closure of consciousness by ideology (See CEJL IV, p.215). Similarly, in 1947, discussing "a piece of brilliant journalism intended to shock the public of this country into some kind of consciousness of the hunger, disease, chaos and lunatic mismanagement prevailing in the British Zone" of occupied Germany, Orwell identified the insidious neutralization of the impact of facts by representations which become conventional:

This business of making people conscious of what is happening outside their own circle is one of the major problems of our time, and a new literary technique will have to be evolved to meet it ... The now-familiar photographs of skeleton-like children make very little impression. As time goes on and the horrors pile up, the mind seems to secrete a kind of self-protecting ignorance which needs a harder and harder shock to pierce it, just as the body will become immunized to a drug and require bigger and bigger doses. (CEJL IV, pp.312-13)\(^{14}\)

There are powerful interests vested in this process of neutralization. Bob Geldof's phrase "compassion fatigue" epitomizes the way the '80s media rapidly automatized the public consciousness which they initially helped raise, entailing that permissible charitable concern about the African famines did not develop into widespread knowledge about the First World's involvement in the military destabilization and impoverishing indebtedness of the Third. Clearly, our dependence on the modern-mass media and their day-to-day construction of a global hyperreality is both inevitable and has no
miracle cure. But it can at least be alleviated by imaginative forms of reportage, which are themselves an implicit critique of conventional reporting. Consequently, the '30s project and its origins may still teach us something about the necessity of and methods for constituting alternative hyperrealities.

In a modest (but hopefully more theoretically informed way) I have attempted to map out the same area in British writing that Stott has in American. In so doing, I have traced the Modernist origins of the new reportage and the complementary 'literature of fact' to the theories and practices of the early Soviet avant-garde and their transmission through the more radical artists of Weimar Germany's Neue Sachlichkeit, as epitomized by Egon Erwin Kisch. The implications of Russian Formalist 'defamiliarization' led to the new reportage's intention not only to represent suppressed facts but to subvert 'automatized' concepts. Further, it challenged official paradigms defining historically significant data and brought the model of reality constructed by privileged modes of realistic representation into question. The new reportage was self-consciously mediating and 'bared its devices', often using devices like montage to expose the fictionality of ideology and the notion of history as a seamless, uninterrupted narrative. The relative lateness of the impact of these ideas and practices on home-grown traditions of social reporting can be partly accounted for by the shift in British perception of the centre of European Modernism at the end of the '20s from Paris to Berlin. Ironically, this shift occurred not long before the condemnation of avant-gardism at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress, under the Stalinist reaction in the USSR (and its
German equivalent, the *Gleichschaltung* of culture which followed the Nazis' 1933 coup), which greatly complicated the issue. Ironically, Stalinism came to feel its hegemony was threatened in the same way as the capitalist culture against which Russian avant-garde theory and practice was originally directed. Thus it imposed its own uniform mode of representation in the '30s - Socialist Realism.

The advent and critical impact of the new reportage in '30s Britain also brings into question the received idea that the decade's so-called anti-modernism was merely a qualified regression to the Naturalistic realism of the nineteenth-century as a cultural response to the pressure of socio-economic crises. It can more properly be seen as a complex development of particular Modernist trends. Similarly, the dominant tradition of documentary - i.e. the apparently objective recording of facts and historical events - can be interrogated by reconstructing the alternative broken tradition of radical reporting which defamiliarized the privileged status of documents (including photographs and film) as forms of representation.

In his 1913 manifesto, 'Destruction of Syntax - Imagination without Strings - Words-in-Freedom' (1913), F.T. Marinetti proclaimed that modern transport and communications were effecting a revolution in consciousness reflected in Futurism's militantly experimental cultural forms:

Futurism is grounded in the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science. Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the aeroplane, the cinema, the great newspaper (synthesis of a day in the world's life) do not realize that these various means of communication, transportation and information have a
decisive effect on their psyches. But by the '20s, Futurism's credo had split and polarized, the Italian branch following Fascism and the Russian, Bolshevism, which showed that there was no inherent political direction in Modernist avant-gardism. As Joseph Freeman, editor of America's New Masses, put it, Futurism's preoccupations, such as technology, speed and the crowd, "were to become the clichés of groups on both sides of the barricades in the European social war ... bottles into which each ... poured its own wine."

Similarly, Marinetti had rhapsodized about the way the arts of "Man multiplied by the machine" created "Multiple and simultaneous awareness in a single individual". But such thinking was modified in the Marxist theorist Walter Benjamin's more sceptical understanding that "profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus" of humanity, brought about by technology, also endowed the media with a new ideological power. Hence the new reportage emerged partly as a specific response to this ambivalent mass-media consciousness. Marinetti's own Zang Tumb Tuum (1914) and Alcova d'Acciaio (1921), about his experiences firstly as a war-correspondent in the Balkans and secondly, an armoured-car driver in the Great War, exemplified Italian Futurism's I-witness impulse. But it was through early Soviet avant-gardism and its influence in Weimar Germany that this impulse was transformed into a critique of the modern media.

In '30s Britain, writers realized the scale of the media's "colonization of the mind" with a similar "sense of shock and excitement", as Cunningham puts it, to their earlier Soviet
counterparts. And they responded with a similar kind of critical reportage. British newspaper sales mushroomed in the early '30s, but the national press's claim to be 'The Voice of the People' was treated with unanimous suspicion by Leftist writers. As Stephen Spender put it, the claim was "one of the most profitable of democratic illusions" since newspapers were more properly "the ear of the people" through which the bosses shout their propaganda, though, in theory, they are given facilities to express themselves, should they ever be in position to do so." Such criticism was fuelled by the overwhelmingly Rightist make-up of the national press - by the National Government and pro-Appeasement line of the Times and Observer, owned by the Astor family, and especially by Lord Rothermere's papers. His Daily Mail was often openly pro-Nazi and his Sunday Dispatch gave the backing of its powerful million-and-a-half readership to Mosley's British Union of Fascists (founded in 1932), offering cash prizes for reasons 'Why I Like the Blackshirts'. A 1939 readership survey found 69% of the population over sixteen read a national daily paper and 82%, a national Sunday. Those who didn't were mostly illiterate. As Orwell noted, advertising revenue, not sales, now constituted the proprietors' real source of income, making competition cut-throat and editorials subservient to vested interests. Subscribers were bribed with 'free' life and health insurance, silk stockings, crockery and sets of Dickens. The Labour Daily Herald and Conservative Daily Express boosted their circulations to over two million by such means and the arrival of the easily-digested 'tabloid' format made the national daily an even better marketing vehicle. The Mirror was first to adapt it in 1934 on the
advice of the American advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson. Soon others were adopting the huge headlines, telegraphic sentences, shrinking their text in inverse proportion to photographs and strip cartoons, and breaking up neat columns into the 'staggered jigsaw' layout. As John Stevenson comments, "In the absence of commercial radio or television, and with roadside hoardings as the only main competition, it was the newspapers which provided the main channel for the new age of mass consumerism." 26

The pressure of middle-class unemployment also forced artists both into closer identification with the exploited masses and into the patronage or employment of the mass-media. All post-Great War writers had, more or less, to confront the elusive character of the Massenmensch. As Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930, Spanish; 1932, English) asked, "What is he like, this mass-man who today dominates public life, political and non-political, and why is he like it, that is, how has he been produced?" 28 But Leftists like Charles Madge felt that the real answer was complicated by the fact that "the mass is already largely what it has been made by the Press and the rest of capitalism". 27 They extended Benjamin's belief, that commercial cinema denied "modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced", 28 to media representation as a whole. Consequently, as new reporters they were not just isolated I-witnesses of their own subjective experiences, but inhabitants and critical observers of mass-media hyperreality.

The young Graham Greene had prophetically exhorted the writer in his 1925 poetry volume to become a globe-trotting reporter of events and their symbolic refractions: "Stride from the warm glow and the
flickering fire/To carve your dreams in facts across the world." In 1933, Madge, one of the founders of Mass-Observation, the '30s' most ambitious attempt to mobilize the public as collective reporters, underscored the importance of Marinetti's "multiple and simultaneous awareness", in his 'Letter to the Intelligensia': "But we have left school now, we turn the pages/Of a larger atlas; telegrams come in/From China, and the world is mapped on our brains." Greene occupied the Leftist margin of Catholicism in the '30s, but equally Evelyn Waugh's Scoop (1938), subtitled 'A Novel About Journalists', gathered to a satirical head misgivings by a practising Rightist writer and indicated how widespread and cross-political feelings about media power could be. This double sense of social crises and their representations, together with the intermeshing of the subjective and the objective, remained with writers whose reporting and factual art matured in the period. As Greene wrote in 1948:

Public interest in her [Charlotte Bronte's] day was surely more separate from the private life: a debate in Parliament, a leading article in the Thunderer. It did not so colour the common life: with us, however consciously unconcerned we are, it obtrudes through the cracks of our stories, terribly persistent like grass through cement. Processions can't help passing across the end of our imaginary streets ... 

However, perhaps the photographic image is still the most powerful 'medium-that-isn't' for giving the illusion of transparent access to real events. Appearing to make sign coalesce indivisibly with referent, it constitutes the ultimately duplicitous 'absent-presence'. As Roland Barthes wrote

... until this day no representation could assure me of the past of a thing except by intermediaries; but with the Photograph, my certainty is immediate: no one in the world can undeceive me. The Photograph then becomes a bizarre medium, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception,
true on the level of time ... a modest, shared hallucination
(on the one hand "it is not there," on the other "but it has
indeed been"): a mad image, chafed by reality."

Consequently, the power of newer media, like radio and film, for
constructing hyperreality in the ideologically standardized forms of
Hollywood films and commercial newsreels was even more disturbing to
'30s new reporters than the power of the press. In 1934, according to
Paul Rotha, 18,000,000 Britons were going to the cinema each week,
generating £40,000,000 in revenue for the box offices. As Cunningham
puts it, "The huge '30s presence of cinema, as of newspapers and radio,
guaranteed huge access to the pages of '30s writing", both as subject-
matter and a formal model. However, for most Leftists, confronting the
problem "didn't stop with mere denunciation or defensive compromise."
They tried, with limited success, "to outmanoeuvre and subvert" the
commercial mass-media and to capture their mass audience. This meant
finding new forms, epitomized by the different kinds of new reportage,
for constituting alternative versions of the facts, which would take
advantage of the media's redeemable 'mass' features, as Charles Madge
argued in his essay 'Press, Radio and Social Consciousness'.

Consequently, British new reporters were radicalized, partly as a
consequence of foreign avant-garde influences, and partly as the result
of their own increasing awareness of living in a 'democratic' society
with anomalously disproportional media representation for monopolism
and/or the state. This thesis therefore also examines the way newly-
privileged modes of realistic representation, like photography and
cinema, were self-consciously emulated by, and critiqued in, the new
reportage and 'documentary fiction' of the period - turning, for
instance, I-witnesses into 'camera-eyes'—and the practical involvements with the media this sometimes resulted from and/or entailed for particular individuals. '30s writing offers a paradigm of the antagonistic, but also mutually enriching, encounter between modern art and the media, which continues to have consequences today. Hence the need for a coherent reconstruction of it.

Outline of Contents

I have attempted to explore the ways and means by which '30s new reporters expressed their awareness of connections between political and cultural representation, using the work of both individuals and alternative 'nationwide intelligence services' like Mass-Observation. I have focused primarily on prose forms, from unofficial I-witnessing of contemporary events in articles and autobiographies, to 'participant observation', 'documentary' novels and photo-journalism. It has been, of course, also necessary to outline the factors giving reportage cultural prominence at the time, as well as treating some of the specific phenomena and events it represented, such as unemployment, poverty, the Spanish Civil War and the Munich crisis. However, although I take account of the growth of contemporary mass-media reporting, especially its mimetically privileged visual forms like documentary film and newsreels, which were particularly influential in '30s writers'
"creative interpretation of actuality", my brief is intended to be complementary to the ground covered by Paget's recent study of documentary drama and radio. So I have not attempted to deal extensively with these latter.

Chapter I discusses the significance of Formalist defamiliarization theory for the evolution of the new reportage and its interest, not just in new facts, but in transforming the categories of realistic representation. It then proceeds to examine parallels with Walter Benjamin's Modernist theory of history and also, more recently, Hayden White's work on the fictionality of historical representation. These ideas are then brought together in discussing Paget's notion of a marginalized broken tradition of subversive documentary art with its roots in the techniques of Modernist collision montage.

Chapter II analyzes the structure and influence of the text which provided a crucial model for the new reportage, John Reed's I-witnessing/documentary montage of the October Revolution, *Ten Days that Shock the World* (1919). It then examines in detail the theory and practice developed by the early Soviet Left Front in the Arts (LEF), tracing their transmission through international avant-garde circles - particularly via the more radical artists of Weimar *Neue Sachlichkeit*. It also considers the implications of the clash with the attempted unification of art in the '30s under Stalinist Socialist Realism.

Chapter III discusses the writings and experiences of the Germanophones Egon Erwin Kisch and Arthur Koestler. It demonstrates how the influence of LEF was developed in Kisch's texts, exemplified by *Der rasende Reporter* (1925), and its importance for the Weimar Communist
Party's multi-media propaganda machine. Arthur Koestler is then discussed as a post-Kischean new reporter whose own career exemplifies how its critical possibilities were virtually crippled by Stalinism's attempt to monopolize the anti-capitalist perspective. Koestler's texts, like Von weissen Nächten und roten Tagen (1933) and Spanish Testament (1937), are shown to both foreshadow and connect with the similar ideological dilemma of '30s reporters in Britain.

Consequently, Chapter IV surveys the explosion of forms and movements of reportage in Britain which attempted to construct an alternative version of hyperreality that would co-ordinate "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex" and reveal the essentially cooperative nature of mass society. It discusses proletarian I-witnessing, magazines like New Writing and Fact, then considers the Left Book Club's sponsorship and dissemination of factual literature. The Chapter concludes by considering the significance of Mass-Observation's attempt to mobilize the public for a new democratic mass-medium.

Because documentary film and photography became the most important and influential visual models for factual discourse in the '30s, the whole of chapter V is devoted to their forms and impact. It begins by showing how John Grierson assimilated, but also neutralized, the radical implications of the documentary cinema of Dziga Vertov. Since Grierson's project was limited by being tied to an establishment economic base, the chapter discusses how it was used to reinforce the dominant objective tradition of documentary. Conversely, this chapter also shows how Leftist film-makers, like Ivor Montagu, struggled to keep the
alternative, experimental tradition alive. It recounts how the '30s
newsreel cartel functioned as a virtual arm of state censorship,
particularly over events like the Spanish Civil War, but also how
Leftist photo-journalism, assisted by the artistic diaspora from Nazi
Germany, still achieved a wider impact, in the work of photo-reporters
like Bill Brandt, Humphrey Spender and the photomagazine Picture Post.
The chapter concludes by discussing writers' ambivalent emulation and
suspicion of editing and the 'camera-eye' aesthetic.

Chapter VI shows how British new reporters helped re-draw the
ideological map of Britain by writing defamiliarizing 'internal-
travelogues' into 'unknown' or officially unrepresented areas of
society, exemplified by Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London
(1933), J.B. Priestley's English Journey (1934) and Jack Hilton's
English Ways (1940). It also discusses why coal-mining and its
communities were represented as the archetype of economic exploitation
in '30s texts, like Montagu Slater's Stay Down Miner (1936), B.L.
Coombes's These Poor Hands (1939) and Orwell's The Road to Wigan Pier
(1937), and how mining, consequently, came to epitomize the necessity
for post-war industrial and social transformation.

Chapter VII shows how '30s 'documentary fiction' effectively
complemented the new reportage, by using montage and foregrounding
questions of representation to emphasize the interface between factual
and fictional modes. Consequently, it examines novelists' attempts to
reproduce Vertovian cinematic techniques in literary form to depict
social and political crises, concentrating on John Sommerfield's May Day
(1936) and Christopher Isherwood's Goodbye to Berlin (1939).
The last chapter (VIII) surveys the role of war-reporting in the '30s, especially that of the Spanish and Sino-Japanese Wars, including texts by Cockburn, Sommerfield, Cornford and Isherwood. The discussion pivots, however, around Orwell's crucial critique of the documentary fabrications of hyperreality in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), tracing its implications for the mass-media propaganda techniques of the Second World War and after, through the relations between Orwell's radio broadcasting and his post-war satires.

Finally, 'Conclusions' discusses the subsequent mobilization of '30s reporters in wartime media work and their role in shaping Britain's war aims and post-war reconstruction. Britain's social-democratic war aims were designed to ensure there would be no to return to the conditions of '30s capitalism which these reporters had helped expose. However, they have since been uncoupled from the popular memory of heroic resistance in the interests of a Right-wing nationalism which has, thus, eroded their concrete legacies. In this context, the chapter makes the case for reclaiming Orwell as a representative '30s new reporter. It shows how the ideological hijacking of his late texts during the Cold War was part of the same move which has maintained the dominance of the objective, recording tradition of documentary in our culture and, consequently, marginalized its alternative.
Notes to Introduction


3. See Derek Paget *True Stories? Documentary Drama on Radio, Screen and Stage* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1990), pp.39-41. Also see below Chapter I, section iii, pp.57-58.


5. See Epigraphs and Note, above.

6. See Hayden White *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987) and see below Chapter I, section ii.


14. Gollancz both wrote and published *In Darkest Germany*. Almost half of the text was photographs of the kind Orwell describes.

15. See Note 1 above.


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24. See below 'Conclusions', pp.441-42


28. See Benjamin *Illuminations*, p.234.


34. Cunningham *British Writers*, pp.280 and 296.


Chapter I
i: Reportage and the Hyperreal

Linguistic theory since de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916) has continued to undermine objectivism's 'common sense' notion of language reflecting reality, showing instead that it is an organizing framework which encodes and shapes our conceptions of reality. Words are not neutral carriers of 'news' about the world and language is not a "conduit" through which 'facts' pass, whole and intact, but the most basic medium of representation. However, the Modernist poet Ezra Pound defined literature as a conveyor of 'news' in a significantly different sense: "Literature is news that STAYS news." What he was referring to was not any capacity of literature to represent facts in a fixed and permanent form, but its paradoxical potential for stimulating us to re-create our own sense of the real.

Roman Jakobson and, more recently, Lakoff and Johnson have demonstrated that language, as well as being an artificial construction is unavoidably figurative. Hence, the common sense notion that any report is an unmediated transcription of reality deploys rhetorical figures while simultaneously protesting its own innocence of them. To be transcribable, something must be written in the first place (from Latin *trans*, 'across or beyond' + *scribere*, 'to write'). When reality appears to be merely transcribed, conventions of representation are being unconsciously reproduced. Our consciousness of language is controlled by the very metalanguages used to constitute it as an object of thought.

A characteristic of language, Roger Fowler points out, is "the relative independence" of its subject matter, the capacity "to refer to things and events removed in space and time from the immediate context"
of utterance". It is, therefore, inherently displacing. Whether words designate real or imaginary referents, report facts or relate fictions, they represent the things to which they refer. Hence, the common-sense view of language is dangerously uncritical if applied to our social and political experience, which extends into Jean Baudrillard's informational 'hyperreality', ceaselessly constructed by the discourses of mass-media technology, whose data cannot always be checked by strictly empirical criteria. Such common sense is, hence, a powerful instrument for politicians claiming that their policies are identical to it and, therefore, not based on ideology or dependent on representation. Hence, the most insidious form of propaganda naturalizes its cultural processes until, as A.P. Foulkes puts it, they "coalesce completely and indivisibly with the values and accepted power symbols of a given society".

As I have said, the existence of objective reality is not in dispute, but a political dilemma stems from the paradox that we are compelled to comprehend it in symbolic terms even though, in Jacques Lacan's formula, it is that "which resists symbolisation absolutely". Derridean Post-Structuralism has described language itself as "a sprawling limitless web where there is a constant interchange and circulation of elements, where none of the elements is absolutely definable and where everything is caught up and traced through by everything else." Nonetheless, language enables us "to experience the world as an ordered, and not anarchic or random, context for living". But it also generates the illusion of 'literalism', that, as Tony Bennett has put it, "it 'reflects' a stable and consistent reality instead of signifying it" making its constructed order consumable as if real in itself.
Fowler associates two problems with the order language imposes on the world: legitimation and automatization. Legitimation stems from the fact that the meanings which individuals accept are not invented by them, because semantic categories are "products of the society in which the language is moulded". Because we are subjects within a political and historical framework, we absorb "the structures and meanings authorized by the dominant interests of the culture." Hence, what Louis Althusser termed "ideological state apparatuses" are the sources and transmitters of an official language of legitimated meaning: besides family and school, there are the media, controlled by powerful economic and political interests, which construct "the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence" on a day-to-day basis. However, Fowler stresses how important modern reportage has been in exposing the loading of such meanings in the interests of the groups which legitimate them and the use of language as a tool for maintaining hegemony. Orwell, for instance, argued that facts could be represented in ways which sponsored "a reduced state of consciousness ... favourable to political conformity." (CEJL IV, pp.165-66)

Consequently, "the worst thing one can do" with ready-made linguistic formulations "is to surrender to them", to accept preconceived relations between signs and referents unquestioningly. (CEJL IV, pp.168) Similarly, Orwell saw his own writing as a constant struggle with "worn-out phrases and dead metaphors" which the English as an ideologically 'sleepwalking' nation unconsciously lived by. (CEJL III, pp.42-44, and II, p.77) Hence his awareness of their 'doublethinking' function in the media, for example, to "defend the indefensible" manoeuvrings of Realpolitik. British Imperialism, Stalinist Terror, the bombing of Hiroshima contradicted the professed aims of politicians, so
jargon, euphemism and vagueness were used to represent events without evoking inconvenient aspects of them:

Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned without trial, or shot in the back of the neck, or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic labour camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. (CEJL IV, pp.166 and cf III, pp.132-35)

Such language performed "the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself." (CEJL IV, 165-67) Similarly, the rhetoric of post-war 'Nukespeak' has selectively highlighted and hidden aspects of the facts it reports in order to "defend the indefensible". Hence, the Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky's theory of automatization can be seen as an early attempt to describe the ideological effects of this process. This theory has had great importance for all kinds of modern writing, especially the representationally self-conscious new reportage and the 'literature of fact' that grew out of the Russian Futurism which Formalism theorized. Moreover, Shklovsky's antithetical concept of ostranenie or defamiliarization indicates how this new reportage would not simply mediate facts about reality, but would critically rearrange the terms in which they were made available. The new reportage's methods of subverting dominant concepts, consequently, also helped destabilize conventional distinctions between factual and fictional discourse, and between 'ordinary' and 'figurative language', challenging the privileged discourses constructing official hyperreality.

Shklovsky's essay 'The Resurrection of the Word' (1914) described how 'automatized' language covered not only individual concepts, but
forms of discourse with "its glassy armour of familiarity", obscuring its own process with apparent transparency.\textsuperscript{19} His 'Art as Technique' (1917) then identified defamiliarization as a means of staving off this voracious consumption of consciousness by automatization which ... devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war ... And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar", to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of the object; the object is not important.

As Robert Scholes usefully glossed the final sentence: "In art, it is our experience of the process of construction that counts, not the finished product."\textsuperscript{14} Hence, the 'riddling' devices of artistic language and its forms are not simply perverse disguises for real objects which ordinary language simply reflects, but ways of creatively re-encoding them, revealing them as concepts constituted by discourse. According to Shklovsky, art forms regenerate perception of the Ding an sich indirectly through alternative representations of it. As Roman Jakobson later commented, "The function of poetry is to point out that the sign is not identical with its referent ... since without it the connection between the sign and its object becomes automatized and the perception of reality withers away."\textsuperscript{15} Revealing "the artfulness of the object" prevents its ideological history being obliterated by focussing on the material qualities of signs.

However, when Shklovsky pronounced defamiliarization "an aesthetic end in itself", he handed over a hostage to political fortune. Such remarks abstracted from context, later laid Formalism open to the charge of apolitichnost - of emptying art of significant social and historical
content - although Formalism was more fundamentally constructivist than formalist in the pejorative sense used by the Socialist Realists in the '30s. Later, its influence, resurfacing after decades of organized 'forgetting' under Stalin, helped Structuralism begin "to take us 'behind the scene' as it were of our own construction of the world", but it also influenced the contemporary Constructivism of the early Soviet avant-garde, especially through the Left Front in the Arts or LEF. The construction of concepts revealed by defamiliarization led to LEF's correspondingly open, constructed forms, often characterized by 'collision montage' with its multi-layered potential to juxtapose and question different kinds of discourse (including the privileged objectivity of documents) and different kinds of media.

Saying that art doesn't follow a particular Party line is not the same as denying it political implications and Shklovsky's examples in 'Art as Technique' clearly demonstrate the possibilities of his theory for political demystification. Defamiliarization thus becomes a critical method for seeing round the ideology in which the individual's subjectivity has been constructed. Tolstoy's short story 'Kholostomer' questions the legitimated concept of private ownership which masks historical contingency with the appearance of a permanent, objective reality. Tolstoy used a (figuratively) non-human viewpoint - his narrator is a horse - to deliberately impede automatized perception and contrive a childlike naivety of vision. Moreover, the conventions encoding property relations provide a close parallel to those of language: both are arbitrary in origin rather than founded in conscious agreement, but become deterministic. As Fowler argues, the syntactic structure - Possessive + Noun - which appears so natural in English, encodes a theory of ownership with dominance. Hence, the horse reveals
how both language and economics endow the owned with alienating value.

It was logical, then, that Bertolt Brecht, who like many Weimar artists was in close touch with the early Soviet avant-garde, should have developed his anti-illusionist *Verfremdungseffekt* from Shklovsky's idea. Brecht believed that drama which 'bared its devices' and directed attention to the process of representing the 'real' might also demystify the ideological process Marx called *Entfremdung* and its false consciousness which glossed over capitalism's essential contradictions. Consequently, Brecht's coinage is both a translation of Shklovsky's term *ostranenie* and an antonym for Marx's, though, unfortunately, both German words are usually rendered as 'alienation' in English, obscuring the relationship intended between them.

Shklovsky and his Formalist associates provided "the theoretical and aesthetic basis for an experimental and subversive art". Moreover, since defamiliarization, Shklovsky claimed, is universal and "found everywhere form is found", it had implications for discourses outside the 'high-cultural' concept of literature. Walter Benjamin realized in the '30s that the role and forms of art needed radical redefinition to engage with the hyperreality of "the age of mechanical reproduction". Moreover, it was especially through the possibilities of reportage and the 'literature of fact' as new literary forms between the wars that language's relationship to objective reality and the role and status of privileged forms of realistic representation were investigated.

To recap, the new reportage, by challenging conventional categories of factual/fictional, objective/literary discourse, foregrounded the artificiality of linguistic representation. It didn't merely bring new data about reality to our attention, but through defamiliarization subverted the categories and media which make knowledge of reality
available and legitimate meanings. Consequently, John Carey's recent anthology, *The Faber Book of Reportage* (1987), contains many good things and has resuscitated critical interest in reportage's literary possibilities but fails to provide a coherent theory of reportage as literature. His introduction promotes the "clear" advantages of I-witness reporting of facts over the traditional literary supremacy of the "higher truth" of fiction, because reportage "lays claim to the power of the real, which imaginative literature can approach only through make-believe." This content-based distinction, however, overlooks the basic constitutive function of all representation and reinforces the myth of essential difference between discourses 'saying the thing which is' or 'is not'. Serious political consequences have resulted from dividing discourses into 'pleasurable' and escapist - i.e. fiction - and 'dull' or merely utilitarian - i.e. 'factual' - a legacy of the Romantic division between imagination and ratiocination, which denies the role of language in constructing our sense of the real. This is especially clear when considered in relation to what Walter Lippmann called the 'fictions' of real events constructed by the mass-media (a point which influenced both John Grierson's film documentary and Mass-Observation's diagnoses of popular opinion in the '30s). A report's plausibility can depend as much upon rhetorical effect as on fact, which Carey inadvertently admits in saying that "Much - or most - reportage is read as if it were fiction". (FBR, p.xxxvii) Moreover, though I-witness accounts are inevitably primary source materials for "'objective' or reconstituted history", to state that they "have the feel of truth because they are quick, subjective and incomplete" (FBR, pp.xxix) fails to inspect either the documentary role of report or the status 'objective' history and their interrelationship.
To claim that imaginative literature and 'false' report represent "a flight from the real" and that 'good' reportage renders that flight impossible because it "exiles us from fiction into the sharp terrain of truth" through "the simple fact that the reader knows all this actually happened", is naive. To borrow Paget's terms, it's tantamount to the tautology 'the True Story is true' and assumes that 'objective' history infallibly winnows true reports from false. That reportage is consumed by millions "untouched by literature" only gives it greater potential for mystification, until they possess better tools for analysing its processes and its role in conditioning their consciousness of present and past reality. It is indeed highly probable that "the advent of mass communications represents the greatest change in human consciousness ... in recorded history", transforming a situation where only decades ago "most of the inhabitants of the globe would have no day-to-day knowledge of or curiosity about" most others, into one where "the ordinary person's mental space" is filled with reports "about the doings of complete strangers". (FBR, p.xxxiv) However, Carey's 'hunch' that reportage is the modern equivalent to religion is right for the wrong reasons. By constituting global hyperreality, the mass-media position the individual subject within it ideologically, serving the same totalizing function that theology once did, but with the advantage of the perfect alibi - a secular and apparently demystified image of the world, claiming to record history sur le vif so that its signs seem transparently identical with their referents. Moreover, as Paget puts it, "s/he who controls the representation of events endows events themselves with meaning. In the politics of the hyperreal, the Image-maker Rules OK." Hence, our need to analyse 'sanctioned mediations' and the meanings with which they endow facts.
Carey argues that privileging fiction's 'higher truth' smacks of "priesthood and mystery cults", but fails to produce complementary reasons for the cultural devaluation of reportage, which is to persuade ourselves that its discourse banishes imagination and rhetoric through an unproblematic relationship to objective reality. The visual mass-media reinforce hegemony through their impression of vicarious 'presence' suppressing consciousness of representation and viewpoint in a transparency much more effective than merely written texts. Not dissimilarly, Carey promises the reader a ring-side seat at history's great bouts ('The Louis-Schmeling Fight, 22 June 1938' (FBR, pp.523-25)) or the voyeuristic thrill of peering down its cleavage (see 'A Private Audience with Elizabeth I, 8 December 1597' (FBR, pp.156-59)). The anthology's selection criteria - by content: "is this event of major historical interest"; by form: "qualities of writing and observation displayed" - are also flawed. Carey notes "nothing is important ... except as it is perceived" (FBR, pp.xxix-xxx), but takes what constitutes "major historical interest" for granted, since most of his chosen subjects are sensational in the conventional 'newsworthy' sense. Consequently, the catalogue of mayhem resembles the pulp Disaster magazine Paget refers to: "At one level, the True Story is all about this cultural compulsion ... to be 'shaken' by the 'truth', in an apparently endless soap opera of desperate deeds and heroic endurance." The first such publication, "capitalising on this desire to consume dangers vicariously, appeared in the USA as early as 1919". Such publications neutralize the effects of events by cheap catharsis and reinforce the apparent disconnection between the 'historically significant' and 'everyday life', to which consumers are safely restored after reading. Moreover, from, for instance, a feminist
perspective, it is easy to detect the familiar outlines of a patriarchal paradigm of history in Carey’s anthology, over-representing wars, revolutions and ‘great men’s deeds’, while marginalizing the experience of women. As for the ’30s, the decade when the new reportage became the ‘dominant’ (in Jakobson’s sense) component of British literary production, apart from Wal Hannington’s 1932 account of a hunger march (FBR, pp.504-05) there is little of the alternative I-witnessing of the times. Carey’s second criterion, however, seems to take some account of defamiliarization, but nudges it into essentialism. The devices of ‘good’ reportage, he says, penetrate ‘bad’ reportage’s smokescreen of automatized language, “lifting the screen from reality”. But, for the Formalists, as we have seen, the danger lay not in ‘obscuring’ reality, but in the very illusion of transparent access to it. Formalism and the alternative documentary art influenced by it, laid, therefore, no claim “directly to the power of the real”, but exposed the mediating nature of all representation.

Carey also misses a crucial difference between defamiliarizing preconceptions of rare or remote phenomena and those of another domain of reality ideologically constructed as mundane and insignificant and the disconnection between the two. His example of ‘good’ reportage (significantly, from a novel, La Chartreuse de Parme) is an account of battle – a concept familiar from countless texts and images, but not a familiar experience for most of us. Shklovsky listed “the fear of war” as one of the vital awarenesses devoured by automatization, but reporting such an “extreme situation” (in Craig and Egan’s phrase) as ironically messy and unheroic is arguably less radically defamiliarizing than reporting ‘normal’ conditions to reveal that the militarism which makes wars is the characteristic not of an army, but a
society (as R.H. Tawney believed). Similarly, Jack London in *The People of the Abyss* (1903) reported poverty as a peacetime killing field, whose casualties were infinitely greater though less publicized than those of war. He quoted statistics for industrial diseases, accidents and physical neglect, concluding, that

The average age of death among the people of the West End is fifty-five years; the average age at death among the people of the East End is thirty years. That is to say, the person in the West End has twice the chance for life that the person has in the East End. Talk of war! The mortality in South Africa and the Philippines fades away to insignificance.\(^9\)

Hence, "Here in the heart of peace" was "where the blood is being shed", without the rules of 'civilized' warfare, "for the women and children and babes in arms are killed just as ferociously". London's original assignment was to witness the Boer War's aftermath. Instead he stopped off in England for seven weeks to report conditions in the East End. This wasn't just a major change of geographical direction, but of rhetorical and conceptual direction too. 'War' then became a metaphor which revealed the underlying economic contradictions of British society, a project continued by many of the new reporters on whom London was a major pre-Modernist influence.\(^1\) This 'un-newsworthy' crisis of the commonplace Carey ignores in his choice of contributions from the reportage of London and Orwell: 'The San Francisco Earthquake, 17 April 1906' (FBR, pp. 418-21) and 'Wounded by a Fascist Sniper' (FBR, p. 521-23)). The new reportage, on the other hand, often defamiliarized apparently insignificant facts. By revealing the collective political and cultural ramifications of everyday phenomena like property, clothes, food, sex and gender, work and leisure, it shifted contemporary history's front line from the merely extraordinary, bringing it home.

A crucial modern reporter missing from Carey's anthology (but, to
be fair, also from Anglophone literary history as a whole) is Egon Erwin Kisch. Interestingly, Kisch edited an anthology of his own entitled *Klassischer Journalismus: Die Meisterwerke der Zeitungen* in 1923, which included excerpts from pre-Modernist writers such as Addison, Balzac, Bismarck, Defoe, Dickens, Goethe, Hoffman, Kleist, Luther, Marx, Napoleon, Rochefort and Swift. Kisch also highlighted the intimate relationship between journalism and more conventionally literary discourse. For instance, Zola, the "größte Reporter aller Zeiten" ("greatest reporter of all time"), gave his novels reportage foundations and his fiction, in turn, influenced the style of subsequent journalism. Moreover, in *Der rasende Reporter* (1925), Kisch's innovative attempt to give reportage a new Modernist 'literary' status in its own right, he teasingly assumed the guise of the innocent I-witness "der einfach berichtet" ("who simply reports"), but it quickly becomes clear to the reader that his feuilletons deploy every possible device to defamiliarize the objects and commodities of everyday experience and reveal their relationships to society's collective processes.

*Der rasende Reporter* not only reported extraordinary facts, but also made "das Interessante aus Gleichgültigem" ("the interesting out of the indifferent) and "das Unbekannte aus Bekanntem" ("the unknown out of the familiar"). Hence, the more radical Neue Sachlichkeit art of the '20s, which Kisch epitomized in literary form, was generally more concerned with defamiliarizing the apparently banal, rather than the conventionally newsworthy. Its objectivity was qualified by Modernist self-consciousness about mediation. Kisch's Soviet-influenced theory of the form and function of reportage thus anticipates the British new reporters of the '30s in its sense of the artistic and political
necessity of making representations of everyday reality compete imaginatively with the discourses of sensation and fantasy, not as unproblematic 'opposites', but on equal terms. Orwell also recognized that the dilemma of keeping a clear view of facts 'In Front of Your Nose' (see CEJL IV, p.150) involved constant resistance to the automatizing effect of language, which alienates us from what is ontologically closest to us. Similarly, Kisch's one-time colleague, Arthur Koestler was aware of the necessity for finding forms to transgress the "dream barriers" separating us from consciousness of the mundane atrocities of our time. Hence, the myth that historical facts speak their own truth, for which the writer is a mere conduit, prevents the recognition that they are always spoken for, which is the precondition for any theory of reportage that might genuinely help us to limit what Carey calls our "capacity for the inhuman" (FBR, p.xxxviii).

ii: Modernist Fictionality and Factual Representation

There was a sense among Leftist writers after the Great War and the October Revolution of new historical realities to be addressed, but with something more than the mere resuscitation of nineteenth-century Naturalism's mimetic project. Naturalism has been defined by John Willett as a "form of literary Positivism ... basically post-Darwinian and inclined towards an environmentalist and often evolutionary explanation of life", frequently taking "the form of close reportage and documentation." The new reportage of the inter-war years was, arguably, partly symptomatic of a reaction to Modernism's imploding preoccupation with self-analysis and technical innovation. It was
'anti-Modernist' to that extent, but was also a creative acknowledgement
that the impact of Modernism's linguistic self-consciousness, together
with new technologies of mediation and transport, had irrevocably
changed modern consciousness. On the one hand, the new reportage
involved a partial regression to Naturalism and a continued
subversion of it; on the other, a reaction against Modernism and a
development of it. Moreover this change wasn't only aesthetic but also
political, because Modernism also showed that by remaining static
categories of representation could themselves become repressive
instruments. Whether they embraced its legacy, were ambivalent, or even
hostile, Leftist reporters between the wars were more or less
conscious of how Modernism had problematized the very acts of perception
and writing.

Ernest Hemingway, for instance, reported a 1922 Paris to
Strasbourg flight in a way which foregrounds the joint role of
technology and avant-garde art in constructing modern consciousness:
"... rising in the air as though we were sitting inside a boat that was
being lifted slowly by some giant ... the ground began to flatten out
beneath us. It looked cut into brown squares, yellow squares, green
squares and big flat blotches of green where there was a forest. I began
to understand cubist painting."38 By the '30s it wasn't only personal
friends of Gertrude Stein who incorporated experimentalism into
representations of mundane reality. L.L. Avery's 'Lunch in a
Restaurant', prize-winning entry to a 1935 Left Review competition 'Nine
workers describe a shift at work', indicates how deeply avant-gardism
had permeated. Whether the piece was genuine reporting or a proletarian
short-story is irrelevant compared to the fact that this obscure writer
felt that the waitress's subjective thoughts were a legitimate aspect
of reality and tried, not unsuccessfully, to blend Joycean interior
monologue and objective I-witnessing:

"Yes sir!" Steak and chips - God shall I remember it all? Steak pie, cauli. and mashed, roast beef, baked and turnip, sweetbreads, mash and sprouts ...
"Yes, sir! Cigarettes at the desk, shall I get them for you? No trouble at all sir."
Green salad and brown bread; hum, she must be dieting. Gosh that plaice looks good, all plump and brown, smells like the sea, too, nice and clean, reminds me of the Sunday I spent up the river with Bob in the summer; we bathed and picnicked. A wonderful day that was.
"Hullo, my dear, day-dreaming?"

References testifying to a widespread sense of Modernism's irreversible impact cropped up like Freudian parapraxes in the most unexpected places in '30s reportage, as in Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* (1937), the first Western account of Mao Tse-Tung's 'Long March' which scooped a 'bio-interview' with the Chinese Communist leader. Snow drew his analogies for the alien landscape of North Shensi Province from Modernism:

There are few genuine mountains, only endless broken hills, hills as interminable as a sentence by James Joyce, and even more tiresome. Yet the effect is often strikingly like Picasso, the sharp-angled shadowing and colouring changing miraculously with the sun's wheel ...

Snow's ambivalence also characterized the times, since he both denied Joyce's writing relevance to reality, yet simultaneously granted that it corresponded somehow with the objects observed. Picasso's more favourable reception is probably down to his celebrated fellow-travelling, whereas Joyce had been proclaimed the antitype of Socialist Realism at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress.

Hence, the Leftist problem was how to modernize realist form without altogether abandoning the notion of accurate mimesis and risking inaccessibility, or, as Helga Geyer-Ryan puts it, how to reconstruct human subjectivity "to meet the demands of cultural modernism ...
without dissolving the capacity for political action". What was sought was paradoxical: an art appearing to reproduce objective reality as soberly and closely as possible, while, at the same time, self-consciously baring its own devices as a mediating construction. The new reportage and literature of fact which became international was a crucial attempt to overcome this contradiction, caught most beautifully in James Agee's documenting of the lives of Alabaman sharecroppers, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. Agee aspired to present 'things as they are' more than naturalistically, but, simultaneously displayed the impossibility of his own project: "If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odors, plates of food and of excrement." Agee most certainly did not believe in unmediated realism, and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* shows a closer relationship with Modernist forms such as Kurt Schwitter's collages and the Surrealists' *objets trouvés* the more concretely objective it becomes.

Importantly, the new reportage constituted a kind of critical interface between the discourses of imaginative fiction and those of factual history, and challenged presumed boundaries between them. It can thus be seen as a central product of avant-garde scepticism about conventional modes of realistic representation. Walter Benjamin formulated the Left avant-garde theory of history as the main plank in his project for what Terry Eagleton calls a "modernist Marxism". Eagleton notes that for Benjamin history was "not a fair copy but a palimpsest, whose deleted layers must be thrust to light, written together in their episodic rhythms rather than repressed to unruptured narrative." Consequently, as Helga Geyer Ryan puts it, Benjamin saw
history "as a text, as an artefact, as something constructed, the encoding and interpretation of which are always to be understood as socially and ideologically determined."\(^46\) Thus, written history was itself a kind of ever-expanding, closureless montage, only 'fictionalized' into a seamless continuum in the interests of those in power.

Frank Kermode denies that we can ever see history 'naked', "without structural support and without the integument of rhetoric": a "degree zero" of (non)representation is impossible. Similarly, Hayden White's work continues to refute neat antitheses between fiction and history and the idea that historical facts can be related "without the aid of some enabling and generically fictional matrix."\(^47\) White argues that the historical text is a paradoxical "verbal model" which cannot be checked by reference to the original, nor can we distinguish strictly between types of discourse by their 'contents', because of "the tropical element" in all of them, which makes the relationship between their data open to reformulation by alternative strategies of representation (\textit{Tropics}, pp.1-2). The 'master tropes' - metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony - deploy the facts of historical discourse into patterns, generating the illusion of mimesis, but actually in terms of poiesis. He follows Lévi-Strauss's argument that the "formal coherency" of historical narratives of events is a "fraudulent outline" imposed upon a body of data which resolve into a "multitude of individual psychic moments", each in turn translatable into more basic processes of "unconscious development, or nervous phenomena, which themselves have reference to the physical and chemical order" (\textit{Tropics}, p.55\(^48\)). Viewed thus, historical 'facts' seem less outside the influence of mind and language and more like the moments of
'co-ordinated' perception in Modernist novels like Ulysses's 'Wandering Rocks' or Mrs Dalloway, the sum of a number of 'refractions' through individual consciousnesses. Consequently, White concludes, they are constituted by abstraction and "as though under the threat of an infinite regress."

Historical narratives "gain part of their explanatory effect" by successfully "emplotting" stories from "mere chronicles" by the "encodation of the facts ... as components of specific kinds of plot structures", as is the case with "fictions" in general. (Tropics, pp.83-84) Moreover, this is done by suppressing and/or subordinating certain facts and highlighting others. And if different historians 'emplot' different story structures from the same or similar material, so do reporters. For example, John Reed I-witnessed the Great War as a tragi-comedy in The War in Eastern Europe (1916), but emplotted the October Revolution partly as an epic romance. Later, during the Spanish Civil War, Orwell reversed this pattern, by undermining the romance with sinister tragi-comedy to describe an event like the October revolution and the Somme "rolled into one". Historiography and reportage, then, overlap when "considered as a system of signs", because they both point in "two directions simultaneously: toward the events described in the narrative and toward the story type or mythos ... chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of the events." (Tropics, p.88)

Similarly, as White has argued more recently in The Content of the Form (1987)

... theories of discourse, however, dissolve the distinction between realistic and fictional discourses based on the presumption of an ontological difference between their respective referents, real and imaginary, in favor of stressing their common aspect as semiological apparatuses that produce meanings by the systematic substitution of signifieds (conceptual contents) for the extra-discursive entities that serve as their referents. In these semiological theories of
discourse, narrative is revealed to be a particularly effective system of discursive meaning production by which individuals can be taught to live a distinctively 'imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence,' that is to say, an unreal but meaningful relation to the social formations in which they are indentured to live out their lives and realize their destinies as social subjects.""
The nineteenth-century's setting of history "over against" fiction produced "the dream of a historical discourse that would consist of nothing but factually accurate statements about a realm of events which were (or had been) observable in principle, the arrangement of which in the order of their occurrence would permit them to figure forth their true meaning or significance." Similarly, in fiction the Naturalists hoped to find the form of words presenting reality "right side up and in true perspective" (Tropics, p.123). However, any linguistic protocol obscures as much as it reveals "about the reality it seeks to capture". Historians or other writers who insist that 'ordinary language' is a safeguard against ideological deformations of facts ignore the way its own "terminological determinism" compounds a representation of reality already naturalized as common sense (see Tropics, pp.130-34). Though historical events "can be assigned to specific time-space locations" outside consciousness, Lévi-Strauss has shown that historical events also take place inside the consciousness of the I-witness and attain meaning through negotiations with the signifying practices available to him/her. Hence the old formula of fiction "as the representation of the imaginable and history as the representation of the actual, must give place to the recognition that we can only know the actual by contrasting it with or likening it to the imaginable", since both are made sense of by similar means. At issue, therefore, is the extent to which the discourses of either "overlap, resemble, or correspond with each other" (Tropics, p.121). Since, the 'facts' of the unprocessed chronicle "exist only as congeries of contiguously related fragments", they are assembled by the historian in the same way that novelists "put together figments of their imaginations"
to display an ordered world" (Tropics, p.125). It is this process which the new reportage and literature of fact, underlined by its own deliberately transgressive poesis, used to disrupt the seamless coherence constituted by dominant versions of reality.

According to David Hackett Fischer, the epistemological paradigms underlying historical accounts are simultaneously an "idea of the past" and a "way of knowing it". This highlights the problem of selecting, editing and connecting what Foucault called the "plethoric" heterogeneity of facts in both historiography and reportage. However, dominant paradigms of history, based on nineteenth-century positivism, pre-define major historical significance and privilege certain facts over others. Conversely, in order constantly to expand its field of research and methods of representation, historiography has to acknowledge its inherently edited character so that more past facts can find new value in reciprocal relation with the alternative paradigms used to constitute and connect them.

Benjamin expressed the radical formal self-consciousness of the left avant-garde, because he outlined not a particular narrative of the past as such, but a theory of how its facts are constituted and what rival paradigms include and exclude, reveal and conceal. Hence, his theory and the new reporters' practice anticipate White's belief that historical paradigms must be replaced when they become "unable to accommodate certain kinds of data". The present can be liberated "from the burden of history", not just from the causal effects of past events but from dominant modes of representing them. With this in mind, White's parallel between alternative historical re-employment and psychotherapy is particularly illuminating: the former can also be seen as the restoration to consciousness of traumas repressed in the
collective cultural memory by the 'organized forgetting' practised by history's victors (See Tropics, pp. 41 and 87).

The new reportage departed from the triumphalist 'royal road' of history's victors, highlighting instead the marginalized by-ways taken by those who are subjected and silenced. It helped reroute the past, to arrive back at a present whose future possibilities were, thus, critically altered and multiplied. For example, Orwell's description of life in a lodging house in The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) emphasises the contradictory directions of mass experience and the optimistic official timetable of British history. His hosts, the Brookers, are:

one of the characteristic by-products of the modern world. You cannot disregard them if you accept the civilization that produced them. For this is part at least of what industrialism has done for us. Columbus sailed the Atlantic, the first steam engines tottered into motion, the British Squares stood firm under the French guns at Waterloo, the one-eyed scoundrels of the nineteenth-century praised God and filled their pockets; and this is where it all led - to the labyrinthine slums and dark back kitchens with sickly, ageing people creeping around them like black beetles.

The Brookers are not a marginal level of fall-out from capitalist 'progress' so much as one of its major products. Through defamiliarizing the apparently insignificant data of mundane reality, the new reportage rescued what Benjamin understood as "the ever vanishing traces of the historically defeated". As Orwell wrote about the material construction of history:

When I think of antiquity, the detail which frightens me is that those hundreds of millions of slaves on whose backs civilization rested generation after generation have left behind them no record whatever. We do not even know their names. In the whole of Greek and Roman history, how many slaves names are known to you? I can think of two, or possibly three. One is Spartacus and the other is Epictetus. Also in the Roman room at the British Museum there is a glass jar with the maker's name inscribed on the bottom, 'Felix fecit'. I have a vivid mental picture of poor Felix (a Gaul with red hair and a metal collar round his neck), but in fact he may not have been a slave; so there are only two slaves whose names I definitely know, and probably few people can remember
more. The rest have gone down into utter silence. (CEJL I, p.298)

The new reportage helped to expose how such disappearances are turned into coherent official narratives. Hence Orwell's belief that unofficial I-witnessing plugged "the holes" in authorized accounts (CEJL II, p.326) and that writers of different kinds of modern literature of fact such as Silone, Malraux, Salvemini, Borkenau, Serge and Koestler were alike in producing unofficial history, "the kind that is ignored in the text-books and lied about in the newspapers" (CEJL III, pp.270-71).

The new reportage's role between the World Wars in this critical interaction between data and paradigm was crucial. It helped affirm, as White puts it, that "history has no stipulatable subject matter uniquely its own" and "is always written as part of a contest between ... poetic configurations of what the past might consist of" (Tropics, p.98). As Kisch admitted, the new reporter also depended on some kind of historical paradigm, however provisional, through which to recognize and constitute the 'counterfactual', or, at least, a critique of the dominant one. Hence, the dilemma of the '30s Leftists whose I-witnessing began to conflict with the alternative paradigm that initially helped them create their oppositional perspective on capitalism, but which was itself being appropriated as a new basis for dominance. Stalinism attempted to terminate the proliferation of data not simply hostile to its enemies. Its claims to scientific objectivism made it increasingly suspicious of, and vulnerable to, the new reportage's unchecked potential for criticism and subversion. The argument came to a crisis in the debate about avant-gardism and the 'correct' historical basis for constituting a socialist view of reality. Modernist writing of many kinds problematized the seamless
chronological narrative characteristic of both Positivist historians and Naturalist writers. But Socialist Realism resuscitated it, to match Stalinism's absolutist form of historicism, and even denied its fictionality. One of Socialist Realism's tenets was that language was merely part of the superstructure and took no active part in mediating between consciousness and the world, though language might achieve a scrupulously accurate reflection of reality if its creative potentials were kept in line. Hence, avant-garde practices were suppressed in the Soviet Union and anathematized in international Leftist circles, precisely because constructive form foregrounded the materiality of discourse and disrupted the illusion of unmediated access to historical significance which was once again official policy. Hence many new reporters found themselves fighting a guerilla war on two fronts, caught between ideologies, Capitalist and Stalinist, each with a common interest in stifling alternative accounts.

As Milan Kundera has written, "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting," and this struggle is waged to preserve history's objective materials. As his character Hubl says, "The first step in liquidating a people ... is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world around it will forget even faster." However, this nightmare scenario, which never succeeded in fully suppressing the Czech culture of resistance, was in fact the totalitarian equivalent of more subtle and routine processes of organized forgetting still operating in post-Cold War capitalist media and society. Although Orwell's critique of history may not have been as radical as Benjamin's, his experiences as a
new reporter were, nonetheless, the basis of his similar realization of the power of official versions: "Who controls the past ... controls the future". Hence, the fact that the Stalinist paradigm's bid for historical dominance has finally collapsed makes it likely that its main ideological rival will step up its own efforts to monopolize present hyperreality.

White draws a vital distinction between a discourse "that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the world and reports it and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story", which pretends to release the inherent 'True Story' within the facts, as it were. As Barthes indicated, history can be "represented in a number of different modes, some of which were less 'mythological' than others inasmuch as they overtly called attention to their own process of production and indicated the 'constituted', rather than 'found', nature of their referents." Similarly, Paget's distinction between 'reporting' and 'recording' documentary, which I shall discuss in the next section, indicates the demystifying historical project behind the formal self-consciousness of the new reportage.

iii: Documentary and its Double

Paget has dubbed cultural productions claiming to represent facts 'True Stories', but as we have seen the discourses of fact and fiction are not so much opposite as adjacent and overlapping. However,
assurances of factual authenticity are used as a kind of cultural passport to credibility in the modern media, as if the True Story were indeed Fiction's Opposite, in both content and form. This is symptomatic of how facts have become a twentieth-century fetish and can be produced to "virtually compel belief", as Paget puts it. The discourse of factuality exhibited in True Stories normally comprises rhetorical strategies which have become so naturalised that they are perceived as conveying 'straight facts' and this ideological process can be traced "in the very provenance of the term 'documentary'" (True Stories?, pp.4-5). According to E.H. Carr the "fetishism of facts" is also an essentially nineteenth-century legacy and "was completed and justified by a fetishism of documents" which were "the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of facts". Consequently, there are connected reasons for analysing reportage and True Story dramas from a cultural materialist perspective. Unlike Art with its assumed insulation from reality, they are both forms apparently claiming "a direct linkage" to reality (True Stories?, p.6).

The term documentary resides at the "problematical borderline between concepts of 'fact' and 'fiction'" (True Stories?, p.14). The OED attributes the earliest noun-usage to Paul Rotha in The Film Till Now (1930) and it was through the British documentary film movement of the '30s, of which Rotha was part, that the term became loaded "with its truth-telling significance" (See True Stories?, pp.12-14). Similarly in 1933, the movement's initiator John Grierson defined it as "the creative interpretation of actuality". It is what Paget calls "documentary mater-reality" - the tangibility of documentary sources stands in for and 'guarantees' the absent-presence of the real events themselves (See True Stories?, pp.15-17). However, the way in which
'documents' are used within certain kinds of modern art problematises both the fictional nature of art and the factual nature of information. Transgressing discourses conventionally held to be antithetical calls into question the status of documents by placing them in a defamiliarizing context.

The twentieth-century True Story can also be seen as an extension of Naturalism's mimetic project into the "apparently unproblematical 'realism'" of film and t.v., which "have held out particular hopes of achieving a replication of reality conceived as essentially visual in nature" (True Stories?, pp.3 and 18). The photographic image gives the appearance of an unmediated reflection of real objects, by mimicking in two dimensions our three dimensional perception of them, and, thus, goes one stage beyond the 'mater-real' quality of written documents. Hence, the rise of documentary was accompanied by a belief in a certain kind of documentary form as a touchstone of "Olympian 'objectivity'". Reithian claims of liberal even-handedness are still habitual in British broadcasting but the very etymology of information (i.e. from Latin formare 'to form') suggests that it is never value-free, context-less or free of mediation. Objectivity is, in this sense, itself "a hegemonic myth" and the perfect alibi for propaganda. However, even though an unattainable ideal, it can be enabling "if it serves the primary purpose of helping to identify levels of information distortion" (True Stories?, p.19).

The belief that Naturalism's promise of "being more 'real' and thus more 'true'" (True Stories?, p.18) is fulfilled in the modern media also effaces the contradictory history of the term documentary and the critical effect of Modernism on modes of factual representation. Naturalism's key illusion was precisely that it used none. Similarly,
its modern extension effaces "the very processes of reproduction" up to the point where they seem invisible, "turning the unnatural (signification) into the natural, a simulacrum of 'life itself'" (True Stories?, pp.20-21). Hence, the ultimately privileged 'realism' of the 'camera eye'** transforms a set of formal conventions into truths established by a common-sense norm of perception.

However, the alternative documentary art, based on Modernism, can involve us in the radical conflict over the nature and status of the facts. Althusser considered Brecht's drama as an attempt to produce "a new spectator, an actor who starts where the performance ends"(True Stories?, p.29). Similarly, the new reportage and literature of fact, whose techniques and aims have common roots with Epic theatre through Formalism, were part of the early Soviet avant-garde's project for creating a parallel new reader, who would be, in Sergei Tretyakov's words a "producer/consumer" and whose interaction with real events began where the 'realism' of the written text bared its construction.** Hence the "development, marginalisation and recuperation" of the potential of True Story forms to subvert the myth that facts = truth can indeed "be seen most clearly through an examination of the 'two traditions' of documentary"(True Stories?, p.30)

The True Stories of sensational magazines are almost universally presented in a 'documentary' medium of "photographs and/or 'reconstruction' drawings, juxtaposed with newspaper-like columns of prose laden with quotations from 'eye-witnesses'." As such, they are an extension of "that 'photo-journalism' which both tells us and shows us its stories". They testify to the way once innovative techniques have been naturalised by their vicarious promise of authenticity - "the simulation of someone else's, 'I was there'" (True Stories?, pp.32-33).
Such privileging of the visual image, so that seeing automatically guarantees believing, is a product of the arrival of the portable camera "on the scene of the public (and private) event" in the '20s, with its merger of I-witness and camera-eye. The subsequent explosion of photomagazines, newsreels and documentary films in the '30s made fiction's apparent opposite "the primary expression" of the times. In Europe and the Soviet Union too between the wars the range of such cultural production was so enormous that, as Paget points out, all major events (and much more) "seem not only to have been filmed, but also accompanied by a prose piece of 'reportage', like Ten Days that Shook the World. However, documentary's primary association with film meant an intensified "belief in the unproblematical authenticity of the visual document."

In '30s Britain, "social problems were reported and recorded ... to a new and unprecedented degree", reflecting a growing compulsion to open society up "to underclasses of various kinds." However, Paget sees many of these moves as essentially attempts by the hegemony to contain social upheavals brought about by economic collapse: "Ultimately it is always easier to establish practices urging a paternalistic social democratic view of non-conflictive politics under a "strong" but "benevolent" state', as Don MacPherson has remarked of Grierson's project. It is much harder to establish more radical practices (as UK film maker Ralph Bond tried to do in the 1930s, for example)." However, although it is arguable that the documentary movement in helping to form "a climate of opinion which ultimately led to New Deal welfare policies in the USA and Welfare State socialism in the UK" was ultimately just "part of an ideological counter-thrust" to the threat of international Revolution (see True Stories?, pp.35-38), it is
difficult to say how far and how consciously individual artists intended it to be so. British and American documentary film also involved a more complex and ambivalent response to the development of the more radical Modernist art of fact in Russia and Weimar Germany. 

Documentary can thus be roughly divided into two antagonistic traditions. The dominant tradition remains one which holds that facts and information are in themselves liberating. This tradition tends, therefore, to regard facts as able to speak 'the truth' for themselves. It is what Paget calls "a recording" tradition, which maintains that the effacement of subjectivity produces an objective and literal record of events. The alternative "is a radical/revolutionary reporting" tradition, which declares its tendency openly. Again etymologies give a lot away: 'record' (from L. recordari, 'to remember') has this sense of 'neutral' memorializing, whereas 'report' (from L. re+portare, 'to bring') underlines the means of conveyance. Hence the reporting tradition recognizes "facts and information can never come value-free" and foregrounds questions of mediation (See True Stories?, pp.39-40).

In the Modernism-based art associated with this second tradition, defamiliarizing documents and exposing "the all-important context behind information has most often been achieved through 'montage' techniques" (True Stories?, p.40). From French monter, montage is editorial cutting and joining of often disparate pieces of film to form new units of meaning to be interpreted by the spectator. Eisenstein described his originally theatrical concept in Lef in 1923:

Instead of static 'reflection' of an event with all possibilities for activity within the limits of the event's logical action, we advance to a new plane - free montage of arbitrarily selected independent (within the given composition and the subject links which hold the influencing actions together) attractions - all from the strand of establishing certain final thematic effects - this is montage of
Film montage is of two different kinds: 'linkage montage' provides connections giving the appearance of continuity which effaces the very discontinuity and ellipsis of which it consists. 'Collision montage', on the other hand, by baring its device openly displays discontinuity between items and invites the spectator to construct more conscious connections between them. Hence, it makes no attempt to conceal the 'joins' and it was, perhaps, the 'constructive' technique common to all forms of Modernism.

Collision montage was used for documentary purposes, but not at all in the dominant objective sense. It was particularly prominent in the Epic Theatre pioneered by Meyerhold, Piscator and Brecht, which enabled its audience "to engage actively with the material presented" (True Stories?, pp.41-42). But it was also present in the new reportage and literature of fact theorized and practised by the early Soviet avant-garde and the more radical German Neue Sachlichkeit writers, with its activated reader or "producer/consumer". This is confirmed by the way Georg Lukács's defence of narrative against Brecht echoes his attacks on the new reportage and 'constructed' art in general. Lukács was perhaps the most sophisticated of the critics who led Stalinism's reaction against experimentalism in the late '20s and the '30s and promoted the absolute historical paradigm which constituted Socialist Realism. His first major thrust was 'Reportage or Portrayal?' in the journal Die Linkskurve in 1932.

Lukács denounced alternative documentary technique in his review of Ernst Ottwalt's Denn sie wissen, was sie tun (1931)). Ottwalt's text, which was largely reportage, dealt with class bias in the Weimar legal system and Lukács, while sympathizing with his aim, condemned his
formal means. By montaging fragments of documents from actual trials to implicitly display their contradictions, Ottwalt, he argued, confined his text within the machinery of the law he sought to expose, leaving the reader without a clear narrative perspective through which to penetrate the veil of reification and see that machinery as part of capitalism's wider system: "Portrayal of the overall process is the precondition for a correct construction. Why is this? Because only portrayal of the overall process can dissolve the fetishism of the economic and social forms of capitalist society, so that these appear as what they actually are, i.e. (class) relations between people." Thus, Ottwalt's scrupulous factuality was allegedly irresponsible, because decontextualized and lacking the sense of social connections which would make individual examples 'typical'. Lukács advocated instead fully-crafted fictional 'portrayal' (what he called Gestaltung) "as a more effective means of presenting social issues".

On the other hand, as Rodney Livingstone puts it, by using montage to juxtapose "the facts of the case and various attitudes of the participants, without providing an overall authorial judgement", Ottwalt threw "the burden of thought back to the reader", enabling him/her to synthesize his/her own reading from the discontinuity of the text's discourses in order to adopt an attitude to the reality they mediated. Ottwalt's approach was pragmatic like Brecht's. Consequently, his reply in Die Linkskurve (October 1932) argued that workers preferred the cutting-edge of documentary facts to blunted nineteenth-century fictiveness, and that no form ought to be prescriptively rejected if it worked. Moreover, Lukács's criticism "was a response not just to Ottwalt, but to a whole tendency", in which Soviet new reporters like Ilya Ehrenburg and Sergei Tretyakov who favoured montage over the
"Procrustes Bed" of plot were also implicated. Thus, the second half of Lukács's essay extended the attack to alternative documentary art as a whole, arguing that it reproduced only the surface of reality objectively, rather than reality's essential processes. Paradoxically, its anti-illusionist baring of devices was merely abstract and negated realism.

Alfred Döblin was also rebuked for deviation from 'proletarian' form into montage in Berlin Alexanderplatz, and in 'Narrate or Describe' (1936), Lukács criticized Dos Passos's novel Manhattan Transfer (1925) on similar grounds, with 'narrating' standing in for 'portrayal', and 'describing' for 'reportage'. Instead of guiding the reader with a clearly-defined perspective, Dos Passos juxtaposed characters and events and mixed fragments of factual and fictional discourses on apparently aleatory principles. "Narration establishes proportions, description merely levels", Lukács argued, making "everything episodic". What he objected to in both Ottwalt and Dos Passos, in effect, was the subversion by montage of the hierarchy of realistic representation, for allowing written 'documents', 'camera-eye' and 'newsreel' techniques, to clash with conventional narrative. The inclusion of both factual and imaginary events, of reportage and fiction, in such 'constructed' novels drew attention to the adjacent and overlapping characteristics of the discourses used to represent them, through the juxtaposition, contradiction and tension between various fragments. This complemented the new reportage's transgressive poesis, by including fiction in the text itself and thus shifted the problematizing of discourses from the margins of the text to the structural centre.

As David Midgeley argues, Lukács's tirades against 'Formalism' denied artists scope for using whatever practical techniques came to
hand for exploring reality. Hence, ironically, his concept of Realism was in itself formalist, in the prescriptive sense. * Lukacs granted that reportage was an indispensable form of journalism for the cause, but argued that it must work by intellectual persuasion and could not be confused with art. Thus he denied Modernist-based documentary's potential for questioning privileged forms of realistic representation, especially the resurgent nineteenth-century techniques that were the aesthetic corollary of Stalinism's historical perspective. Ottwalt (1901-43), real name Ernst Nicolas, went on to write a number of anti-fascist novels and stories and collaborated on the script of Brecht's 'alienating' film Kuhle Wampe before seeking asylum from the Nazis in Moscow, only to be arrested for literary deviation in 1936 and to die in an Archangelsk labour camp. His own career was, therefore, symptomatic of the repressive political direction in which Socialist Realism was heading.

The influence of the new reportage and literature of fact in Britain may not have been so systematically theorized nor so self-consciously part of a radical movement as it was briefly in the USSR and the Weimar Republic. It arrived belatedly and was cross-fertilized with home-grown traditions of social reportage and Anglophone avant-gardism, but often retained the constructive features of alternative documentary. Thus, it was widespread enough by the middle of the 1930s for W.H. Auden to make self-reflexive jokes about it in Letters from Iceland (1937), a text which is itself an example of the form:

Every exciting letter has enclosures
And so shall this - a bunch of photographs,
Some out of focus, some with wrong exposures,
Press cuttings, gossip, maps, statistics, graphs;
I don't intend to do the thing by halves.
I'm going to be very up to date indeed.
It is a collage that you're going to read. * 
Similarly, Auden and Isherwood's play *On the Frontier* (1939) also displayed "multiple and simultaneous consciousness" through a montage of clashing newspaper reports about an imaginary war.\(^8\) This technique mimicked the National Government *Times*, the reactionary *Mail*, the Labour *News Chronicle*, the Communist *Daily Worker*, and "the sensational inside-story mongering" of Claud Cockburn's *The Week*, and it derived from the Workers Theatre Movement's satirical media revues and 'Living Newspapers'.\(^8\) Moreover, newspaper excerpts, actual or invented, and techniques using documentary 'cut-ups' of all kinds were endemic to British writing in the '30s.

Similarly, the pervasiveness of cinematic terminology reflected writers' attempts to emulate and investigate the formal properties of film. In the course of attacking the dominant ideology many '30s texts, as we shall see, developed their own types of montage in which collisions between different kinds of factual representation and/or imaginary events provided multiple perspectives which challenged the notion of unmediated realism and its assertion of univocal, narrative truth. Epic Theatre also montaged photographs and film into the theatrical frame as 'documents'. Drama could contextualize and deconstruct the camera-eye's visual representation, maximizing "the characteristic rhetorics" of the new media without "being enslaved by them" (*True Stories?*, pp.44-45). Given the obvious constraints of print in comparison with performance, the same could be said of parallel borrowings in the new reportage and literature of fact, which both mimicked and critiqued the techniques of the camera-eye (as well as incorporating actual photographs) in order to signal a new kind of factual authenticity, but also to problematize its cultural status. A key validating device in Griersonian documentary film is the voice-over.
commentary which, in Paget's words, "supplies the programme's aural editorial gloss, but purports to be value-free". Generally using a male actor with authoritative tones, it is "the voice of the nineteenth-century novel's omniscient narrator translated into twentieth-century technological terms" (True Stories?, pp.47-48). However, in the new reportage and literature of fact the subjectivity of the narrating camera-eye/I-witness is usually foregrounded, problematized and fragmented, undermining any universalized norm of realistic representation/perception.

In the '30s documentary art based on collision montage was suppressed in the USSR and Germany by rival totalitarianisms. In Britain and the USA, it has been culturally marginalized. However, it survives, as Paget shows with theatre, in a 'broken tradition', and its past débris can still be critically recycled. Similarly, a central example of what happened to the Anglophone new reportage is the selective post-Nineteen Eighty-Four view of Orwell as the documenter of (usually Leftist) bias and untruth, whose stylistic practice was unself-conscious and, therefore, unproblematic. This critical myth serves both to efface the background of Orwell's writing in the new reportage and literature of fact in the '30s, and its wider critical implications for the status of the mediations that construct our daily hyperreality and our consciousness of history. Thus, as Paget puts it, the informational power of 'documentary' "may inadvertently confirm our lack of understanding while increasing our knowledge" (True Stories?, p.87) unless we also understand the contradictions of its double history.

Michel Foucault called "continuous history", (i.e. history as conventionally understood) "the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject". 88 It was this "unruptured narrative", 63
"purged of all that might disrupt its hold on power" which Benjamin wished to "blast open" and reveal as an instrument of present hegemony (See True Stories?, pp.163-64). And it's precisely such discontinuity and difference which the 'broken tradition' of radical documentary forms attempts to lay bare. Consequently, the next chapter will examine John Reed's I-witness account of the October Revolution, as a model for the theory and practice of avant-garde reportage and literature of fact as it was developed by the Soviet LEF Group in the '20s, and as it was perverted in the Stalinist cultural reaction of the '30s.
Notes to Chapter I


3. For Jakobson's central theory that language always operates figuratively along a metaphorical and/or metonymic axis see 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasia' in Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle (eds.) *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp.59-64. See also George Lakoff and Mark Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, especially p.3.


5. See above Introduction pp.10-11 and Note.13


16. See below for Socialist Realism's pejorative use of 'Formalist', etc., in Chapter II, section iii, especially p.96.


18. See below for definition collision montage and its commonness to different Modernist groups in Chapter I, section iii pp.57-58, and Chapter II, section ii, pp.88-89.


26. See ibid., p.31.

27. See Roman Jakobson 'The Dominant', in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (eds.) Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology P, 1971), pp.82-87, especially p.82.

28. See below Chapter II, section ii, p.87.


31. See the discussion of London's influence on Kisch and Orwell in Chapter III, section i, pp.131-32, and Chapter VI, section i, pp.297-99.

32. For Kisch's reputation in the Anglophone world in the '30s see below Chapter III, section i, pp.116 and Note 9


34. See Dieter Schlenstedt Egon Erwin Kisch: Leben und Werk (Berlin: Volk und Wissen, 1985), pp.211-12, and below Chapter III, section i, pp.118-19 and 130.

35. See Schlenstedt Egon Erwin Kisch, p.200 and below Chapter III, section i, p.129.


41. For the scapegoating of Joyce at the Congress and the more favourable reception of Ulysses by some '30s Leftist critics and writers, see below Chapter II, section ii. pp.99, and Chapter VII, section i, pp.350-51, respectively.


45. Geyer-Ryan in Collier and Timms (eds.) Visions and Blueprints, p.68.


49. See Craig and Egan Extreme Situations, p.257. Also see below Chapter VIII, pp.407-08.


51. See ibid., pp.xi and 2, respectively.


54. See above Chapter I, section ii, pp.43-44.


56. See Geyer-Ryan in Collier and Timms (eds.) Visions and Blueprints, pp.72. Also Chapter III, section i, pp.140-42, below.

57. See the discussion of Kisch's view of the reporter's historical perspective in Chapter III, section i, p.130, below.

58. Geyer-Ryan's term for the repressed data of the collective memory restored to consciousness to challenge the facts of dominant accounts by alternative historical representations. See Collier and Timms (eds.) Visions and Blueprints, pp.70-71 and 75, and below Chapter III, section i, pp.140-42.


61. See White *Content of the Form*, p.2.


63. See Derek Paget *True Stories? Documentary Drama on Radio, Screen and Stage* (Manchester: MUP, 1990), pp.1-4. Henceforth, all page references to *True Stories* will be given in brackets in the text.


67. See Chapter II, section ii, pp.87-89.

68. Photojournalism is discussed at length in Chapter V, below.

69. Stott *Documentary Expression*, p.xi.


71. See below Chapter V.


73. See below Chapter II, section ii, p.89.


75. See Rodney Livingstone’s introduction to *Essays on Realism*, especially pp.15-16.

76. See Chapter III, section i, p.138 and Note.

78. See 'Communism and the Avant-Garde: the Case of Georg Lukacs' in Collier and Timms Visions and Blueprints, pp. 52-65, especially p.57.


83. See Benjamin Illuminations, pp.264ff. Also cf. Chapter III, section i, p.141.
In Alistair Cooke's opinion "Only by the wildest freak is a reporter ... actually present at a single convulsion of history."\(^1\) John Reed's account of the events of October 1917 is by this token a classic example of 'scoop' reportage of major historical interest. In Petrograd's extreme situation, distinctions between politics and the mundane reality of the "social organism", in Reed's own phrase,\(^2\) were defamiliarized by the sheer force of crisis. Their critical relationship was revealed, necessitating urgent choice between the Provisional Government's continuation of the War and the desperate simplicity of Bolshevik agitation for "Peace, land, bread!"

However, its status as historical scoop notwithstanding, the Modernist experimentalism of *Ten Days that Shook the World* (USA, 1919; UK, 1926) has never been fully acknowledged in accounts of Western cultural radicalism between the wars. According to John Willett, it was a seminal influence on the subsequent building up of "a rich corpus of documentary work in different media" by early Soviet avant-gardists, particularly those, like Sergei Tretyakov, associated with the LEF Group and its development of the theory and practice of the new reportage and literature of fact.\(^3\) It seemed to them an example par excellence of committed writing about authentic realities, yet also 'bared the devices' of its construction by its striking typographical montage; it reported "the immense surprise and excitement of the Bolshevik revolution as it struck an alert outside observer at the time", but did this through a technique alternating subjectively-charged I-witnessing with "speeches, articles, photographically reproduced
proclamations with their heavy Cyrillic headings". Similarly, the Italian Futurist F.T. Marinetti had proclaimed a "Typographical Revolution" in 1913, which would make texts 'concretely' expressive artefacts:

... the so-called typographical harmony of the page... is contrary to the flux and reflux, the leaps and bursts of style that run through the page. On the same page, therefore, we will use three or four colours of ink, or even twenty different typefaces if necessary. For example: italics for a series of similar or swift sensations, boldface for the violent onomatopoeias, and so on. With this typographical revolution and this multi-coloured variety in the letters I mean to redouble the expressive force of words.

Hence, for Futurism's Russian branch, both the content and form of TDTSTW seemed to proclaim a new era in politics and literature.

Reed (1887-1920), an 'ace' American correspondent, had already reported Pancho Villa's Mexican rebellion (see Insurgent Mexico (1914)) and the Balkan Front of the Great War (The War in Eastern Europe (1916)). Thus his journalistic instincts led him to the potential epicentre of world revolution, the Petrograd of Kerensky's Provisional Government, in autumn 1917. Reed's reportage achieved a difficult balance between political commitment and the avant-garde ambition to give reportage artistic status. On the political side, he was influenced by intellectuals like Walter Lippmann and Max Eastmann, radicals like Emma Goldman, his wife Louise Bryant and Big Bill Haywood of the Syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World movement (IWW); on the artistic, by progressive 'muck-raking' journalists like his mentor Lincoln Steffens, who wrote The Shame of the Cities, and the factual novels of Upton Sinclair. He published in the same journals as Theodore Dreiser, William Carlos Williams, Dos Passos and European luminaries like Picasso, Gorki and Bertrand Russell. Reed was the 'golden boy' of New York bohemia during the period of Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession.
Gallery 291 and the Armory exhibitions of the latest modern art, and with Eugene O'Neill he helped initiate American Expressionist drama through the Provincetown Players. Writing for the *Masses* magazine put Reed at the cutting edge, as Robert Rosenstone puts it, of "Marxism, anarchism, syndicalism, birth control, industrial unionism, free love, cubism, futurism, Freudianism, feminism, the new woman, the new poetry, the new theater and direct action". Later, while interviewing for *TDISTW*, he got on personal terms with leading Bolsheviks, admiring Trotsky but preferring "the company of Lenin". He also moved in Russian avant-garde circles and was especially impressed by agitprop graphics, which contributed to *Ten Day's* montage form. He met Lunacharsky, the first Soviet Commissar for Culture, and talked with Mayakovsky and the other Futurists who were "surprised to find an American interested in art". Visiting a Proletkult centre, he found evening-classes for workers in all media and was enthused by attempts to "break down artificial separation of the arts and the people."

Reed's first encounter with the labour movement was in 1913, when he helped organize the silk-workers' strike in Paterson, N.J. On his return, from Mexico he covered the Ludlow Massacre during the 1913-15 Colorado coal-miners' strike and its aftermath. Eric Homberger notes that Colorado had a similar effect on writers like Reed to Orwell's experiences in early revolutionary Barcelona. Reed's article 'The Colorado War' was, consequently, "a preliminary sketch, for the far greater canvas" of *TDISTW*. He started writing for *The Masses* (effectively suppressed by the wartime government for its pro-Bolshevik and anti-war activities) after joining the American Socialist Party. For its successor, *The Liberator*, Reed reported the notorious Chicago trial of IWW leaders. After returning from the October Revolution, he toured
America, lecturing on its significance, and helping found the Communist Party of the USA. However, having been interned by the Finns on his way back to Russia, he died of typhus after his release in 1920; he was commemorated by a plaque on the Kremlin Wall.

Thus, Reed seems a prototype for the modern Leftist reporter. Renouncing a potentially brilliant career in the capitalist press, he apparently resolved the dilemma of the writer seeking relevance by reporting historical events without detachment from their implications. For Eastman, Reed "revolted against the contemporary world, against the conditions of exploitation from which our journalism, and what we call our art and literature, springs, and which it justifies, and over which it spreads a garment of superficial and false beauty." Similarly, Granville Hicks in his 1936 book *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary* consolidated Reed’s status for the inter-war generation of American radicals. In his autobiography *Joseph Freeman*, editor of *New Masses* founded in 1926, called TDTSTW their "classic story of the October Revolution" and Reed’s life "a model for middle-class intellectuals who went over to the proletariat."

Undoubtedly the form of TDTSTW sparked interest in avant-garde reportage too and the '20s saw the growth of a network of 'worcorrs', or worker-correspondents in America emulating the Soviet rabkorí, with Reed as their common model. *New Masses* encouraged contribution towards an equivalent American literature of fact. Michael Gold’s editorial of July 1928 called for:

Confessions - diaries - documents
The concrete -
Letters from hoboes, peddlers, small town atheists, unfrocked clergymen and schoolteachers -
Revelations by rebel chambermaids and night club waiters -
The sobs of driven stenographers -
The poetry of steelworkers -
The wrath of miners - the laughter of sailors -
Strike stories, prison stories, work stories -
Stories by Communist, I.W.W. and other revolutionary
Another consequence was the New York John Reed Club founded in November 1929 by the New Masses editorial board, soon to take its slogan 'Art is a Class Weapon' from the 1930 Kharkov Congress. Clubs sprang up all over the USA, until by the first national convention in 1934, there were some thirty with 1,200 members. Dos Passos's salute to Reed in his documentary novel Nineteen Nineteen (1932) typifies Reed's posthumous reputation in American and international Leftist circles. Dos Passos even suggested that Reed's life overcame the historical contradiction between America's capitalist present and revolutionary past:

Jack Reed wanted to live in a tub and write verses; but he kept meeting bums workingmen husky guys he liked out of luck out of work why not revolution? He couldn't keep his mind on his work with so many people out of luck; In school hadn't he learned the Declaration of Independence by heart? Reed was a Westerner and words meant what they said...

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness not much of that around the silkmills when in nineteen-thirteen, he went over to Paterson to write up the strike, textile workers parading beaten up by the cops, the strikers in jail; before he knew it he was a striker parading beaten up by the cops in jail; he wouldn't let the editor bail him out; he'd learn more with the strikers in jail.

He learned enough to put on the pageant of the Paterson Strike in Madison Square Garden.

He learned the hope of a new society where nobody would be out of luck.

why not revolution? 12

By the time of the American Writers' Congress of 1935, Joseph North was announcing that Reed was instrumental in making reportage "into one of the most important forms of the revolutionary movement". 13
Nevertheless, the October Revolution, internationalist and anti-militarist as it was, inspired its own 'displaced nationalism' and once more legitimated armed struggle. Hence, it is not merely cynical to detect touches of 'revolutionary romanticism' in TDTSTW anticipating Socialist Realism. As Reed's preface admits:

It is still fashionable after a whole year of the Soviet Government, to speak of the Bolshevik insurrection as an "adventure". Adventure it was, and one of the most marvellous mankind ever embarked upon, sweeping into history at the head of the toiling masses, and staking everything on their vast and simple desires. (TDTSTW, p.xii)

Moreover, the text itself displays several, conscious and unconscious, paradoxes and contradictions. Although Reed employed every device to signal conventional journalistic authenticity, he also declared his partisanship from the start: "In the struggle my sympathies were not neutral. But ... I have tried to see events with the eye of the conscientious reporter, interested in setting down the truth." (TDTSTW, p.xiii) Thus, by being open about his own purpose, he acknowledged that completely objective recording of history is impossible. According to Marx and Engels, history is a human construction, because in itself it "does nothing; it does not possess immense riches ... does not fight battles". History is not some autonomous entity using humanity as a means to its own ends, because "History is nothing but the achievements of men in pursuit of their ends". However, documentary mediations inform our consciousness of both past and present hyperreality, and Lenin's original introduction to the text illustrates why particular versions of history become authorized. He recommended Reed's account for its "truthful and most vivid exposition of the events so significant to the comprehension of what really is the Proletarian Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat." (TDTSTW, Introduction). Lévi-
Strauss insists that "history of" is always "history for" and TDTSTW shows perfectly how, in Hayden White's terms, "all historical representations" constitute "a progressive encodation on a deep or figurative level, of events which exist on the surface level as simple description or analysis." Thus, as Homberger puts it, "What is at stake in Reed's imagery ... is the legitimacy of the revolution itself." To an extent, TDTSTW counters the charge that the Bolshevik coup was opportunism lacking mass support tropically, through the cumulative effect of many scenes of mass-movement involving images of dynamic social forces and technology relished by both Italian and Russian Futurists.

Hence, Bolshevik promotion of TDTSTW also illustrates Gramsci's distinction between 'domination', over a society's 'economic base', and ideological 'hegemony', over its 'superstructure'. 'Domination' is associated with coercion, state power and political institutions, while hegemony is associated with consent and civil society's institutions, such as the family, church, education, culture and the media. Gramsci argued that the superstructure constituted "an effective operating reality" and the objective of hegemony was stabilization, rendering coercion unnecessary. However, though Gramsci suggested that the process of "cultural penetration" which creates hegemony begins long before changes in the base leading to domination, Reed's reportage suggests that in the case of early Bolshevik Russia the two processes overlapped. For example, his I-witnessing of the orderly take-over of the Winter Palace is anti-climactic compared to Eisenstein's lurid cinematic depiction in October (subtitled Ten Days that Shook the World, made a decade later in 1928 and often used as if it were recorded footage of the event itself) which, ironically, derived in part from the mass
dramatic 'reconstruction' staged by the Bolsheviks to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Revolution on the same principle as the *Paterson Pageant*. Significantly, Reed drew attention to the role of documents in the subtle struggle for hegemony:

We penetrated at length to the gold and malachite chamber with crimson brocade hangings where the Ministers had been in session all that day and night, and where the *shveitzani* had betrayed them to the Red Guards. The long table covered with the green baize was just as they had left it, under arrest. Before each empty seat was pen, ink and paper; the papers were scribbled over with the beginnings of plans of action, rough drafts of proclamations and manifestoes. Most of these were scratched out, as their futility became evident ... (*TDTSTW*, p.86)

The writings left behind by the ejected members of the Provisional Government were responses to political contingency, just as Reed's reportage is a response to the unstable, post-1917 situation. They represent loss of public consent, highlighted by the tautological appeal: "The Provisional Government appeals to all classes to support the Provisional Government". Conversely, the Bolsheviks found the extension of their hegemony by agitprop was vital if they were to retain their precarious domination, in the teeth of civil war, foreign blockade and intervention, and their image abroad was especially important in these early days, when international working-class support seemed the sole guarantee for the regime's survival. The international value of Reed's account was not just documentary, but politically useful.

Consequently, his Preface has to be treated cautiously:

This book is a slice of intensified history - history as I saw it. It does not pretend to be anything but a detailed account of the November Revolution, when the Bolsheviks at the head of the workers and the soldiers, seized the state power of Russia and placed it in the hands of the Soviets. Naturally most of it deals with "Red Petrograd", the capital and the heart of the insurrection. But the reader must realise that what took place in Petrograd was most exactly duplicated, with greater or lesser intensity, at different intervals of
The idea of an authentic "slice of history", served up raw, is no less metaphorical than the clichéd 'slice of life', though qualified, to some extent, by the implications of "intensified". Furthermore, far from being given immediate access to history sur le vif, we are primed by two "essential" chapters setting up a causative grid before the I-witnessing actually begins. However, even if we grant Reed's own journalistic credentials, his criteria for accepting the testimony of others are sometimes complex and disguised: "I saw no reason to doubt Trusishka's story of the journey." Similarly, Reed's claim that events in "Red Petrograd" typified those all over Russia, is a kind of synecdoche, from which the reader is supposed to infer a kind of historical tessellation (though Reed did occasionally give accounts of other cities, notably Moscow). His I-witnessing was doubly partial, then: both because it was politically partisan and because it was physically limited, though supplemented by various documentary sources.

Reed stated that, besides his own notes, he used "a heterogeneous file of several hundred assorted Russian newspapers", including the English Russian Daily News, the French Journal de Russie and Entente, and in particular the daily Bulletin de la Presse of the French Information Bureau, which summarized the Russian Press. He also claimed to possess copies of "almost every proclamation, decree and announcement posted on the walls of Petrograd from the middle of September" as well as "secret treaties and other documents discovered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs" by the Bolsheviks. What Paget calls "documentary mater-reality" is the way the plausible tangibility of sources 'guarantees' the absent tangibility of real events almost as if they were direct material 'traces' of them.
Hence, it isn't simply the inclusion of documents in TDTSTW which authenticates its account, but their reproduction in original form by a new technological process, making them something between text and photograph. However, on examination this mimetic effect is self-defeating and displays the 'constructedness' even of mediations which make the closest possible approach to real events. The montage structure of TDTSTW also problematizes the privileged representational status of documents including, in turn, its own implicit future position as a 'document' in the ever-growing construction making up our knowledge of the past.

Consequently, far from representing history as a seamless narrative continuum, TDTSTW's consciousness of it is inevitably mediated and always subject to revision (as Reed himself revised the early sections of TDTSTW which appeared in The Liberator) - a multi-layered, intertextual accretion of competing, heterogeneous representations, as in the many-page montage of fragments quoting the cacophony of factional reports on the Bolshevik coup d'etat: "On the other side what a storm of proclamations posted up, handbills scattered everywhere, newspapers - screaming and cursing and prophesying evil. Now raged the battle of the printing press". (See TDTSTW, pp.95-99) Thus Reed bared the process by which documentary accounts are assembled in a kind of visual 'deconstruction', despite the fact that the commentary framing his edited sources inevitably guides our responses to them. Though it reports "history as I saw it" for a political project, TDTSTW also foregrounds the critical tension between history as an objective and a semiotic phenomenon. For example, the scene in the newly Bolshevik-controlled Congress of Soviets: "In the immense white meeting-room the Tsay-ee-kah [Central Executive Committee] was waiting, with the whole
Petrograd Soviet and a thousand spectators beside, with that solemnity which attends great conscious moments in history." (TDTSTW, p.260) The form of TDTSTW underlines the fact that it is not history itself which constitutes key moments, but the historical paradigms with which we construct it.

Thus TDTSTW is documentarily objective, not in the mythic sense of neutral recording, but in the Modernistic, formal sense of concrete art. Dozens of facsimile fragments are intruded into Reed's I-witness reportage and similar documentary experiments in montage/collage techniques, as we have seen, would be crucial to the new reportage and literature of fact between the wars, reflecting the Soviet avant-garde's 'constructive' adaptation of Futurism and its 'cult of materials'. Hence the symbolic context against which Reed reported a speech by Lunacharsky:

...between the gaunt brick walls of a huge unfinished building, ten thousand black-clothed men and women packed round a scaffolding draped in red, people heaped up on piles of lumber and bricks, perched high up on the shadowy girders, intent and thunder voiced. Through the dull, heavy sky now and again burst the sun, flooding reddish light through the skeleton windows upon the simple mass of faces upturned to us. (TDTSTW, p.24)

This juxtaposition of human and industrial resources in the 'unfinished' construction of history parallels Reed's innovative reportage as an intertextual praxis that represents reality and transforms its possibilities.

As White argues, historical narratives utilize literary forms, such as epic, romance and satire, as icons of emplotment. Reed also emplotted his observations using various literary devices and forms. For example, he quoted William English Walling's generalization about the Russian proletariat:
The Russian Workman is revolutionary, but he is neither violent, dogmatic, nor unintelligent. He is ready for the barricades, but he has studied them, and alone of the worker's of the world he has learned about them from actual experience. He is ready and willing to fight his oppressor, the capitalist class, to a finish.20

And similar allegorized representatives of soldiers, workers and peasants mingle with historically identifiable protagonists on the epic stage Reed erected, especially in dramatic dialogues, where, like bit-parts in Shakespearean history plays, they often deliver strategic speeches, as when the Congress of Soviets' debate is interrupted:

a young, lean-faced soldier, with flashing eyes, leaped to the platform, and dramatically lifted his hand: "Comrades!" he cried, and there was a hush. "My familia (name) is Peterson - I speak for the Second Lettish Rifles. You have heard the statements of the two representatives of the Army committees; these statements would have had some validity if their authors had been representatives of the Army" - Wild applause. "But they do not represent the soldiers!" Shaking his fist. "The twelth Army has been insisting for a long time upon the re-election of the Great Soviet and the Army Committee, but just as your own Tsay-ee-kah, our Committee refused to call a meeting of the representatives of the masses until the end of September, so that the reactionaries could elect their own false delegates to this Congress. I tell you now, the Lettish soldiers have many times said, 'No more resolutions! No more talk! We want deeds - the power must be in our hands!' Let the imposter delegates leave the Congress! The Army is not with them! (TDISTW, pp.77-78)

Reed hardly needed to add, "This was the voice of the soldiers - the stirring uniformed workers and peasants were men like them, and their thoughts and feelings were the same", because the context gives away Peterson's function as a class 'type' overriding the authority of the non-Bolshevik delegates by acting as the voice of the people. However, such a figure contrasts sharply with Reed's detailed sketch of Lenin, one of history's 'protagonists', which is simultaneously defamiliarizing and photographically mimetic: Lenin's heroism is authenticated by insisting on his unsuitability as the hero of mere romance:

A short, stocky figure, with a big head set down on his shoulders, bald and bulging. Little eyes, a snubbish nose, 82
wide generous mouth, and a heavy chin; clean-shaven now but already beginning to bristle with the well known beard of his past and future. Dressed in shabby clothes, his trousers much too long for him. (TDTSTW, pp.103-04)

Thus Reed contrasted Lenin's sincerity with a suspiciously Napoleonic Kerensky, who literally heads the counter-revolution on a white charger. Reed also highlighted uncharismatic features to symbolize Lenin's personality traits. His "bald and bulging" head placed him in that select group of the intelligentsia Marx prophesied would lead the revolution and escape the wrack of the bourgeoisie. However, this intellectualism was humanised by a "wide generous mouth" and given solidarity with mass-poverty by almost Chaplinesque clothes. Reed thus created a double perspective - Lenin as real man and as legendary 'instrument of history':

A strange popular leader - a leader purely by virtue of intellect; colourless, humourless, uncompromising and detached, without picturesque idiosyncrasies - but with the power of explaining profound ideas in simple terms, of analysing a concrete situation. And combined with shrewdness, the greatest intellectual audacity. (TDTSTW, p.104)

As would many writers after him, Reed felt confronted with a choice between an egalitarian future and an elitist-past (posthumously prolonged under the Provisional Government's 'bourgeois democracy'), which it was irresponsible to ignore: "The poets made verses - but not about the Revolution. The realistic painters painted scenes from medieval Russian history - anything but the Revolution." (TDTSTW, p.11)

Moreover, he knew mass literacy was the informational key to changing social consciousness:

All Russia was learning to read, and reading - politics, economics, history - because the people wanted to know ... In every city, in most towns, along the Front, each political faction had its newspaper - sometimes several. Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organizations, and poured into the armies, the villages, the factories, the streets. The thirst for education, so long thwarted, burst with the Revolution into a frenzy of
expression. From the Smolny Institute alone, the first six months, went out every day tons, car-loads, train-loads of literature, saturating the land. Russia absorbed reading matter like hot sand drinks water, insatiable. And it was not fables, fanciful history, diluted religion, and the cheap fiction that corrupts — but social and economic theories, philosophy, and the works of Tolstoy, Gogol and Gorky ... (TDTSTW, pp.11-12)

The tonnage of printed matter was ammunition on its way to the hyperreal front where the battle for ideological supremacy is waged. However, to draw out the negative side of Reed's metaphors, this sudden cultivation of a desert of feudal ignorance called for drastic measures and the exemplary reading matter he describes betrays his own dilemma as the product of a liberal cultural tradition trying to adapt to the demands of agitprop. In retrospect, we can see how Reed's optimism wasn't fulfilled by the philistine populism that would grip Soviet culture in the '30s. Ironically, his own reportage's double aim of factual authenticity and concrete 'baring of devices', the model of the LEF group, was anathema under Socialist Realism, which defined a historically 'correct' form for literary discourse, free of inconvenient facts.

The international success of TDTSTW anticipates the romantic cult of the Soviet Union amongst Western leftists in the '30s, and its images of mass-movement also suggest the exploitability of a sincere desire to sub/merge the isolated viewpoint of the writing I into the 'we' of the people. For instance, the proletarian army at Tsarskoye Selo is described fighting "their battle for their world; and the officers in charge were elected by them. For the moment that incoherent multiple will was one will". (TDTSTW, p.183) Similarly, although Reed did not survive to have his I-witness integrity tested by Stalinism, TDTSTW hints at a potential "spirit of evil in things heavenly". 
Alert and suspicious, the working class of the city constituted a vast spy system, through the servants prying into bourgeois households, and reporting all information to the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee, which struck with an iron hand unceasing. (TDISTW, pp.233-34)

This system of surveillance, once institutionalised, facilitated the Red Terror of the Civil War and, arguably, also made the much greater Stalinist Terror of 1936-38 inevitable. It thus negated Reed's hope that dictatorship was a necessary but transitory means.

Significantly, Reed clashed over the autonomy of the constitution of the American Communist Party with Karl Radek, then head of the Bureau of Revolutionary Propaganda and Comintern Secretary and later spokesperson for literary unification at the fateful 1934 Soviet Writers' Union Congress. It was this Congress which anathematized Modernism and promulgated Socialist Realism, based on positivist concepts of historical representation, as the uniform Stalinist theory of art. Rosenstone disagrees with Theodore Draper's view that during the summer and autumn of 1920 "Reed was probably as disillusioned as it was possible to be and still remain in the movement", suggesting that having been "driven to Bolshevism by world events and his own needs and goals" he would not easily have abandoned a philosophy allowing him "to make sense of his experience". Similarly, Homberger argues that Reed "accepted the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution, and loyally defended its policies", but seemed "a figure more comfortable on the left wing of the Socialist Party than one of the many former socialists gingerly trying to make their way through the minefield of the Comintern". However we hypothesize Reed's political development had he survived, his old friend and colleague Max Eastman (himself later excommunicated as a 'Trotskyist') would be arguing by 1934 that the proletarianism of the John Reed Clubs was cashing in on his reputation to market a crudely
ultilitarian Soviet policy that contradicted everything Reed "stood for as an artist". 26

ii: LEF and the Funeral of Fictiveness

The fatal irony of relations between the new reportage which TDTSTW initiated and the Stalinist view of history is exemplified by the early Soviet avant-gardists who attempted to use the 'constructive' potential of Formalist theory for the cultural ends of the new regime.

The pre-revolutionary Russian Futurists followed the general Modernist break with Naturalism and focused on defamiliarizing so-called mundane reality, developing forms which signified the objects of automatized perception afresh. They sought to create artefacts, which 'bared the devices' (the Formalist category of obnazhenie priyoma) of their construction, to re-orientate both the writer and reader "from the illusion toward the device, from 'what' toward 'how'." 88 They did not consider that "artistic permanent revolution" (in Fredric Jameson's phrase 27) was influenced by social factors. However, after October 1917, they quickly seized the opportunity to identify their avant-gardism with the demand for a revolutionary culture, although this also meant compromising their notion of aesthetic autonomy and developing a utilitarian project of 'applied art' known as the Left Front in the Arts (LEF). The poet Vladimir Mayakovsky became the editor of its journals Lef (1923-25) and Novy Lef (1927-28), but Osip Brik was the coordinating force behind the group's theories. A heterogeneous alignment of artists
who transgressed conventional divisions between forms and cross-
fertilized different media, they were united by hostility to 'mimesis',
belief in 'construction' and the objective of matching Communism's
'revolution of content' with a 'revolution of form' that would shape the
consciousness of Soviet citizens.

As Sergei Tretyakov wrote in 'From Where to Where? (Futurism's Perspec
tives)', LEF believed mundane reality was an ideological construction:

What we subjectively call everyday life ... is the system of feelings and actions which have become automatized by repetition in conformity with a particular socioeconomic basis, which have become a habit, and which are extraordinarily durable. Even the most powerful revolutionary blows are not capable of smashing this inner life routine, which is an exceptional obstacle to the people's acceptance of the tasks dictated by the shift to productivist mutual relationships. Objectively, we term everyday life that unchangeable order and character of things with which the human being surrounds himself, to which, regardless of their utility, he turns as fetishes of his sympathies and memories, and of which, ultimately, he becomes a slave.

The Futurists' "maximal" programme, on the other hand, was "the integration of art and life, the conscious reorganization of language according to the new forms of life, and the struggle for the emotional training of the producer-consumer's psyche". Thus, through new modes of representation, they sought to expose the illusory literalism of ordinary life and language to reveal their dynamic ideological connection with collective socio-economic processes.

The first Commissar for Education and Enlightenment from 1917 to 1929 was Anatoly Lunacharsky whose ministry, Narkompros, initially encouraged experimentation. Generally-speaking, Lenin underwrote Lunacharsky's policy, although he was less concerned with aesthetic theory in the immediate post-revolutionary period, than mobilizing the media for agitprop purposes - films, radio, posters, exhibitions,
street-spectacles, agit-trains, etc. Hence, Futurism's new slogan, 'Working for the Social Commission' (sotsyalni zakaz), still enabled it to subvert realistic representations that fostered "passive admiration of illusion", because they were "for this very reason not suited to be an efficient weapon in the hands of the proletariat."** LEF writers claimed to be 'verbal engineers', who, by promoting awareness of language and mediation, would modernize popular-consciousness. Their programme attempted to abolish the hierarchy of pure and applied art, labour and creation, through a new cultural materialism with a crucial sense of both the content and responsibility of forms. As Tretyakov wrote in 'Happy New Year!', "We say that ideology does not lie in the material which art makes use of. Ideology lies in the devices through which that material is worked up; ideology lies in form. Only expediently formed material can become a thing with a direct social function."** LEF's anti-illusionism, therefore, was not a refusal to be relevant to reality, but an attempt to defamiliarize and demystify automatized modes so that, as Halina Stephan notes, "the construction of an art work by the artist, had to be matched by the reconstruction performed by the reader or listener":

Such a preoccupation with construction manifested itself in the fragmentary structure of Futurist poems, in the montage of disconnected film fragments practiced by Dziga Vertov, in the piecing together of a theatrical performance from minute 'attractions'... and in the construction of a photographic collage arranged by Aleksandr Rodchenko.**

Soviet socio-economic conditions demanded a cooperative division of artistic labour. The 'exploded' form of much avant-garde art, based on collision montage, impeded passive consumption of signs and discourses, often by layerings of different media, so that the final act of meaningful synthesis, of deciphering this intellectual cohesion, was
left to a public reconstituted as the 'producer/consumer'. The suggestive assembling of textual and/or visual 'fragments', including written and photographic documents was, as we have seen, a common feature of Modernism internationally, but in '20s Russia specific historical circumstances activated its potential for an ideological critique.

At the same time a new cult of facts and a search for new forms to represent them was becoming endemic among Soviet avant-gardists. For example, Mayakovsky wrote in *How Are Verses Made?* (1926) that "The value of factual material (and this is why documentary reports from the workers and peasants, journalists are so interesting) must be marked at a higher price ... than so-called 'poetical works'". So by the beginning of *Novy Lef* in January 1927, both the utilitarian and documentary aspects of LEF's programme had become more marked, developing in parallel to the abandonment of fine art for industrial design. Their editorial 'We Are Searching' set out their new programme of "literature of fact" (*literaturna fakta*) and suggested that writers assist what Nikolai Chuzhak called "the funeral of fictiveness", creating literature by reporting the authentic facts of contemporary social and political reality but still using self-consciously constructed forms: "to belles-lettres and the related claim to 'reflection' Lef opposes reportage - 'factography'- which breaks with literary art traditions ... If fact is needed - old art is no use. Old art deforms fact - to grasp fact use new methods." And as Tretyakov asserted in 'What's New':

Now the maximum of the left movement has transferred over to the line of the assertion of documentary literature. The problem of the fixation of fact; raising the interest of the activists in reality; the assertion of the primacy of realness over fiction, the publicist over the belletrist - this is now what in Lef is most burning and immediate.
The memoir, travel notes, the sketch, articles, feuilletons, reportage, investigations, documentary montage - opposed to the belles-lettres forms of novels, novellas, and short stories. The fight for fact against fiction divides today's Futurists from the passéists.

Similarly, he called for a "shift from the description of fictional people to those who really exist" and prophesied:

There will be a battle not for the literature of fact as an aesthetic genre... but for the literature of fact as a method of utilitarian publicistic work on present-day socialist problems - raising literacy, doubling the harvest, collectivization of agriculture, raising the productivity of labour, and other everyday matters, respectable kilometers away from where the defenders of inspired fiction and artistic synthetics prefer to soar aesthetically through the clouds.**

According to Tretyakov, traditional fiction-based art, with its "social-narcotic" function, "divides reality into two halves: the boring-practical-prosaic half and the fascinating-poetic half." However, the "uninvented literature of fact" by transgressing the two categories would reveal the constructedness of both.** Rejection of nineteenth-century Naturalism was still central to this new programme. The young Formalist Roman Jakobson's 1921 essay had astutely unravelled the multiple meanings behind the deceptively simple notion of realism. He argued that absolute mimesis was inconceivable even in visual representations, because the projection of a three-dimensional image onto a flat surface, the use of colour, the abstraction and simplification of the 'object', the selection of features represented were all based, consciously or unconsciously, on convention. Consequently, the Naturalist "ideogram", as he called it, "needs to be deformed" and the "artist innovator must impose a new form upon our perception, if we are to detect in a given thing those traits which went unnoticed the day before." However, cultural conservatives interpreted
this relativism as "a rejection of the principle of verisimilitude" itself and fetishized one form as the only 'realistic' one. Nonetheless, LEF's rejection of Naturalistic realism became the principal stumbling block to state recognition (especially after Lenin's death in 1924 and Lunacharsky's resignation in 1929), because LEF theory clashed increasingly with the evolving official policy, which favoured adapting nineteenth-century narrative into what became Socialist Realism in the '30s. The short-term, bureaucratic advantages this new Party line offered were clear - familiarity, 'clarity', prescriptive form and so on. Ironically though, it was partly in response to LEF agitation that politicians became more conscious of the hegemonic potential of a uniform culture, but LEF also made them suspicious of avant-gardism's unchecked potential for subversion.

LEF art had been criticized as formally unintelligible and socially irrelevant in content. But its new programme of 'literature of fact' answered such criticisms, without forfeiting the right to innovate. Yuriy Tynyanov's article of 1924, 'About the Literary Fact', admitted the centrality of social factors in literary evolution, but synthesized this with Formalism's 'dynamics of genre change' to indicate the social appropriateness of raising a formerly 'sub-literary' form like reportage to literary status. But the use of documents by LEF continued to defamiliarize the illusion of unmediated realism and the 'objectivity' of the I-witness reporter was problematized because his/her point of view was usually presented as subjective, ironic, or ambiguous.

Characteristic examples of this new reportage and literature of fact were Larissa Reisner's dispatches in The Front (1924) (compared at the
time to TDTSTW) and Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry* (1926) and *Odessa Stories* (1927), sequences of fragmentary, thematically-linked anecdotes and sketches montaging fact and fiction. *Novy Lef* promoted Shklovsky's *Sentimental Journey* (1923), memoirs of the events and personalities of 1917-20, as a model for factual literature, as practised by the most influential Formalist. But, above all, Tretyakov's drama drawn from a newspaper report on factory life, *Gas Masks* (1924), and his Chinese reportage (published in *Lef*) synthesized innovative form and factual content. His Chinese dispatches, for example, were described as 'film notes' and employed a 'camera-eye' technique. Moreover, the LEF *faktoviki* ('factographers') identified themselves closely with the documentary tendency of Soviet cinema and photo-journalism, with Vertov's *kinoki* or 'cinema-eyes', and the *rabcori* or 'worker correspondents', who sprang up all over the USSR with cameras and/or notebooks. Thus, the ensuing proliferation of autobiographical sketches, diaries, travelogues and pieces of reportage can be traced to LEF's model, as exemplified by the *Novy Lef* anthology, *The Literature of Fact* (1929), edited by Nikolai Chuzhak.

Tretyakov served as a link man in the '20s between the closely connected Russian and Weimar avant-gardes. Furthermore, Egon Erwin Kisch, who wrote the preface to the 1927 German edition of TDTSTW, explicitly transmitted the theory and practice of reportage between the two. Thus, LEF's 'factography' was much more than a desperate attempt to tailor Russian avant-gardism to political specifications. Kisch endorsed its self-consciously mediated, defamiliarizing treatment of objective reality when he claimed that cool, detached and precise factuality was the hallmark of reportage, yet also "Nichts ist phantasievoller als die Sachlichkeit." ("Nothing is more imaginative
than objectivity."") The term Neue Sachlichkeit or 'New Objectivity' was coined for the exhibition of pictures of 'tangible reality' at the Mannheim Kunsthalle in 1925 (including work by Georg Grosz, Otto Dix and Max Beckmann) which signalled the rebirth of sobriety in German art after Expressionism and Dada. It was transferred to German literature to describe an equivalent documentary tendency initiated by Kisch's work. In German, both das Ding and die Sache can mean 'thing' or 'object'. But if Kant's Ding an sich can be said to be the object itself, die Sache would be our concept of it. Neue Sachlichkeit was, therefore, not objective in the naive sense, because it always foregrounded a tension between the illusion of realism and the self-conscious representation of facts. Neue Sachlichkeit photography, for example, presents technically precise images of objects, nonetheless defamiliarized by the devices of the camera-eye. Its 'newness', therefore, consisted precisely in the qualification of mimesis by Modernism.

However, for the Soviet avant-garde, there was an in-built contradiction between what Tretyakov called "utilitarian publicistic work" and subversive defamiliarization. Under increasing ideological pressure from Stalinism, this was bound to reach a crisis, because it meant that obedience to the apparent social commission would inevitably override formal unorthodoxy. It was from the LEF group's felt need for radical social justification that the tragedy of the new reportage and avant-gardism in general stemmed. LEF's symbolic collapse came in 1930 when Mayakovsky joined the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), forerunner of the Soviet Writers' Union, which from 1928-32 dictated literary policy and conceived Socialist Realism. He committed suicide soon after.
RAPP favoured coupling a revived nineteenth-century Naturalism with Proletcult's idealization of the industrial worker, collective hero of the October Revolution and ostensible beneficiary of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Eden and Cedar Paul, in their 1921 study, described Proletcult as an international workers' educational movement but with clear implications for the arts, particularly in the first 'workers' state' where "The social revolution will have released the creative forces slumbering in the proletariat; art and science will blossom abundantly and will assume new forms. It is to these developments that the term Proletcult was first applied in Russia." Lenin's wife, Krupskaia, was a leader of the movement, but A.M. Bogdanov was its most uncompromising, and dynamic theorist. In the Paul's subsection on 'Proletarian Art' they discussed Bogdanov's *What is Proletarian Poetry?* which attacked the notion of a universalized art with a capital 'A'. By contrast, like LEF's, Proletcult's concept was artisanal, because art "originated simply as a means of self-expression in the craftsman". Only capitalist society warped it into "an idle bourgeois pursuit" through its alienating dissociation of 'ownership' and 'work', 'leisure' and 'toil'. Communist society would revive "that conjuncture of labour and imagination" which was art's "true social basis" and produce a new renaissance.

Initially there was no perceived incompatibility between Proletcult and Futurism; both seemed to be working for a common end, intended to "render the worker's mind immune to bourgeois ideology" by cultural
'innoculation' and it was from such Proletcult ideas that LEF got its project of 'constructing' the new Soviet citizen as artistic 'producer/consumer'. It was the question of how 'proletarian' culture was to be created that stirred controversy, although, the notion itself was attacked by Trotsky in *Literature and Revolution* (1924) as based, ironically, on a myth of *essential* class identities. Working-class consciousness was itself the product of historical contingencies and Marxism's object was a classless society. Proletarian credentials and partisanship did not guarantee greater realism because ideology had to be critically refracted through aesthetic innovation.

However, Prolecult was enthusiastically promoted by *Pravda* editor Nikolai Bukharin, and caught the imagination of sympathisers abroad, "who for a long time saw it as the new Russia's main contribution to the arts." Though subordinated to the Chief Committee for Political Education in 1920, its influence over Party policy throughout the '20s spelled the end not only of LEF, but also of any real cultural pluralism before Gorbachev. After Lenin's death in 1924, Trotsky became isolated and finally exiled in 1929. Consequently, official intolerance of avant-gardism, now identified with 'left oppositionism', was proportional to Stalin's rise. The encounter between art and power politics resulted in the abandonment of *ostranenie* for the 'reflection theory's' elision of realism and essentialism, with a vulgar Marxism as its historical paradigm. Jakobson's 'On Realism' had pre-emptively exposed this fallacy but failed to prevent its eventual ascendancy.

Stalinism set increasingly restrictive limits on the new reportage's potential to question official hyperreality and the backlash against Modernism in general is explained by Ellul's distinction between *agitation* and *integration* propaganda, the former
subverting dominant ideology and the latter reinforcing it. The regime needed integration propaganda to consolidate itself, and Stalin's new slogan, designating writers "engineers of human souls", was an extreme form of this. Zhdanovism (as the orthodoxy became known from Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's cultural lieutenant) was thus part of a "self-mutilating process" which cut away the culture and ideas that created Soviet society.

In 1932 the Party established the all-embracing Union of Writers of the USSR, which held its First Congress in Moscow in 1934 and laid down Socialist Realism as the obligatory literary method. Demanding, in the official wording, "a true, historically concrete depiction of reality in its Revolutionary development", it meant realism in theory but totalitarian idealism in practice. Later during the Purges, topical charges against 'Trotskyites' found their equivalent in 'literary sabotage' by deviants from Socialist Realism, and the term 'Formalist' itself "soon lost any precise connotation and became a mere term of abuse applied without discrimination to all disgraced and non-approved authors."

Max Eastman, one-time editor of The Masses and close friend of the American reporter John Reed was quick to condemn Socialist Realism in Artists in Uniform (1934) as symptomatic of the apostolic succession claimed by Moscow. Socialist Realism was "a veritable theological bludgeon" stifling art's capacity for critical defamiliarization which made cultural and social development possible. "Art is a class weapon", slogan of the earlier International Congress at Kharkov in 1930 and subsequently of the John Reed Clubs of American writers, meant, in effect, crude subordination to bureaucracy and was "the most accurate possible contradiction ... of everything he [Reed] ever put faith in as
an artist". "This class struggle plays hell with your poetry," were the last words Eastman remembered from Reed's lips. Like Benjamin, Eastman saw the dangers of historical materialism as a scientific alibi for a kind of displaced theology, because not since Galileo had "direct, honest, empirical investigation of fact had to stand up against a barrage-fire of deductions from sacred state-supported dogma".

Orwell's view in 'The Prevention of Literature' (1946) is clearly a development of such thinking: "A totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy, and its ruling caste ... has to be thought of as infallible." Moreover, periodic revisions of doctrine to accommodate the volte face of Realpolitik were bound to conflict with the new reportage's self-conscious mediation and critical content, because they demanded expedient deletions and distortions "to show that this or that mistake was not made, or that this or that imaginary triumph happened" (CEJL IV, p.86). Thus, what Eastman called the "new Soviet scholasticism" threatened the possibility of questioning authorized versions, since, in Orwell's terms, it rendered heretical the freedom "to report what one has seen, heard, and felt, and not to be obliged to fabricate imaginary facts and feelings". Similarly, "familiar tirades against 'escapism', 'individualism', 'romanticism' and so forth" in Stalinist criticism privileged the discourse of Socialist Realism and made "the perversion of history seem respectable." (CEJL IV, p.84)

Socialist Realism's core doctrine was reinforced by important "ancillary concepts" as Ronald Hingley has explained: partiynost - "Party-mindedness", or conformity to the Party line - and narodnost - devotion to the people and Soviet patriotism, which meant that literary language must be easily comprehensible and eschew difficult practices like defamiliarization and collision montage. Conforming to shifting
Party lines violated LEF's principle of authenticity, because, as Hingley puts it, "empirically perceived truth might on no account be depicted in the numerous areas where it contravened the higher truth, as enunciated by the Party". For example, a mass of contemporary sources testify to peasant resistance against collectivization, but to actually depict peasants "irrevocably opposed to so cardinal a Party policy would be untruthful in the higher sense" since officially-sponsored truth declared this was only done by evil kulaks. Hence it was possible under Socialist Realism's idealized social typology for peasants opposed to collectivization, like workers lacking enthusiasm for the Five Year Plan, to automatically qualify as untypical even if statistically the majority, except as deplorable 'exceptions'. A "politically correct authorial perspective" thus became a criterion for 'realism'.

The transcripts of the Congress were published in translation as Problems of Soviet Literature: Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writers' Congress 1934. (1935). Hence, Socialist Realism also had a distorting effect on the reception of alternative, Modernist-based documentary art amongst the international Left. The Congress was effectively an artistic show trial, branding avant-gardism objectively reactionary, whatever its subjective intentions, because (as Lukacs argued about Ottwalt two years earlier) it failed to penetrate surface reality to underlying patterns of historical development. However, nothing upsets this crude identification between form and political tendency more than its ironic symmetry with that made under Nazi Gleichschaltung. Contradictorily, the same forms could be 'crypto-fascist' in tendency in the USSR and 'cultural Bolshevism' in the Third Reich. The link lay in the monopoly of realism and objective truth to which both totalitarianisms laid claim, and their shared fear of the
subversiveness of demystifying art.

Karl Radek's key speech 'On World Literature' framed Joyce's Ulysses in order to prove the necessity for Socialist Realism. In a classic instance of displaced theology, Radek claimed that "our line is not foisted on us from without by the tyranny and arbitrary will of some dictatorial party; it is history's own line of march, revealed and illuminated by the highest reason, finding its expression in the teachings of Marx and Lenin." Hence, the critical value of much '30s new reportage consists exactly in its questioning of claims that 'History' is the legitimate and final judge of human affairs and of the expediencies committed in its name. This is not to suggest there were no dissenting voices at the Congress, but they mostly knuckled under or went on to practise the doomed Isaac Babel's "genre of silence". Wieland Herzfelde, brother of the artist Helmut ('John Heartfield'), who published some of the principal works of Weimar Dadaism and Neue Sachlichkeit through his Malik-Verlag, and thus represented German avant-gardism in exile, was castigated by Radek for objecting that Dos Passos, previously lionized by Soviet critics, was influenced by Joyce. This may have instigated Lukács's ensuing attack on Dos Passos in 'Narrate or Describe' (1936). However, the crucial, pragmatic dilemma Socialist Realism avoided, as Ilya Ehrenburg pointed out at the time, was between the 'constructive' lessons of Modernist form and the urgent need to engage with contemporary reality."

Leopold Averbakh, head of RAPP, had earlier called for an appropriate cultural plan to match the first Five Year Plan concentrating on heavy industry which began in October 1928. The international photojournal USSR in Construction was typical of Stalinism's promotion of its achievements abroad, and Averbakh's
directive put particular pressure on Soviet new reportage, because although encouraging rabcori and bourgeois writers to get their 'operative angle', through field work on construction sites and participation in the social and cultural life of factories and collective farms, it also predefined their perspective, ruling out both uninhibited factuality and anti-illusionism as conditions of publication. Stephen Spender, discussing the Moscow Congress and Eastman's *Writers in Uniform* in *Left Review* criticized such "conversion of art into an instrument that can be used for political purposes" for its particular danger to reportage. Ironically, it was no longer the business of the Soviet artist "to observe, but to conform": He must not be a two-edged instrument which might turn against the party. It is his business to go where he is sent, and to observe what he is told."

Hence, Soviet cultural policy sometimes made distinctions between reportage and fiction, between reality and official fantasy, paper-thin or negligible in practice, while crudely reinforcing them in theory. Such was the case with texts like *The White Sea Canal*, praised by John Lehmann, along with *Those Who Built Stalingrad* as an advance towards new 'collective' documentary forms.

*Those Who Built Stalingrad* (1934), which reported the building of a giant tractor plant, was trumpeted in Maxim Gorki's Foreword as one of "the most interesting and novel" Soviet texts. His description of the construction site exemplified the portentous rhetoric of technics opportunistically borrowed from Futurism that was the order of the day: "the huge bare expanse was broken only by the towering iron skeletons of the future Plant, being created by the energy of this youth amid thunderclouds of dust, amid the deafening crash of iron, amid the crushing and grinding of stone-crushers and concrete-mixers."
Interestingly, he claimed the project disproved the Babel-myth, because, "despite all differences of language", it taught "unity of feeling and thought" and illustrated in miniature "that simple and wise path which the proletariat of the Union of Socialist Soviets is taking towards its great and splendid goal". But the biblical allusion underlines Socialist Realism’s own mythical function as a uniform discourse which claimed to give unmediated access to historical reality. Individual chapters are thus titled with appropriate rapture: "ALICE KHLOPTUNOVA: 'I Want to Know All About Metal!'", "S.M. TALALYEV: A Tractor Every Five Minutes", "KUZUA TREGUBENKOV: 'We Strode Two Hundred Years Ahead'". Yakov Ilyin and B. Galin claimed in their Postscript that there was no place for the proletariat "in the literature of the bourgeoisie" which possessed "neither the strength nor the capacity to show their true face", while such Soviet texts had "already set about the great and difficult task of depicting the class of the new masters of life." But the text’s fourteen "Life Stories" were actually transcribed and edited by the members of a writers brigade, though ostensibly allowing the proletariat the right to its own authentic voice by "group composition".

However, the ethical nadir of Soviet reportage was The White Sea Canal which revived another myth - rehabilitatory labour for the sinful - in the same grim way that the Nazi concentration camp motto "Arbeit macht frei" did. It 'documented' the construction of a link between the Baltic and White seas between November 1931 and August 1933, by 300,000 convicts, including many political offenders, using wheelbarrows and the most primitive mechanical aids (such as giant treadmills) to minimize costs. Official statistics claimed 72,000 prisoners were afterwards paroled, though unofficial sources suggest at the cost of
100,000 fatalities. The project also gave some leading "engineers of human souls" the chance of expiating their Formalist tendencies by reporting it 'correctly'. A brigade of writers, artists and photographers, headed by Gorki, was conscripted and 35 of them - including Shklovsky, Alexi Tolstoy, Mikhail Zoshchenko and Alexander Rodchenko - collaborated to whitewash "the grim enterprise as a triumph of progressive penology". No doubt some of them bowed to the Party's superior wisdom, genuinely believing it was in the interests of the Revolution. Censorship had been officially abolished by the Bolsheviks, but was operated through the Chief Administration for Literary Affairs and Publishing (Glavlit). However, as Koestler and Orwell came to believe, the most effective form of censorship is internalized, and represses critical thought on the grounds of expediency - a fatal trahison des clercs.

*International Literature* carried a special report on the project, with articles, including Gorki's 'Education by Truth' and 'Now and Then: Worker-Prisoners Speak for Themselves' and an English version of the book, in fashionable photo-reportage format, appeared in 1935. Its epigraphs read, in historical retrospect, with bitter irony, for example: "I want to live in a country where there are no locks on the doors." (Zoschenko) or "Our writers must tell all about this. For facts appear first and are then followed by their artistic reflections." (Gorki). Similarly, the cynicism of the photographic captions is exemplified by the pantomime horse and chorus line in 'Camp Theatricals'. And nothing exemplifies the wish-fulfilling glamour Stalinism exercised over some British Leftists better than Amabel Williams-Ellis's introduction which posed two rhetorical questions: "What happens to political prisoners in the U.S.S.R?" and "does a Soviet
labour camp differ from a concentration camp in, say, Nazi Germany?" The
answers, she claimed, made "one of the most exciting stories that has
ever appeared in print" with "some of the best pieces of comic writing
that even Russian literature can afford".74

Williams-Ellis proclaimed the text itself a masterpiece of
'Stakhanovism' produced by "a picked group of 122 shock-workers" in 38
days,75 but it was, in effect, a Machiavellian travesty of LEF's ideal
of constructing the 'New Soviet Man', as Chapter I, 'The Problem'
suggests:

This sounds the most Utopian part of the plan, for the work is
to be a double one; the task is to be attempted not by tried
heroes of the revolution, but by the very men who have set
themselves to work against it; the men who are to forge this
new tool of the Five Year Plan are themselves to be reforged.

The project did not solve the problem of (Marxist) alienation - despite
boasts that "Over the entire country there is a new attitude towards
work. Labour is no longer a hateful means of existence, but the rational
expression of a happy life"76 - so much as epitomize the tragic
perversion of revolutionary ends through expedient means. It was a
futile monument to Stalin's edifice-complex: on completion, the canal
was neither deep enough for ships of large berth, nor wide enough to
prevent freezing. The text also carried a list of 'authenticating'
documentary sources, including the industrial combine, the camp papers -
"wall newspapers ... slogans and posters, diagrams, tables, reports,
etc." - as well as speeches, interviews with GPU personnel and prisoners
themselves,77 not for collision montage effect, but linked into a
seamless narrative. It epitomizes the way the new reportage had been
asset-stripped and incorporated as an instrument of the official claim
to objective recording. And the hair-raising naivety with which
different kinds of Leftist reportage could be treated at the time is
shown by *Left Review*, which advertized Kisch's *Secret China* and *The White Sea Canal* on the same page." 78 Ironically, *The White Sea Canal* was banned in 1937 because Genrikh Yagoda, GPU head and the project's instigator, was himself purged, confessing to having ordered the poisoning of Gorky along with other early victims of the Terror. Thus, when a periodic revision of history made Yagoda an 'unperson', it, logically, became an 'unbook', and all official records of the camps were suppressed until after Stalin's death in 1953.

There is little evidence that many '30s British writers slavishly followed Moscow's literary line against avant-gardism, though the Soviet example did in some ways set both the agenda and parameters of the cultural debate in this period outside the small number of British writers who were Party members. Equally, for political reasons there was also a reaction against militant Socialist Realism in the Soviet Union itself in the second half of the '30s. This corresponded to the change of Party line after the 'Class against Class' policy had proved disastrous in Germany in 1933 by making it impossible for Communists to prevent the rise of Nazism by forming an alliance with Social Democrats and Liberals. It was feared that the same pattern of Fascist triumph would repeat itself all over Europe if the Party continued to risk alienating sympathetic fellow-travellers in the capitalist democracies. The new Popular Front strategy was given formal expression at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935. Consequently, terms like 'proletarian' and 'bourgeois' literature were generally dropped in favour of the more accommodating, trans-class term 'Left', as in the British periodical *Left Review* which began publication in October 1934. The British section of the Writers' International had already been founded in February 1934, out of the old
British section of the Proletcult dominated International Organization of Revolutionary Writers (MORP). Hence, from the middle of the '30s, the idea of a broad front of progressive art began to spread and made a degree of rapprochement between Stalinism and avant-gardism feasible. As Andy Croft puts it: "A writer was no longer merely the mechanical amanuensis of history, but someone who could help write history. Literature was no longer just a way of interpreting the world, but a way of changing it too." C. Day Lewis's 1936 article in Left Review was instrumental in forming a British literary Popular Front. By 1937, Ralph Fox noted in The Novel and the People, that a cultural alliance was coming into being in Britain similar to the non-class based cultural dimension of the Popular Front in France, centred on the periodical Commune, founded in July 1933 by the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Revolutionnaires and "taking its beginning from the welding into a common unity of the working people, and gradually spreading to include all those who live by their own labour, of what ever class, has drawn together the most diverse elements in French letters, particularly among the novelists. The Communist Malraux, the anarchist Celine, the liberal Jules Romains, the Socialist Bloch, the supreme individualist Gide, have managed to find a common ground." However, this new cultural oecumenicism could be fragile, as Gide's reportage Retour de l'URSS demonstrated.

The Stalinist cultural Congresses of the '30s always had "bogeys-of-the-day", in Cunningham's phrase. Significantly, by the 1937 Valencia Congress in Spain, an I-witness reportage, adhering to the twin principles of factual authenticity and foregrounded mediation, was the target: André Gide's Retour de l'URSS (1936) replaced Ulysses as the greatest threat to Socialist Realism's perspective. Gide claimed to
aim at balanced criticism including "the best and the worst". However, he challenged the double-standard which praised I-witnessing of capitalist abuses, on one hand, while accepting the itinerary of Intourist unquestioningly, on the other: "Those who approved me for leaving the Governor's motor-car in the Congo ... can they reproach me for having had a similar end in view in the U.S.S.R ... ?" To the argument that such criticism 'objectively' aided socialism's enemies, Gide replied "the particular errors of one country cannot suffice to compromise a cause which is international and universal" (Back from the USSR, p.17).

He reported a tour of the USSR undertaken with the Dutch Communist Jef Last, later also prominent in what Orwell called the "literature of disillusionment about the Soviet Union" (See CEJL III, p.272). The ensuing furore of denunciation was caused not so much by what Gide actually reported as by his breaking the taboo of silence about what was already known or suspected by some literary Leftists. What affected him most was not Stalinism's inefficiency and privation but its mass uniformity, which seemed less an inevitable consequence of economic equality than a deliberate repression of individuality. Of a model collective farm, he commented "Every dwelling is interchangeable with every other; so much so that kolkhosians [collective farmers] (who seem to be as interchangeable themselves) might all take up their abode in each other's houses without even noticing it." He refused to believe that such depersonalization could be considered progress. (Back from the USSR, p.44) Moreover, information starvation and integration propaganda meant that the Russian proletariat's view of reality was "made up of hope, confidence and ignorance", creating a chauvinistic "superiority complex", unsusceptible to empirical truth. 'Criticism'
consisted in discussing whether something was "in the right line", not discussing the line itself (Back from the USSR, pp.46-48). The suppression of 'Formalist' culture had secured the triumph of the banal and early Bolshevik tolerance had been replaced by anti-abortion and anti-homosexual legislation. In short, the increasingly reactionary and philistine ethos of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat had become scarcely distinguishable from petit-bourgeois prejudice.

Ironically, the growth of a new system of class privilege with apparatchiks at the top, confirmed for Gide that the "spirit which is to-day held to be counter-revolutionary, is that same ... which first broke through the half-rotten dam of the old Tsarist world." (Back from the USSR, p.61) It had been "the props which help to build an arch, but which are removed when the keystone is in place". 'Trotskyism' was merely a convenient catchword for all dissent, but Gide's ultimate blasphemy was to doubt "whether in any other country in the world, even Hitler's Germany, thought be less free" (See Back from the USSR, pp.62-63). He gave the example of how the workforce at an oil-refinery were unable to applaud his solidarity speech with the Spanish Republic because the Party line on the Civil War had not then been broadcast. The gulf between Stalin and the masses was illustrated by the refusal of the staff at a telegraph office to send Gide's greetings to him, unless the egalitarian 'you' was qualified with epithets like "You, leader of the workers" or "You, master of the peoples" (Back from the USSR, pp.65-67). Gide also noted some Russian translations of his speeches and texts had been so ideologically revised into Socialist Realist discourse as to be almost unrecognisable on re-translation. In a kind of Dostoevskian Grand Inquisitor scenario, Gide wondered what would happen "if Lenin himself were to return to earth to-day" to witness the divergence
between original ends and present means (Back from the USSR, pp.70-71).

As we have seen, for Orwell (whose Spanish Civil War I-witnessing in Homage to Catalonia intensified the controversy about Stalinist practices initiated by Gide) the most insidious danger to the new reportage came from expedient self-censorship: "So often it seems a positive duty to suppress or colour the facts! And yet genuine progress can only happen through increasing enlightenment, which means the continuous destruction of myths." (CEJL IV, p.56) He also saw an important resemblance between reportage and Modernist 'free association', in the sense that often historical significances could be derived from following apparently unlikely associations. Any degree of censorship (external- or self-) set limits on the critical defamiliarization of facts: "Even a single taboo can have an all-round crippling effect on the mind, because there is always the danger that any thought which is freely followed up may lead to the forbidden thought." (CEJL IV, p.88) Consequently, Orwell revealed Stalinism as a form of "transferred" or displaced nationalism, by tracing the unconscious political implications of its rhetoric:

It was simply something to believe in. Here was a church, an army, an orthodoxy, a discipline. Here was a Fatherland and - at any rate since 1935 or thereabouts - a Fuehrer. All the loyalties and superstitions that the intellect had seemingly banished could come rushing back under the thinnest of disguises. (CEJL I, p.565)

However, Orwell's work is also conscious of the wider pressures on reporting under any political system. That is why what Bernard Crick calls the selective "Time-Life and Encounter view of Orwell" as Socialist apostate, rather than Socialist dissident, has characterized the hi-jacking of his work by Rightist cold warriors and its abstraction from its context in the '30s. Consequently, I now want to discuss in
detail the texts and experiences of two Leftist writers, Egon Erwin Kisch and Arthur Koestler, which illustrate both the possibilities and political paradoxes of the international dissemination of the new reportage between the Wars, before going on to examine responses and parallel initiatives in '30s Britain.
Notes to Chapter II


2. See John Reed *Ten Days That Shook The World* (New York: Boni and Liverwright, 1919; repr. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961), p.93. (Henceforth, all page references to TDTSTTW will be given in brackets in the text unless otherwise stated.)


4. Ibid., p.34. And see Appendix A for photocopies of documents reproduced in the original text. The standardized typography in the Penguin edition of TDTSTTW (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) regrettably obliterates Reed's intended effect!


7. See ibid., pp.363-64.


10. Ibid., p.265.


18. 'Trusishka' was in fact Alex Gumberg. Reed attributed his own I-witness account of the front at Gatchina to Gumberg, because Reed went against Lenin's orders by undertaking the journey. See Rosenstone Romantic Revolutionary, p.299.


20. The source of Reed's quotation (TDITSW, p.x) was William English Walling's own account of the 1905 Revolution Russia's Message.


33. See Lawton and Eagle (eds.) *Russian Futurism*, p.274.


36. See Lawton and Eagle (eds.) *Russian Futurism*, p.266.


38. See section iii of this Chapter.


40. See ibid., pp.165-66.


42. Nikolai Chuzhak’s coinage. See Lawton and Eagle (eds.) *Russian Futurism*, p.280.


44. See below discussion of DrR in Chapter III, i, pp.121-22.

45. See below discussion of DrR in Chapter III, i, pp.130-31.

46. See present section above, p.90.


48. ibid., pp.102-04.

49. ibid., p.45.


51. Willett *New Sobriety*, p.42.

52. See Ellul *Propaganda*, pp.70-84.


55. See 'From the First Section of the Charter of the Union of the Soviet Writers of the USSR’ in Bowlt (ed.) *Russian Art of the Avant Garde*
56. See Hingley ibid., pp.90-91.

57. See Eastman *Artists in Uniform*, pp.viii, 6, and 8-9.

58. See ibid., pp.205-06 and Benjamin *Illuminations*, p.255.


60. See Hingley *Russian Writers*, p.199 and Foulkes *Literature and Propaganda*, p.60.


63. Ehrenburg's remarks, deleted from the official transcripts of the Congress, were nonetheless noted by Amabel Williams-Ellis in her report 'Soviet Writers' Congress' *Left Review* Vol.1, No.2 (Nov. 1934), pp.17-28, especially p.24.


65. For the 'operative principle', see below, Chapter III, section ii, p.157.


68. Maxim Gorki 'Foreword' to English translation of *Those Who Built Stalingrad* (as told by themselves. Fourteen Life Stories, Foreword by Maxim Gorki, Message from Stalin, Drawings by Fred Ellis (London; Lawrence and Wishart, 1934), pp.5-6.

69. 'Postscript' to ibid., p.258.

70. See Hingley *Russian Writers*, pp.140-42.

71. See this section below p.108, and Chapter III, section ii, pp.150-52.

72. See *International Literature* No.5 (1933-34), pp. 69-76 and 77-83.

74. Introduction to ibid., pp.ix-x.

75. Aleksei Stakhanov (1906-77) was a Donbas miner who led a campaign for higher productivity in 1935, setting an example by raising his own to allegedly superhuman levels.

76. White Sea Canal, p.7, also below p.5.

77. ibid., p.xiv.


82. Cunningham British Writers, p.299.


Chapter III

i: The Will to Objectivity
Egon Erwin Kisch's Der rasende Reporter

The early Soviet new reporters, inspired by Reed, collected and assembled factual materials from the political, social and industrial environment to supply Tretyakov's encyclopaedic "fact factory", whose alternative documentary products would act as stimulants against narcotic fiction and the dream factories in Hollywood and elsewhere. Understandably, with the close cultural ties that grew up between the two contemporary pariah nations of Europe, the vogue for the topical Sachbuch in Weimar was connected with cultural developments in Russia. Moreover, as John Willett points out:

Reportage as a genre and as a term seems first to have hit Germany through the writings of the Communist journalist Egon Erwin Kisch: Der rasende Reporter in 1925, and Zaren, Popen, Bolschewiken about the new Russia immediately following. 3

The German Leftist writer Theodore Balk in a 1935 article on Kisch argued that with the October Revolution the imaginative potential of reality had outstripped fantasy and "The time was ripe for putting the naked and sober report into gripping form. The time for a writer to report freshly-warm about a world in which today and tomorrow changed the face of the world with cinema speed". 4 He compared TDTSTW and Kisch's Asien gründlich verändert. Both were "classic reportage", but "entirely different in structure." Reed's text was "a frantic race through ten days" with, for all its other modernist touches, more or less conventional narrative structure, while Kisch's deliberately displayed "no time continuity whatever". TDTSTW was "whole casting", Asien gründlich verändert "built up of individual stones" in the "self rounded complexes" of feuilletons. But both writers, in their differing
use of montage, explored the possibilities of the new reportage which Balk designated "a wild west region of literature" offering "the emigrant a wide field for pioneer work." It put only two conditions on content and form: they "must be authentic and concrete" to "convince the reader both logically and emotionally." Hence, Balk saw Reed and Kisch as representative of two different branches of the new reportage which ultimately shared the same project: the historical 'scoop' and the defamiliarization of the mundane. Whereas Reed corresponded from the 'front-line' of events, which were explicitly momentous, Kisch "began at the sweepings" and was "the local reporter of the world" who had "started to discover workaday reality."

As a Communist, Kisch has been a controversial figure in the two Germanies divided by the Cold War until 1989: official canonization in the GDR was inversely proportional to official neglect in the FRG. But lately, purely ideological evaluation has given place to more balanced critical and public acknowledgement of Kisch's seminal role in modern German journalism and literature, as recognised in, for instance, the Stern's Egon-Erwin-Kisch-Preis instituted in 1977 and the importance accorded to Kisch in the introductory article, 'Sozialreportage - Das Gewissen der Nation?' ('Social Reportage - The Conscience of the Nation?'), to a recent anthology of West-German journalism. However, Kisch remains relatively unknown in Anglophone culture although some of his later works became available in English in the '30s when he enjoyed a brief but high reputation amongst certain sections of the British and American Left. But his most innovative texts from the '20s, like Der rasende Reporter, have never been translated and, consequently, are missing from the account prevailing in Anglophone culture of the impact of radical Neue Sachlichkeit on modern reportage internationally.
Kisch's extraordinarily active and eventful life certainly fits the hectic image of his literary alias as 'Der rasende Reporter', for whom writing and service to the revolutionary cause went hand in hand. He was born in 1885 in Prague of middle-class German-Jewish parentage and from 1905-6 attended the school of journalism in Berlin, subsequently working for the liberal daily Bohemia. During the Great War, he saw active service and was severely wounded in 1915. In 1917 he was promoted to lieutenant's rank and served at the Vienna War Press Bureau, under Robert Musil, while simultaneously carrying out illegal anti-war activities in the Workers and Soldiers Council. In 1918 he became Commander of the Viennese Red Guard, edited the supplement to the weekly Free Worker and entered the Austrian Communist Party in 1919. Later he began writing again for the bourgeois press and for the Prague theatre before finally leaving permanently for Berlin in 1921. From 1925-26 he was active in the German communist press and writers' associations and began his long reportage-trips to the USSR (1925-26), USA (1928-29), Soviet Central-Asia (1931) and China (1932). After 1930, he taught at the Kharkov Faculty of Journalism and worked as a radio broadcaster in Moscow. On the night of the Reichstag fire (1933), he was arrested along with other prominent Communists and imprisoned in Spandau, but was soon deported to Prague after Czech Government intervention. He carried on literary-political activities from exile in Paris from the middle of 1933 to the end of 1939 and in 1934 was delegated to the Australian Anti-War Congress by the 'World Committee against War and Fascism', getting round an anti-immigration order by leaping from the ship onto the dock and hospitalizing himself with a broken leg. He also spoke at the European Anti-Fascist Workers Congress in Paris (1933) and at the Congresses for the Defence of Culture in Paris (1935) and Valencia.
(1937). From 1937 to 1938 Kisch was with the International Brigade in Spain, but at the outbreak of World War II he left for the USA and from the end of 1940 carried on anti-Fascist activities in Mexico, through the Heinrich Heine Club, the newspaper Free Germany and the publishing company El Libro Libre. In March 1946 he finally returned to Prague to report post-war Czechoslovakia, but died not long after, in 1948.

Der rasende Reporter - an innovative collision montage of short feuilletons on all kinds of factual subjects, connected by implicit thematic and symbolic cross-references - met with immediate acclaim and thus its title furnished a permanent (but, in the long term, restrictive) alias for Kisch. Moreover, Kisch’s rather disarming foreword seems to represent a concise theoretical manual for 'objective recording' of facts. As Willett puts it, "Long before Isherwood, Kisch presented himself as an impersonal screen, a neutral observer letting the facts speak for themselves.” However, on analysis, the relationship of Kisch’s foreword to the reportages themselves turns out to be largely ironic or ambiguous, and Kisch’s new objectivity to be a far from straightforward 'reflection' of the facts. For example, Kisch quotes Schopenhauer to stress reportage’s democratic potential and to assign paramount importance to 'authentic content' and not the artfulness of the reporter:

Ganz gewöhnliche oder platte Menschen können vermöge des Stoffes sehr wichtige Bücher liefern, indem derselbe gerade nur ihnen zugänglich war, zum Beispiel Beschreibungen ferner Länder, seltener Naturerscheinungen, angestellter Versuche, Geschichte, deren Zeugen sie gewesen, oder deren Quellen aufzusuchen oder speziell zu studieren sie sich Mühe und Zeit genommen haben.

This view appears to sanction common-sense realism as the foundation of report: global reality is fascinating, sensational, but nevertheless accurately transcribable. Hence the reporter’s function is “die
Der Reporter hat keine Tendenz, hat nichts zu rechtfertigen und hat keinen Standpunkt. Er hat unbefangen Zeuge zu sein und unbefangen Zeugenschaft zu liefern, so verläßlich, wie sich eine Aussage geben läßt — jedenfalls ist sie (für die Klarstellung) wichtiger als die geniale Rede des Staatsanwalts oder des Verteidigers.

Even 'bad' reporters, though deliberately exaggerative or distortive, Kisch goes on, still depend on 'objective facts', obtained from I-witnessing, interview and enquiry. However, this view is, as we have seen, provocatively naive. Consequently, there are suggestions in Kisch's foreword that warn the reader against taking it literally (eg. "wie sich eine Aussage geben läßt") and the reportages themselves in no way eschew political Tendenz or Standpunkt. Indeed, as quickly becomes clear, they are written from a revolutionary point of view, with agitational intent (Kisch wrote for the Weimar Communist Party's Rote Fahne and Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung, among others, working closely with its propaganda chief Willi Münzenberg) and they display economic and social judgements as partisan as those of 'bourgeois' courts of law.

The foreword also maintains that the reporter cannot write well without experiencing his subject matter, and that his effectiveness comes, not through any special qualities, but by his very ordinariness:

"Er ist kein Künstler, er ist kein Politiker, er ist kein Gelehrter — er ist vielleicht jener >platte Mensch< Schopenhauers, und doch ist sein Werk >vermöge des Stoffes sehr wichtig<." (DrR, pp.7-8) However, as Dieter Schlenstedt notes, it is not the author himself who is the I-witness persona of the text "sondern eine Gestalt, die sicher mit ihm verwandt, doch aber von ihm abgehoben war." 14

Most importantly the foreword claims that the reporting of
authentic truth is vital in a world where reality is constantly overwhelmed by falsehood. However, this claim does not fit the method and effect of the reportages themselves. The foreword’s simplistic distinction between truth and falsehood has to be qualified in terms of Ellul’s two main types of propaganda: integration, which attempts to sustain the current hegemony, and agitation, which attempts to destabilize it.\(^\text{16}\) Hence, as we shall see, Kisch’s reportage was intended to subvert concepts propagated by the capitalist media and to unmask the economic and political interests lying behind them. Kisch saw reportage as a way, in Benjamin’s phrase, of brushing against the grain of official history. Similarly, Max von der Grün defines the primary importance of Kisch’s reportage as a filling in of the silences in authorized versions of events.\(^\text{18}\)

Kisch’s definition of the newsworthy was unconventional too. For him, significant ‘reality’ was not to be reported only from distant and alien places, but also recovered from what was assumed to be prosaic and mundane. Thus Kisch’s reportage was partly an extension of the LEF Group’s attempt to synthesize Formalism’s theoretical insights with the practical Marxist objective of penetrating alienated appearances. It recovered the facts of everyday social and economic experience and gave them dramatic expression. In 1935 Kisch defined the function of reportage as “Sichtbarmachung der Arbeit und der Lebensweise” ("making labour and way of living visible") \(^\text{17}\) and, as Bruno Frei writes, “Er entdeckte, daß das Alltägliche, das Gewöhnliche die größten Sensation sein kann, wenn man es in seinem allseitigen Zusammenhang darstellt.” Hence even the grimy banality of factory production could acquire fascination when artfully recontextualized and "Die Technologie wird in seiner Schreibmaschine zum Detektivroman."\(^\text{18}\) In the 1918 essay 'Wesen
des Reporters', Kisch had stressed two key factors in reportage. The first was the importance of gathering authentic factual materials by first-hand, empirical methods and the second, the need for what Kisch called "logische Phantasie" - the imaginative quality and rhetorical skill which brings facts together into significant patterns of interpretation, puts them into context and reveals their past and future direction.19 Out of Kisch's patchwork of facts emerges what he was to call in *Marktplatz der Sensationen* (1942) "Poesie der Neugier" ("poetry of curiosity"). As Hans-Albert Walter's afterword to the 1983 edition of *DrR*, 'Der größte Phantast der Realität' puts it, Kisch consciously exploited the 'literary' possibilities of his form for political effect:

"Von anderen Reporteren unterscheidet ihn, daß er im Grunde keiner war, sondern ein Künstler im Gewand oder besser: in der Rolle des Reporters."20 (DrR, 343) Similarly Max von der Grün argues that in Kisch's reportage no topic was inherently "nebensächlich" ("trivial") and might not lead to significant generalizations.21 For example in *DrR*, the world of the poor ('Unter den Obdachlosen von Whitechapel' ('Among the Homeless of Whitechapel')), or heavy industry ('Stahlwerk in Bochum, vom Hochofen aus gesehen' ('Bochum Steelworks Seen from the Blast-Furnace')) is potentially as strange and unexplored as the bottom of the sea ('Ein Spaziergang auf dem Meeresboden' ('A Stroll along the Seabed')). Moreover, Kisch's own foreword states:

Die Orte und Erscheinungen, die er beschreibt, die Versuche, die er anstellt, die Geschichte, deren Zeuge er ist, und die Quellen, die er aufsucht, müssen gar nicht so fern, gar nicht so selten und gar nicht so mühselig erreichbar sein, wenn er in einer Welt, die von der Lüge unermäßig überwältigt ist, wenn er in einer Welt, die sich vergessen will und darum bloß auf Unwahrheit ausgeht, die Hingabe an sein Objekt hat. Nichts ist verblüffender als die einfache Wahrheit, nichts ist exotischer als unsere Umwelt, nichts ist phantasievoller als die Sachlichkeit.22 (DrR, p.8)
Hence, the content of many of DrR's reportages is not so much objective, in the simplistic sense, as the familiar made artfully strange: it concerns our ignorance of what we 'already know'. Places, events and things apparently insignificant in themselves are decoded as concrete tokens of the larger historical processes more publicly at work in TDTSTW.

Far from letting facts 'speak for themselves', Kisch knew they were either silent or *spoken for*, with competing degrees of articulacy and power. His *Sachlichkeit* or objectivity, then, consisted in a challengingly imaginative realization of Shklovsky's "artfulness of the object" as a conceptual artefact constructed in language, not in the objectivist fallacy of neutral recording.

Kisch himself named German reporters like Helferich Peter Sturz, Georg Forster, and the Czech Jan Neruda as early influences, but above all the commentaries he wrote for his anthology *Klassischer Journalismus* (1923) acknowledge his debt to the English social moralist Charles Dickens and the French Naturalist Emile Zola. In *Klassischer Journalismus* his evolving notion of 'reportage' as journalistic writing elevated above merely topical or transitory interest, was used as a principle of selection which cut across simplistic distinctions between factual and fictional discourse. For instance Zola had used first-hand observation and other fact-gathering methods as a basis for his own novels and his particular kind of imaginative realism had in turn influenced subsequent journalism:

*Emile Zola hat die unendlichen Gebiete der Wahrheit in den Roman eingeführt, er hat die Konflikte, die Situationen, die Lokalitäten, die Figuren des Alltags und des Heute gegeben, die Reportage in den Dienst der großen Epik gestellt. Es hätte sich erwarten lassen, daß in reziproken Weise die Journalistik von ihm profitieren werde. Ein Bergwerk, die Börse, einen Bahnhof, ein Elendviertel, ein Pferderennen, einen Hochofen, ein Theater, einen Park, ein Wirtshaus, eine Waschküche, einen*
Wallfahrtsort, eine Polizeistube, eine Lokomotive, die
Markthallen, ein Maleratelier - allerdings wird es nie einer
so hinziehen können wie dieser größte Reporter aller Zeiten,
der Tag und Nacht an sein Objekt hingeben war. 33

Kisch, too, discovered the subject matter and rhetoric of his own
journalistic Streifzüge or 'raids' into contemporary reality, not only
"auf der Straße", but also in a distinctive tradition of literary
models, stretching back before Zola to Mercier, Diderot, Defoe, etc.,
reporting "die Konflikte, die Situationen, die Lokalitäten, die Figuren
des Alltags und des Heute".

By 1918, he already saw a potential role for the reporter as
mediator between "Künstler und Bürger" ("artist and citizen") (See
Gesammelte Werke VII, p.208) who would use literature to inform the
public of socio-economic reality. Moreover, he had already lost any
illusions about the disinterestedness of contemporary journalism. As
Orwell would at the BBC in the early '40s, Kisch had first-hand
experience of the extraordinary methods of state propaganda at the War
Press Bureau. But also, like Orwell, he saw the subtler, economic
censorship wielded by the "großen Kanonen von Fleetstreet" and the
"Weltpresse" ("big guns of Fleet Street" and the "international press")
in normal circumstances (Gesammelte Werke VII, 357) as a far greater
pressure on critical reporting. In the '20s, the right-wing nationalist
Hugenberg-Konzern controlled two-thirds of the German press and in 1918
Kisch had already published an article attacking the 'Dogma von der
Unfehlbarkeit der Presse' ('dogma of the infallibility of the press')
to voice his personal frustration with editorial restrictions on the
Bohemia:

Heute werden Begabungen unter der selbstverständlichen
Bedingung gekauft, daß sie jene Meinung zu vertreten haben,
auf welche sich der Herausgeber der Zeitung, ihre einstigen
und gegenwärtigen Redakteure in allen Fragen festgelegt haben.
Aus diesem Schienenstrang kann niemand heraus. 36 (Gesammelte
123
Later, in Der rasende Reporter, Kisch endorsed Kierkegaard's condemnation of the journalist's compliance with dominant ideology:

"wegen unseres Mangels an Haß, an Empörung, an Erregung. Wir sind ärger als Phrasendrescher, denn wir sind freiwillig zu Dienern der Phrasendrescher geworden, zu Knechten des Kompromisses, zu Leibeigenen des eitelsten Spießertums, zu Sklaven des Heute." (DrR, p. 70)

Consequently, the problem for this socially-critical reporter, aware of the artistic possibilities of his craft, was how to report from a subversive perspective and transform disposable articles into something recognisably literary. As Balk put it, ordinarily the reporter's contribution to the daily "logbook of the world" was just another consumer item lasting "as long as their cup of coffee" and then becoming "waste paper at half a cent a kilogramme." Hence, Kisch's new form was designed to fill "a blank space in the table of the arts". This double aim, political and aesthetic, decided him to assemble DrR for the Reiß-Verlag from the "merkwürdigsten meiner Reportagen" ("most remarkable of my reports"). It was a seminal text in presenting reportage as a Kunstform ('art-form') by lifting feuilletons "aus den Kontexten ihres jeweiligen Gegenwartsbezuges" ("out of their contemporary context") to create an encyclopaedic Zeitbild ('picture of the time').

Some of Kisch's literary contemporaries felt the term rasend misrepresented DrR's careful stylisation. But Kisch deliberately wanted to sponsor the impression of a correspondent with an 'American' raciness. In fact, the same suggestion was kept up in his subsequent titles: Hetzjagd durch die Zeit ('Chase through the Time') (1926), Wagnisse in aller Welt ('Hazards all over the World') (1927) and
Abenteuer in fünf Kontinenten ('Adventures in Five Continents') (1935).

Moreover, there was an artistic motivation behind this as Kisch later wrote:

[Readers] sahen sich verblüfft einem Autor gegenüber, der heute in Cuxhaven den Rekord-Personendampfer >Vaterland< zur Stapelfahrt besteigt und morgen ohne Übergang als Hopfenpfücker ins böhmische Land zieht - auf Seite zwanzig nächtigt er im Londoner Nachtasyl und auf Seite vierundzwanzig überfliegt er mit einem Hydroplan Venedig -, all das ohne Übergang, ohne Verbindung, als spränge er, von Raum und Zeit, von Hindernissen und Kosten unabhängig, just nach seiner Laune kreuz und quer ...

The original photomontage jacket of DrR, by the Berlin Dadaist 'Umbo' (alias Otto Umbehr), showed Kisch's head with "a well-articulated body", constructed "from all the equipment of modern transport and communications". Part-man, part-monitoring machine, this bizarre figure makes an unexpectedly rational statement about Kisch's text and implies the extension of empirical experience into media hyperreality, to produce the "multiple and simultaneous awareness" of modern consciousness, in Marinetti's phrase. Thus it not only 'bares' the text's conception, but also illustrates how German avant-gardism (beginning towards the end of the Great War to subvert the conventional media by making incisions into their discourses and reassembling them into Dadaist works) was moving into a new imaginative Sachlichkeit. DrR is a carefully constructed montage, which deliberately omits explanatory links and the 'I'-witness's motives for being in particular places at particular times (such as specific commissions from newspapers, military orders, political affiliation, etc.). This absence of logical interconnections invites the reader to draw his/her own inferences from intriguing collisions, separations and contrasts and to participate in the imaginative construction of critical relationships between the reportages. Perhaps more clearly than anything, Kisch's spatio-temporal
shuffling contradicts the foreword's claims about the reporter's 'artlessness'. As Schlenstedt shows, sequences and immediate contexts were "planvoll zerissen" ("deliberately torn apart") (for instance, the London reportages of 1914, the four from Vienna in 1919, six from Paris, circa 1921, the eight from Berlin in the early '20s, etc.) to create the impression of a rapid and heterogeneous "bunte Folge" ("colourful succession").

Moreover, as Bruno Frei commented about Eintritt verboten in 1934, the subtler purpose of Kisch's writings emerged more slowly and effectively from behind this hectic impressionism:


Theo Balk called Kisch a "dialektischer Reporter" ("dialectical reporter") and as Heinz-Dietrich Fischer argues "Detailsicht und -interpretation erwuchsen bald zu einer Art Markenzeichen für Kisch's Reportagen", which belied his original alias. Like Orwell's, Kisch's draft manuscripts show how much painstaking labour he expended to create the effect of colloquial directness and compress complex ideas into vivid feuilletons of four or five pages. Kisch often referred to them as Kinoschnitten ('film-cuts') and Balk too saw the closest analogy between reportage and the cinema as "very young arts": "They have much in common in their dynamics. The closeup, illusion, sparingness of gesture, montage."

Significantly, though Kisch's reportage appealed to the sense of
authentic empirical truth, it also foregrounded questions of mediation in the reporting of facts. Kisch remarked that "Literatur ist die Vermittlung von Erfahrungen - für andere" ("Literature is the mediation of experiences - for others") and DrR challenges uninspected distinctions between real deixis and fiction. 'Ein Spaziergang auf dem Meeresboden' makes a playfully implicit point about this. The reporter wants some mussels as souvenirs of his deep-sea diving expedition:


The 'transparency' of report is deceptive, like the refraction of objects in water, and cannot be simply taken hold of as a "corpus delicti" of indisputable, factual evidence. In DrR even the precise communication technology of the modern world establishes no stable, trustworthy divisions between rhetorical illusion and reality. On the contrary, the disorientating and potentially dehumanizing perspectives opened up by technology are some of the book's interrelating themes, just as Umbo's photo-montage showed Kisch with his senses extended and amplified by various machines. This is especially the case in 'Erkundungsflug über Venedig' ('Reconnaissance-Flight over Venice'), which reported a sea-plane flight. Marinetti, in his Italian Futurist manifestoes, displaced Pegasus, the classical symbol for poetic vision, into speeding cars and aircraft, and Kisch was thus one of the first to critically report this modern reality which had the wonder of relativity. His "Hippogryphen", as he calls it, symbolises this Faustian world of space and speed, and the new dimensions of good and evil created by the detachment of scientific ingenuity (this was, significantly, a military mission). As the plane rises into the air,
distinctions of size, subject and object, mundane and strange are
defamiliarized and flight becomes an avant-garde artistic experience as it did for Hemingway:


The world comes to resemble a representation of itself - reality and illusion change places - and it shifts from cartography to the plane of abstract forms and colours. Hence the artistic strategy of DrR foregrounds the fact of our dependence on and yet need for scepticism about the communication technology which constructs our hyperreality.

DrR's heterogeneous "Reportagenwirbel" ("reportage-vortex") also juxtaposed contradictory aspects of the complex social structure, reporting the experiences of criminals and the "Unteren", as well as of bohemians and industrial magnates. It included sketches about the Balkan and Great Wars and coups by reactionary groups against the Weimar Republic. It covered modern technology and industry, labour and culture,
as well as an encyclopaedic list of other phenomena, conventionally sensational or apparently inconsequential: the Berlin and Paris morgues, the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, cycle-racing, carnival costumes, a Danish funeral, a Jewish literary café, a submarine voyage, tipping, tattoos, etc. Hence, Kisch attempted an artistic shorthand, cross-sectioning the dazzling multiplicity of the contemporary world, while at the same time distinguishing important social and political patterns behind its heterogeneity. However, it is precisely Kisch's standpoint which makes "[das] Interessante aus Gleichgültigem" and "das Unbekannte aus Bekanntem" ("[the] interesting out of the indifferent" and "the unknown out of the familiar"). His belief that a literature of fact must, of necessity, be as strikingly imaginative "wie das Phantasie-Produkt" ("as the product of fantasy") (Gesammelte Werke VII, 138) is both the political and artistic crux of his reportage. In 1926, he complained of contemporary literature as a "Flucht aus dem Heute 'und Flucht aus dem Hier" symptomatic of an "allgemeine Emigration aus der Wirklichkeit" ("flight from the here and now" ... "universal exodus from reality"). (Gesammelte Werke IX, 17) This was not so much a question of reality's inherent lack of interest. On the contrary (as the foreword to DrR later phrased it), "nichts Sensationelleres gibt es in der Welt als die Zeit, in der man lebt." ("nothing in the world is more sensational than the time in which one lives.") (DrR, p.8) Rather it signalled the need for a stimulating reportage to constantly subvert the automatized perception created by the official media. Like Benjamin, Orwell and Kundera, Kisch knew that the process of 'organized forgetting' was rampant "in einer Welt, die nichts Wahres hören will und darum die Spielereien des Radios hört, in einer Welt, die nichts Wahres sehen will und daher den Film sieht, den
Therefore, paradoxically, the sense of reality had to be defended by all the devices of art. The reporter, Kisch wrote in 'Ein Reporter auf der Barrikade' (1928), taking John Reed’s style as his model, had to vigilantly guard his facts "vor jedem Stäubchen Langeweile" ("from every speck of boredom") (Gesammelte Werke IX, 91), to resist the constant ideological pressure displacing the reader's attention to a mythical 'elsewhere' rather than an imaginative 'here and now'.

Kisch, who wrote the preface to the 1927 German edition of TDTSTW, considered that Reed’s and Larissa Reisner’s writing embodied the "soziale Erkenntnis" ("social perception") necessary to the reporter (Gesammelte Werke IX, 92-93), because they demonstrated by concrete examples how "die Mehrheit aller so heterogenen Ereignisse ... auf gemeinsamer Wurzel füßen." ("how the multiplicity of all such heterogeneous phenomena ... have the same roots") (Gesammelte Werke IX, 91) Thus, to detect "in jedem Einzelschicksal" the pattern of "das große Schicksal der Menschheit" ("in each individual destiny" ... "the great destiny of humanity") (Gesammelte Werke IX, 193), required an alternative historical perspective, theoretical training and rhetorical skills, which denied the fallacy of ideologically innocent I-witnessing. In effect Kisch had proleptically unmasked 'Der rasende Reporter's' common-sense persona as the man "der einfach berichtet" ("who simply reports") (as Schlenstedt puts it") in 'Wesen des Reporters':

Ein ganz gewöhnlicher oder ganz platter Mensch wird niemals ein wichtiges Buch schreiben können und wenn er selbst Augenzeuge der Sündflut, Kammerdiener der Semiramis oder Reisebegleiter des Pizarro gewesen wäre ... das Wichtige wird er nie als solches erkennen. (Gesammelte Werke VIII, 207-08)

Leo Lania, himself one of the more significant reporters of this time, felt Kisch was responsible for placing reportage and Neue
Sachlichkeit at the "Brennpunkt" ("focal-point") of '20s literary debate in Germany. DrR established a model for writing that functioned in intimate knowledge of social relations, institutions and economics. Building on the sociological prose legacy of Heine and Georg Werth, among others, DrR also registered the contemporary influence of other American leftists besides Reed, such as Sinclair Lewis and, in particular, Jack London.

London's influence is clearly illustrated by the first feuilleton in DrR, 'Unter den Obdachlosen von Whitechapel' ('Among the Homeless of Whitechapel'), an account of a night spent in a Salvation Army hostel in the East End taking its cue from The People of the Abyss, long before Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London (1933) (Kisch spent two months in London and Bournemouth in 1914). From his early days as an apprentice journalist, Kisch was fascinated by the Benjaminesque débris of people and things at the margins of respectable society. Hence these "Randfiguren der bürgerlichen Welt" ("figures at the margin of the bourgeois world"), such as artists, criminals, beggars, prostitutes and sexual outcasts, feature prominently in his mature reportage's questioning of the moral values underpinning that respectability.

Like London's, Kisch's I-witness in 'Unter den Obdachlosen von Whitechapel' is literally disguised, adopting a fictional strategem to get closer to the reality of conditions in the original industrial metropolis. His report is defamiliarizing, because it is not a portrait of absolute poverty, as opposed to affluence, but of the relativity of wealth amongst the poorest. Even the worst-off slum dwellers "sind reich gegen die Obdachlosen, die sich müde durch die Schlammdistrikte schleppen; hoffnungslos hoffen sie von den anderen Armen einige Pence zu kriegen, damit sie nicht auf dem Embankment an der
Themse im Froste nächtigen müssen." Social hierarchy is ironically reduplicated even in this 'micro-economic' sphere: "diese Allerelendsten der Elenden sind noch in Gesellschaftsschichten geteilt, noch unter diesen Obdachlosen bestehen Vermögensunterschiede". 49 (DrR, p.9) A few pence, grown disproportionately significant, make all the difference between what even the Whitechaplers take for granted and worse privation.

The I-witness feels theatrically over-dressed for the occasion - until he joins the queue for the casual ward in Middlesex Street: "Mein Kostüm war mir fast übertrieben zerfetzt erschienen, als ich es angelegt hatte. Ein Blick auf meinen Nachbarn belehrte mich eines Besseren." 60 (DrR, p.9) Paying 3d for a plank bed, his descent is described in metaphors which echo London - Abgrund ('abyss') - and anticipate Orwell - Unterwelt ('underworld'):

So steige ich denn die Stufen zur Unterwelt hinab, während die Reichen, die in Vermögen von fünf Pence waren, es sich oben im Schlafsaal gutgehen lassen können ... Was die Stadt in ihren tiefsten Abgründen nicht mehr zu halten vermochte, was selbst Whitechapel, dieses Asyl der Desperados aller Weltteile, nicht mehr aufzunehmen gewagt hatte, was zu Bettel und Verbrechen nicht mehr geeignet ist, scheint hier abgelagert worden zu sein. Da sitzen sie und verderben die warme Luft. Der eine schnallt seinen Holzfuß ab und lehnt ihn an die Bank. Der andere macht Inventur, einige hundert Zigarretten- und Zigarrenstummel neben sich ausbreitend. Einer holt aus seinem Schnapp sack die Dinge hervor, die er wahllos aus dem Rinnstein aufgelesen: Stücke alten Brotes, den Rumpf einer Pumpe, zusammengeballte Zeitungen (er glättet sie sorgfältig), den Rest einer Brille, das Rudiment eines Bleistiftes. Einer bindet sein Bruchband zurecht, einer wickelt seine Fußlappen ab, einer verdaut hörbar - alle Sinne werden gleichzeitig gefoltert. 61 (DrR, p.10)

Human and material refuse - stumps and endings, lumped together interchangeably and dumped out of sight - is the reportage's metonymic conceit. And again the lowest expectations are undermined: for some people even begging and crime are remote aspirations. People can be
literal 'cast-offs', part-person, part-object (like the man with the wooden-leg), or live by re-cycling consumer society's cast-offs. Kisch's facts shock the sensibilities as effectively as any of Orwell's and express a similar anti-aesthetic, but with Dadaesque suggestions of the satire of Grosz and Dix as well as Schwitter's junk collages.

The destitute are still regimented and dehumanized by "the cold and usurous hand" of Victorian charity. At 9.00 p.m., when a whistle blows, the macabre resemblance the beds under the vaults bear to coffins makes the hostel into a crypt: "Und schon beginnt der Totentanz" ("already the death-dance begins") (DrR, p.12) of naked, skeletal bodies - the repressed conscience of the affluent world above. Hence in the morning, the six o'clock call is an ironic resurrection, not to the sublimating after-life, but back to the status quo.

As the relieved reporter goes out of the door, the real 'abyss' between his temporary 'participant observation' and the down-and-outs' fate opens up with bitter irony: "Endlich, denke ich, und atme der Luft entgegen. Die anderen ducken sich vor dem ersten Hieb der Kälte." (DrR, p.14) Nonetheless, suppressed but intimate connections are suggested between the morality and economy of the underworld and the world above. During the night, the narrated 'I' overhears a conversation between his neighbour and a young convict, out on bail from Pentonville. The latter's guarantor is one Danny Rowlett, an enterprising, "steuerzahlender Bürger Londons" ("tax-paying citizen of London"), who needs him and his like for unspecified work. (See DrR, p.12) It is a Brechtian point: "Was ist ein Einbruch in eine Bank gegen die Gründung einer Bank?" ("What's robbing a bank compared to founding a bank?") asks Mackie Messer in Die Dreigroschenoper, tracing his own ascent to bourgeois 'respectability'. Similarly, Kisch's 'Streifzug durch das
dunkle London' ('Raid through dark London') reports the extreme contradictions of one of the richest cities on earth. After midnight, when the hustling business districts sleep, the city's socio-economic alter-ego awakes:


Kisch characterized the East End by its ethnic mix, alcoholism, violence, prostitution, sordidness and poverty. But its docks, sweatshops, pawnbrokers, gangsters and Syndicalist unrest are inseparable from the very basis of private wealth and "Großbritannien's" public respectability. As the I-witness laconically comments:

England schützt seinen Handel, und Millionenwerte sind in diesem Bezirk aufgespeichert. Freilich, die Zahl der Hafendiebstähle ist trotzdem ungeheuer groß, und die Polizisten sind sehr gefährdet.** (DrR, pp.211-212)

Interesting, the reportage criticizes not only British economic, but also literary history. Dickens's legacy of social criticism has been hijacked by nostalgic 'aftermyths'; reality had outpaced its potential for stimulating vision, and it was, ironically, retarding the consciousness it once awakened by a comforting illusion that the fundamental contradictions of a laissez-faire order do not need to be resolved, so long as private charity is seen to mitigate their effects. Hence Kisch saw the notion of realism as historically relative, needing
to be continuously defamiliarized by innovating devices. For Kisch (as later for Orwell in his essay 'Charles Dickens' (See CEJL I, pp.454-504) this cultural assimilation of nineteenth-century writing prevented Britain from waking up to its contemporary circumstances:

Moreover, Kisch was as hostile to sanctimonious charity like the Salvation Army's - "die Jazzband Jesu Christi" ("Jesus Christ's jazz band") - as London had been and Orwell would be.

Also in proto-Orwellian vein (though in Bohemia, not Kent) is 'Drei Wochen als Hopfenpfücker' ('Three Weeks as a Hop-picker'), which reports a motley group, forced by unemployment and the precarious post-Great War economy to seek seasonal work on the land. Unlike Orwell's fellow labourers - mostly working-class down and outs, cockneys and gypsies - Kisch's were a microcosm of middle-European society affected in almost all classes by correspondingly worse conditions - ex-business people, students, office- and factory-workers, housewives, peasants and their families. Lured into the country by the promise of good wages and a full season's work, but finding actual conditions appalling, they eventually desert en masse seduced by a rival offer. And as the I-witness comments, "die Ausbeutungsmöglichkeit und Rechtlosigkeit dieses unorganisierten Lumpenproletariats ist so groß, daß ihnen gegenüber sogar der Kapitalismus seine Solidarität außer acht läßt, eine Gutsverwaltung der andern deren Arbeitskräfte mit Leiterwagen entführt
... Ich fahre mit in das neue Land."

But this turns out, predictably, to be a mirage; a parable of the powerlessness and gullibility of unorganised labour in times of recession.

However, perhaps the most forceful piece of social criticism in DrR is 'Das Nest der Kanonenkönige: Essen' ("The Cannon-Kings' Den: Essen"), attacking the Krupps armaments dynasty, founders of the modern German city of Essen, in the industrialized Ruhrgebiet. Throughout the reportage, there is a consciousness of the obscene profits from the recent Great War and their link with peacetime exploitation. Essen's tortuous streets and alleyways are "engbrüstig und bucklig und schlotternd" ("narrow-chested and bent and tottering"), (DrR, 115) like the bodies of the workers inhabiting this troglodyte kingdom. The rural façades of its blackened houses counterfeit a contact with nature long since severed. But Essen is also a centre of ominous political and spiritual unrest, as stridently competing wall-posters suggest. Moreover, under cover of such details, Kisch suggests the reportage's underlying theme of the relation between superhuman power and inhuman egotism. Captions on religious posters read: "Gibt es ein Weiterleben nach dem Tode? Du selbst mußt Gott werden!" ("'Is there life after death? 'You yourself must become God!'") (DrR, 115) And everywhere is the same cipher (as the Soviet reporter, Larissa Reisner also noted when she visited Essen in 1924"), conferring on things and people the same status of possessed objects:

... und wenn wir nicht wußten, daß wir in Essen sind, wenn uns nicht Stadtplan und Tafeln längst darüber belehrt hätten, wenn all das gehört, daß wir im Reiche ... Kr.< Kr.-Friedhof, Kr.-Lazarett, Kr.-Verwaltungsgebäude, Kr.-Konsumentverein, Kr. Denkmal, Kr., Kr. und wieder Kr. - das bedeutet nicht Kreis<, nicht Krieg<, nicht Krone<, das alles bedeutet: Krupp<. Und diese ganze dunkle Stadt und ihre Bewohner und ihr Leben haben nur einen Namen: Friedrich Krupp Gußstahlfabrik<." (DrR, 116)
Moreover, past Krupps had become 'objectified' too, their power, created from alienated labour, now reified in monuments of stone and metal. Contemporary readers could hardly miss the loaded connotations of "Denkmal" - Krupp ostentation contrasting ironically with the grim anonymity of cemeteries in Flanders, etc., from which company profits were harvested (and would be again, when it serviced the Nazi Wehrmacht). But Kisch focuses on Krupp III's monument, so "überlebensgroß und geschmacklos" ("larger than life and tasteless"), (DrR, 116) recalling the circumstances of his suicide in 1902, when in the middle of a public campaign for basic social security, his scandalous lifestyle could no longer be hushed up. Kaiser Wilhelm's consequent political clampdown necessitated restoring official respectability to a national institution by commissioning the monument and marrying the sole female heir to the nearest available aristocrat, one von Bohlen-Halbach, the contemporary Krupp IV. Here, Kisch's mask of objectivity slips altogether, in an open tirade against the contradictions of a 'national institution' capable of the ruthless economic logic that now characterizes modern multi-national arms trading. The Ruhr was occupied by the French in 1923 for non-payment of war-reparations and Kisch uses "logische Phantasie" to imagine Krupp's future should this continue indefinitely:

... so hätte er [von Bohlen-Halbach] - oh, natürlich erst nach scharfem und mutigem Protest, erst nach Hemmungen, erst nach Umstellungen und erst nach Jahren! - genauso grandiose Kanonen und Mörser und Torpedos und Munition und Panzerplatten anderen Armeen geliefert, wie er sie der deutschen geliefert hat. Denn dieser von Kaiser Wilhelm ausgewählte Gatte des Fräuleins Berta Kr. wird die Tradition des Kr.schen Hauses so hochhalten, als ob er ein geborener Kr. wäre: tadellose Ware, tadellose Lieferung. Hier wurden all die tausendfachen Mordinstrumente geschmiedet, hier wurde der Rekord der Kriegsrüstungen erreicht, von hier aus wurde geliefert und geliefert, bis man geliefert war. Und Hunderttausende schufteten hier, von ihrer Kindheit an bis zu ihrem Ende am Kr.-Friedhof, in einem Leben, dem alle die (noch so
mustergültigem, noch so berühmten) Wohlfahrtsinstitutionen keine Freude geben konnten. So entstand dieses neue Essen, diese neue Vorstadt, die das alte Zentrum unterwarf, so entstand diese schwarze Hauptstadt der schwarzen Erde. 61 (DrR, 117-18)

The sardonic bite of "als ob er ein geborener Kr. wäre" is saevi indignatio worthy of Swift.

The LEF Group intended to replace the heroic individuals of bourgeois narratives with what Tretyakov called the collective "biography of things". 62 DrR is centrally concerned with tracing the production and circulation of everyday mass-produced objects and commodities as tokens defining real inter-connections between individuals and social classes. As Balk put it:

Karl Marx has scientifically unveiled the mysteries of commodity fetishism and of the origin of value and of surplus value.
Egon Erwin Kisch has taken up these traces in the literary field. He became the artist monographer of commodities: coal from the Borinage, mercury from Almaden, baubles from Gablonz, cotton-goods from Shanghai. He has pictured all the exact figures, the misery and woe, all the luxury and riotous living which the silent commodity holds concealed in itself. 63

Next to language, money is perhaps the most powerful fetishized currency which denotes the exchange-value system we inhabit, mediating and conditioning our relationships with things and with others. Béla Balaz's 1924 film Abenteuer eines Zehnmarkscheins ("Adventures of a Ten-Mark Note") put a 'thing' at its focal centre and, as Willett writes, "set out to provide what its author termed a 'cross-section' of Berlin society somewhat in the tradition of Kaiser's play Nebeneinander."

The film's montage of scenes is thus threaded together by the note as it circulates, providing a radical, documentary focus not so much on the individual characters themselves, in their disparate social contexts, but on their economic contiguity. Similarly, Kisch makes a sum of money the subject of 'Experiment mit einem hohen Trinkgeld' ("Experiment with
a Big Tip') and 'Wat koofe ick mir for een Groschen?' ('What Can I Buy for a Penny?'), to highlight economic mediation. Moreover, 'Flohmarkt von Clignancourt' ('Fleamarket of Clignancourt') is a particularly interesting attempt to report human history indirectly, through "the biography of things", by revealing the economic significance of familiar consumer artefacts, implied in where they come from and go to. It describes the economy of the chiffoniers, who for centuries made their living from other people's refuse, and were a vital link in the consumption process from one level of society to another. Thus the chiffoniers' work is not marginal to the system, as it first appears, but a symptomatic part of its life-cycle, signifying intimate connections between its parts:

... zerbrochene Salben- und Konservenbüchsen in Metallwarenfabriken, Papierfetzen in Papiermühlen, Scherben in Glasblasereien, Alteisen in Schmelzöfen, aus dem zerrissenen, vergilbten Wechselblankett wird eine neue Banknote, aus dem abgenagten Knochen ein Hundekuchen, aus der verrosteten, verbogenen Ofentüre ein Offizierssäbel und aus dem Manuskript eines Dichters gar Klosettspapier.** (DrR, 58)

At this market, as in Dada-art, discarded, used and broken things find new purposes and relational values which parody conventional economics and social relationships: "Der Vogel Phönix hat hier Konkurrenz: alles erwacht - so wie er - aus der Asche zu neuem Leben."** (DrR, 61) Interestingly, Karl Kraus called the reporter a "Kehrichsammler der Tatsachenwelt" ("junk-collector of the world of facts")** and 'Flohmarkt von Clignancourt' is emblematic of Kisch's role as decoder and assembler of marginalized facts. Moreover, as in 'Unter den Obdachlosen von Whitechapel', the reportage shows an affinity with concretely 'objective' avant-garde art. Eddie Wolfram in his History of Collage refers to the collagist as a recycler and interpreter of industrial society's material, and, by extension, human, "fall-out"**.
Kisch rifled the 'dustbin of history' to rescue discarded facts from organized oblivion and to reveal the alienated humanity behind them.

Similarly, for Walter Benjamin the chiffonier or "rag picker" symbolised the modern writer's discovery of subject matter in street refuse. He quoted Baudelaire:

Everything that the big city threw away, everything it lost, everything it despised, everything it crushed underfoot, he catalogues and collects. He collates the annals of intemperance, the stockpile of waste. He sorts things out and makes a wise choice; he collects, like a miser guarding a treasure, the refuse which will assume the shape of useful or gratifying objects between the jaws of the goddess industry.

There are, consequently, striking similarities between Walter Benjamin's theory of history and Kisch's reportage practice and Christian Ernst Siegel has made the most detailed and convincing case for linking them. Benjamin argued it was possible to interpret history without reducing its "concrete present ... before our eyes". Montage could "erect ... large constructs from the smallest, precisely and pointedly manufactured units." He was thus able to refute the argument that written sources alone provide access to the past. On the contrary, they merely reproduced the history of dominant, literate classes, sending the rest, in Orwell's phrase, "down into utter silence". So for Benjamin, deciphering alternative extra-textual signs meant 'spatializing' history in everyday objects. Thus its presence could be read all around precisely because the world is always indexical and carries the marks of its own making.

Benjamin's 'Theses on the Concept of History' were "dictated by the drive to rewrite history from the perspective not of the victors ... but of their victims." They were, therefore, 'counterfactual', in Geyer-Ryan's term, proposing how to rescue the 'wreckage' of dominant history - both its material relics and human casualties. Kisch's
'reporter' is like a conflation of two of Benjamin's figures. The chronicler resembles Kisch's reporter in the apparently indiscriminate way in which his subject matter is recorded, because "nothing that has ever happened" should be regarded as irrelevant or "lost for history". Similarly, like the flâneur, Kisch's reporter goes on to decode apparent trivia and marginalia as tokens of socio-economic processes.

Kisch's avant-garde reportage also exposed, as Geyer Ryan puts it, "the materiality and technicality of his work, thus stressing its character as an artefact" in the same way that Benjamin's collision montage theory of history rejected the idea of totalizing narrative structure: "The objects which are able to provide 'dialectical images' for an alternative historical signification are, on the one hand, the relics of an objectively scattered totality; and on the other, the fragments which the historian blasts out of what appears to be a coherent totality of historical meaning." Hence the alternative documentary aim of both Benjamin and Kisch was "the deconstruction of questionable totalities and the remounting of the fragments." Benjamin's notion of allegory also resembles Kisch's "logische Phantasie" as the method by which objects are blasted out of their old historical contexts and defamiliarized. For Benjamin bourgeois history was a falsely seamless narrative of 'progress', concealing a continuous catastrophe. However, it was precisely out of this mundane wreckage that the montage shocks of alternative history could be constructed, just as Kisch's texts were Zeitbilder montaged from the concrete specificities of many feuilletons.

To both Kisch and Benjamin cities like Berlin and Paris were rich sites of historical debris. Hence, Benjamin's play on the double-sense
of lesen in German ('to read', but also, as in auslesen, 'select' or 'collect') also illuminates Kisch's technique and intent. Benjamin's objective was "lesen war niemals geschrieben wurde", to 'read what was never written' and articulate the silence of history's victims. Kisch illustrated Benjamin's objective in concrete practice. 'Flohmarkt von Clignancourt' is thus emblematic of Kisch's counterfactual recycling and montaging. Moreover, Benjamin too connected the suppression of historical débris with automatization of consciousness. As Geyer-Ryan puts it:

... this disappearance of the objective material of a counter-history is paralleled by an ever-increasing loss of experience on the part of the subject. Experience depends on the capacity of personal memory to interrelate the biographical past and present. For Benjamin biographical memory and historical memory are analogous procedures, and one cannot exist without the other.

This idea of recovering "the ever-vanishing traces of the historically defeated who do not write history" was a crucial weapon in the struggle between memory and organized forgetting, for both Benjamin and Kisch. However, tragically, Benjamin's ideas did not fit in with the new narrative totality of Stalinism, which did not erect "large constructs" from the concrete litter of counterfactuality, but rather erected its facts from a repressive historical paradigm.

In 'Geheimkabinett des Anatomischen Museums' ('Secret Cabinet of the Anatomical Museum'), "monströsen Geburtsfehler" ("monstrous abortions") destabilize our culturally-regulated categories of apparent biological 'nature'. This cool method of deconstructing the 'objectivity' of concepts through tokens that appear 'other' to them, yet define them, is interestingly developed in 'Mißgeburten des Porzellans' ('Porcelain Misbirths'). Kisch's most creative use of "logische Phantasie" seems to anticipate Barthes' method in Mythologies of revealing ideological
investment in familiar cultural objects. Ostensibly, 'Mißgeburten des Porzellans' is a factual account of a visit to the Royal Copenhagen works, but china-making is made to exemplify the moulding of a secondary conceptual 'reality' from the undifferentiated objectivity of the environment.

The original 'subject matter' is black clay, caolin, quartz, feldspar, but "Dieses Zeug will man also verwandeln" ("This stuff will thus be transformed") to create a stabilized, endlessly-reproducible 'nature' of china artefacts - elephants, dachshunds, herrings, etc. (DrR, 218) The reporter reveals that these objects have a secret political history behind them too. Ancien régime despots intrigued to obtain the magic formula, and creation in porcelain was an activity the patents of which were guarded as anxiously as state secrets. But, inside the modern factory is a prosaic industrial process like any other, and there is no mystery about the exploited pale-faced girls and shortsighted women, whose painfully fine work grows so automatic that they eventually no longer see the pattern-books from which they paint. Moreover, the glazing's uniform but equivocal perfection - "etwas von der grüngelben Blässe, die ein Embryo in Spiritus hat" ("something of the greenish-yellow lividity of an embryo in embalming fluid") (DrR, 220) - gives these commodities the eeriness of specimens in the Geheimkabinett. Ironically, their verisimilitude is disturbing because it attempts to conceal its own artifice. In contrast the rejects, surrealistically distorted by firing, are like defamiliarizing metaphors which question the stillborn literalism of the perfect specimens and subvert that artificial 'nature' and the condition of alienation it masks, witnessed in a labour process which is the very opposite of pastoral. The importance of keeping these 'abortions' out of circulation
becomes clear. It foreshadows the near future when the Nazis would similarly suppress the avant-garde art of the Weimar Republic (including ceramics) as 'abnormal' and 'degenerate', because it subverted their dogmatic definitions of the normal or natural:

'Das Gebilde, das diese Feuerprobe bestanden hat, darf hinaus in die Welten und Zeiten. Aber nicht jedes betsteht sie ... manchmal verliert ein Figürchen das Gleichgewicht und fällt auf den Nachbarn, mit dem es nun zusammenschmilzt. Wir sehen diese Mißgeburten des Porzellans, ein ganzes Abnormitätenkabinett der Töpferei: zwei Hunde, die nicht voneinander können, ein Kind mit zwei Köpfen, zwei Affen mit vier Popscherln, einen Hirtenknaben, der zum Sodomiten geworden ist, einen Walfisch mit Elefantenrüssel.* (DrR, 220)

'Misgeburten des Porzellans' is a tour de force of the imaginative way Kisch's Neue Sachlichkeit reportage could defamiliarize the most mundane things to reveal their latent ideological significances.

In conclusion, setting aside DrR's achievement in undermining the categorical distinction between journalism and imaginative literature, two questions about Kisch remain. How far did he become disillusioned by Stalin's repressive political and cultural policy in the '30s? To what degree did he accommodate his own counterfactual art to Socialist Realism's new official hyperreality? Kisch's ablest critics disagree on these points.** Though Western leftists could not be forcibly conscripted into 'reporting' events and abandoning 'Formalist' self-consciousness as the Party decreed (unlike the writers brigade who produced The White Sea Canal) their "Wille zur Sachlichkeit" was probably subject to the subtler pressures of self-censorship in the cause of 'higher', historical truth. They were faced with the same choice, simultaneously aesthetic and ethical: to report as individual conscience dictated or accept the imperatives of partiynost. Henri Nannen gives Kisch the benefit of the doubt:

Parteilichkeit war für den in Grunde politisch naiven Kisch keine Einbahnstraße zur Erfüllung des Dogmas, sondern Richtung
auf einen menschlichen Sozialismus. Aber gerade weil er naiv und spontan war, fehlten ihm auch die Scheuklappen. 8

However, though 'der rasende Reporter' did not become an internal dissident on the left (as Orwell subsequently saw himself after Homage to Catalonia (1938)), the Dutch writer Jef Last noted the extent of Kisch's unease at the time of the Valencia Congress in 1937 and the storm over Retour de l'URSS:

Why this conspiracy of silence around the cultural reaction in Russia, about which we all agreed in private? When we heard in Madrid that yet another school had been bombed, Kisch remarked: 'When you hear of such horrors, when you realize what our enemies are, then your courage returns and again you feel inclined to defend everything that has been done on our side, even the trials!' 84

That the leading Neue Sachlichkeit reporter may have rationalized in this way shows the tragic dilemma Stalinism created for a modern literature of fact, the possibilities of which Kisch's new reportage in so many ways epitomised.

In his article on Kisch, Balk declared that "The reporter may approach his work by various methods even such as are poles apart. He may consider the outside world as depersonified and he may take the outer world as a means to expatiate on his own inner life." 86 I will next discuss Arthur Koestler as a post-Kischean reporter, who also represents an important link with the British new reportage of the '30s. Koestler's career began after the Soviet Union's revolutionary phase had ended and Stalinism was attempting to monopolize the alternative historical perspective form which Reed and Kisch had reported. Consequently, Koestler experienced totalitarianism 'from the inside' and it is the symptomatic effects of this ideological pressure, whereby his reporting of the outer world refracted his own inner life, that I now want to examine.
Koestler's reportage documents both his times and his own development from enthusiasm to disillusionment, confirming the I-witness's status as the displaced subject of what s/he reports.

In his autobiography, Koestler wrote that Stalinism made the universe appear "an open book, printed in the language of physical equations and social determinants". However, with his disillusionment came a crisis of representation so that it began to appear "as a text written in invisible ink", decipherable only in provisional patches. Koestler's 'inside knowledge' of totalitarianism meant that his reportage was also a gradual discovering of his own unconscious motives for investing in an ideology which set crippling limits on I-witnessing.

Koestler (1905-83) called his autobiography "this report", and his dual motivation for writing it also applies to his '30s reportage. "The Chronicler's urge" expresses the need to bear witness to external events for others and for the future, while the confessional "Ecce Homo" motive "expresses the same need with regard to internal events." Koestler refracted the history of his time through his own ideological development. His reportage can be read for more than just conventionally historical significances, because "Both the detective and the psycho-analyst affirm that apparently irrelevant facts yield the most important clues". In 'The Novelist's Temptations' (1945), Koestler used the term 'reporter' negatively to account for what he felt was the failure of '30s writers. Their novels "read like dispatches by war correspondents from the fronts of the class struggle", because
their deterministic view of personality as a product of class and biology produced "two-dimensional beings". His own novel *Arrival and Departure* (1943), was a retrospective attempt to analyze his own "political unconscious" in the '30s through autobiographical fiction. However, the workings of this "third, irrational dimension" can also be detected in his earlier reportage as Koestler himself was later at pains to point out (See *Arrow*, pp.69-72). Part of the historical problem of investigating Koestler's development is that so little of the early reportage from his so-called 'Red Period' survives, so that our knowledge of it, for lack of primary sources, has inevitably been filtered through the autobiographical writings of his post-war 'Blue Period'. As Orwell's biographer Bernard Crick has emphasized, we have to be specially wary of identifying differences in consciousness between Koestler's attitudes at the time and those formulated retrospectively.

Crick also points out the questionable reliance of Iain Hamilton's 1982 biography on Koestler's own pronouncements about the first thirty-five years of his life.

The Hungarian Revolution of November 1918 had a crucial effect on the young middle-class Koestler, by bringing contact with the reality of an "alien race", the working-class (See *Arrow*, p.87). However, Koestler suggested that under Stalinism it became an article of faith that the most uneducated "would always have a more 'correct' approach to any political problem ... due to a kind of instinct rooted in class-consciousness." The proletarian became "a kind of collective super-ego" and Stalinism's equivalent to original sin was being born into the oppressing class, making individuals, contradictorily, both determined by their social origin and culpable for it (See *Invisible Writing*, pp.39-41). Hence the contrast between the brief equality of the
Hungarian Commune and the USSR's degeneration into a terrorist state epitomizes the political and psychological tragedy of European intellectuals like Koestler in the '30s.

By 1927 at just 22, Koestler was Middle East correspondent for the House of Ullstein, then at the peak of its influence. Ullsteins, for whom many Germanophone new reporters (including, occasionally, Kisch) worked, was not so much a newspaper chain as a huge communications network. It published four dailies in Berlin alone and photomagazines like the highbrow *Querschnitt* and *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. Ullsteins was anti-militarist, anti-chauvinist and Pan-European, promoting the Franco-German rapprochement of the Briand-Stresemann era, under the motto "political liberalism and cultural modernism" (See Arrow, pp.214-15).

Koestler claimed that there was a basic difference between the ways in which subjectivity was expressed in contemporary Anglo- and Germanophone reporting. The former expressed it indirectly, through "selection of material and distribution of emphasis", making direct opinions and judgements "the prerogative of leader-writers and columnists." In the Weimar press, however, facts tended to be used as the vehicle for direct opinions and oracular judgments, according to the paper's and reporter's Weltanschauung. If it was disingenuous of the Anglophone press to pretend to objectivity, it was dangerous for the Weimar press to abandon it as an 'enabling myth' altogether. Consequently, Koestler alleged, the Weimar public never developed the habit of weighing factual evidence critically and the correspondent "was expected to be more of a littérature ... and to have an 'individual style' like a creative writer". The I-witness form was the feuilleton (the basis of DrR) which Koestler retrospectively denounced as "a
perverse blend of travelogue, essay and short story”. Though this may be exaggerated (as Koestler’s writing about his ‘red period’ increasingly became), it is certainly arguable that irresponsible subjectivity in the Weimar press was symptomatic of a culture “rapidly losing touch with reality” and “which, a few years later, wallowed in the turbid flow of Nazi mystique.” (See Arrow, pp.225-57)

In Paris from 1929, Koestler played the dual role of liberal-capitalist Ullstein News Service man and foreign correspondent for the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), with tacit knowledge of both. Nonetheless, he saw European democratic socialism’s failure to create its own mass-circulation press as “intimately connected” with its decline in the ’30s, because it was unable to identify with, or (in Benjamin’s phrase) reproduce, the people “as a living reality whose interests, tastes and foibles must be understood and shared”, rather than just targetted for propaganda (See Arrow, p.275). Working for Ullsteins automatically made Koestler part of “Dr. Goebbels’s bête noire” of “‘rootless cosmopolitanism’, ‘judeo-pacifism’, ‘pluto-democracy’, ‘Western decadence’, ‘gutter literature’” (See Arrow, pp.296-97). However, well before the Nazis took power in 1933 Ullsteins were ‘Aryanizing’ themselves to survive in the new Pan-German climate. H.R. Knickerbocker’s contemporary condition-of-Germany reportage: Germany - Fascist or Soviet? thus summed up this disappearance of a third way.

There ensued a “mass migration” of young intellectuals to Communism, which appeared the only effective alternative to National Socialism, but Koestler classed himself as a “chronically indignant rebel” rather than an “earnest revolutionary”. The former retains the capacity to develop, while the latter becomes “a bureaucrat of Utopia”, a distinction which parallels that between Graham Greene’s sceptical
'reporter' and the 'leader writer's' fanatical faith (See Arrow, pp.319-21°°). Koestler recollected that it was the American destruction of agricultural stock to inflate prices when millions of unemployed were starving in 1931-32 that ended his "political latency". By contrast, Stalin's first Five Year Plan seemed the fulfilment of utilitarian Progress. The world's greatest power dam would surely "bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number." Utopia seemed concretized "in a real country with real people", a mythic "stepmotherland" whose very inaccessibility and remoteness invited sublimation and displacement (See Arrow, pp.322 and 225-57). Moreover, Soviet culture, not yet uniformatized, attracted Koestler, with its appearance of a Modernist Renaissance. The climax of Koestler's Ullsteins career - as scientific correspondent for the Vossiche Zeitung on the Graf Zeppelin expedition to the Soviet Arctic, commencing July 26 1931 - clinched his decision to write for the Party. Two years after his flight over "the Great Social Experiment" he reported it in Von Weissen Nächten und Roten Tagen ('White Nights and Red Days') eventually published for the German-speaking Ukrainian minority alone in April 1933."" Koestler would later assert that the text's Leitmotif, "the perception of a landscape through the dialectical filter", was unconsciously paradigmatic of the dehumanizing, 'aerial' view of Stalinist reportage. His I-witnessing became an allegorical paysage moralisé glorifying the construction far below, though he learnt later "that the stretch of Karelia over which we flew ... was one of the oldest and most notorious regions of slave labour in Soviet Russia" (See Arrow, pp.388-91). Ironically, it was through here that prisoners building the White Sea canal passed, often serving trumped-up sentences to fill forced-labour quotas. Stalinism
represented a self-contained ideological state. Like orthodox Freudianism or Catholicism, it was a closed system, claiming "to explain all phenomena under the sun" and resisted the threat of "newly observed facts" by neutralizing them through "scholastic processing" (Arrow, p.308). Similarly, language and thought were automatized by jargon to reduce the concrete specificity of experience. Just as for the Freudian "every object has its hidden symbol-value" (Arrow, p.389), Koestler learnt to impose the required interpretation on his experience after joining the KPD formally on his return from the Zeppelin flight (31 December 1931).

However, few intellectuals then realised that Stalinism caricatured the original revolutionary spirit, that the movement had "travelled from the era of the Apostles to that of the Borgias." (Invisible Writing, p.27) Dissenters were 'proved' saboteurs because by disagreeing they endangered unity and, thus, acted as fascist agents even if subjectively their kidneys had been "smashed in a Fascist concentration camp." Such inconvenient historical nuances were erased by the view from the dialectical airship. Thus, Koestler explained, intellectuals evolved their own self-censorship to reconcile "wild zigzags of the Party line", like the transformation of 'class against class' Comrade Hyde into Popular Front Dr Jekyll in 1936 (Invisible Writing, pp.34-36).

Because Koestler's dismissal from Ullsteins in 1932 for undercover Party intelligence work was not publicized, Willi Münzenberg's KPD Agitprop department exploited his intact reputation for Russia through Bourgeois Eyes: "Mr. K., a liberal news-correspondent, starts his journey with an anti-communist bias, is gradually converted by the results of the Five Year Plan, and ends up as a friend and admirer of the Soviet Union." (Invisible Writing, p.56) However, Koestler arrived
in the Ukraine at the height of the 1932-33 famine created by forced collectivization. Its millions of nomadized victims have since been officially admitted, but were referred to then only by the euphemism trudnesty, or 'troubles' on the agricultural front and explained away as evicted Kulaks. Koestler's inner censor accommodated this "brutal impact of reality on illusion" by synthesizing the contradictions. As his original manuscript put it, Kharkov resembled a photograph exposed "once in the past and once in the future. So that only slowly did the newcomer learn to distinguish, underneath a chaotic surface, the shape of things to come; to realise that in Sovietland the present is a fiction, a quivering membrane stretched between the past and the future." (Quoted in Invisible Writing (Koestler's italics). See pp.64-66) Many such passages were officially expurgated, because they demonstrated all too clearly the workings of Koestler's "dialectical filter" which made it possible for him to ignore the fact that this ostensibly egalitarian society was a rigid hierarchy of organizatsia, entitling people like himself to privileges, such as luxury foodshops and Intourist hotels. The good Stalinist had to be alternately positivist and idealist, refusing to see through appearances and refusing to do anything else as required.

Russia through Bourgeois Eyes was never published but became part two of Von Weissen Nächten und Roten Tagen reporting the First Five Year Plan's achievements. Altogether Koestler played 'Der rasende Reporter' for five months, by rail, steamer, car and horse. At the time he was blinded by the rhetoric of technics and the desire for a complete break with the past: "the mystic of the nineteen-thirties yearned, as a sign of Grace, for a look at the Dnieper dam and a three per cent increase in Soviet pig-iron production." (Invisible Writing, p.79)
Consequently, Koestler visited a Yaroslavl synthetic rubber factory, the Gorki automobile plant and the Dnieper Dam itself. However, he repressed his suspicion that Russian industry might be "a young giant" afflicted by bureaucratic centralization "with paralysis ... and epileptic fits" in turns (Invisible Writing, p.83). Similarly, the Asiatic Republics, reported in Part Three, were undergoing 'sovietization', which he refused to see amounted to "deportation into a disconsolate and incomprehensible world" by a colonial power. Coincidentally, he also witnessed a "foretaste of things to come": the show trial of Attakurdov, "the Trotsky" of Turkmenistan (See Invisible Writing, pp.136 and 142-43). Later he met Old Bolsheviks Radek and Bukharin (conflated as 'Rubashov' in Darkness at Noon) soon to be victims of their political heirs' belief in themselves as 'instruments of history'.

Tretyakov, chairman of the Russian section of the International Organization of Revolutionary Writers (MORP), rejected Koestler's manuscript as 'over-critical' and 'romantic' (See Invisible Writing, p.84). Ironically, as we have seen, Tretyakov had himself been important in the theory and practice of the avant-garde literature of fact. The title of his influential 'bio-interview', Chinese Testament (1934), was later echoed by Koestler's Spanish Testament (1937). However, Von Weissen Nächten und Roten Tagen was passed by the Foreign Affairs press department, which believed a degree of superficial criticism would make the reporter's 'detached neutrality' more plausible.

Afterwards, Koestler joined KPD exiles in Paris, now the centre of Comintern anti-Fascist propaganda. His faith had been sustained, despite the depressing Russian experience, by the KPD's unofficial
slogan "Wir werden es besser machen" and Hitler's sudden takeover (See *Invisible Writing*, p.189). The years 1933 to 1939 were years of a political crusade which Stalin exploited for foreign policy and finally negated with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939. Meanwhile, despite the pro-Popular Front sympathies of Léon Blum, French Socialist prime minister from 1936 to 1937 (and briefly again in 1938), on the whole Western nations suffered a failure of imagination towards authentic reports of Nazi atrocities and plans for world conquest, a paradoxical "incredulity towards the incredible" (*Invisible Writing*, p.230).

The initial propaganda victory Koestler helped score, although pyrrhic because Fascism continued to advance on all other fronts, was over the Reichstag arson trial. Willi Münzenberg's Paris HQ was camouflaged as the non-political 'World Committee for the Relief of the Victims of German Fascism'. Koestler monitored the trial's repercussions in British opinion and shaped the daily bulletins distributed to the British press. The World Committee had its own publishing house, 'Editions de Carrefour', and branches all over Europe and America, supported by a host of influential people unaware of its full background. Otto Katz, alias 'André Simon', was the anonymous compiler of the resulting *Brown Book of the Hitler Terror and the Burning of the Reichstag* (1933)."5

It was the first comprehensive, statistical, photoreport on Nazi repression, including persecution of the Jews. Chapter VI, 'The Campaign Against Culture', had a particular impact on writers with its account of 'The Destruction of the Hirschfeld Sexual Science Institute' and the Nazi list of inflammable modern writers including Brecht, Döblin and Kisch. Katz quoted a favourite phrase of Göring's from *Schlageter*,
hero of Hans Johst's play, to encapsulate Nazi art policy: "When I hear
the word culture, I get my Browning ready." The Brown Book also gave
the sensational 'inside story' of the fire, and its success taught
Koestler much about the persuasive methods of documentary reporting
cultivated by the Party after the success of TIDSTW. Though partly based
on supposition and bluff, it hit the target and within weeks was
translated into seventeen languages as an anti-Fascist bible.

It is worth emphasizing the powerful influence of the ex-Spartacist
Münzenberg (1889-1940) on KPD reporters like Kisch and Koestler, and
British fellow-travellers like Claud Cockburn and Christopher
Isherwood. Born into the Thuringian working-class, Münzenberg built
up the worldwide Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe (IAH), which pioneered
multi-media techniques of mass-propaganda. Founded in Berlin in 1921
for Volga famine relief, the IAH sponsored soup kitchens during the
British General Strike and in the '30s operated Spanish and Chinese aid
campaigns. By 1926 the IAH rivalled Ullsteins, owning two German
dailies, as well as the weekly Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung, with its
one million circulation, and Der Arbeiter-Fotograf. Thus it catered for
interests from photoreportage to sport, and produced Eisenstein and
Pudovkin's early films (Mezhrabpom-Film deriving from the Russian for
IAH). By the mid-'30s the IAH specialized in recruiting sympathetic
liberals for the Popular Front. However, Münzenberg's contempt for
apparatchiks and his disillusionment with Stalin eventually led to his
expulsion in 1938 and, following his release from wartime internment by
the French, to his murder in May 1940. His second in command, Katz
(1895-1952), was born in Prague and, like Koestler and Kisch, a
polylingual journalist. He went on to edit the second and third Brown
Book (1934 and 1936) and The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain (1937). Though spying on Münzenberg for the Apparat and quick to desert him in 1938, Katz was, ironically, himself executed as a British spy (allegedly recruited by Cockburn in the '30s) in post-war Czechoslovakia.

Münzenberg also organized a 'Committee of Inquiry into the Origins of the Reichstag Trial', composed of international lawyers and represented as an unofficial tribunal with a mandate "conferred by the conscience of the world" in Katz's The Reichstag Fire Trial. The Second Brown Book of the Hitler Terror. Through this shadow trial, Koestler claimed, Dimitrov's acquittal became synonymous "with the acquittal of Communism in general from the charge of conspiracy and violence" and prepared opinion for the policy change to the Popular Front and the Franco-Russian military pact. Dimitrov mentioned the success of the first Brown Book made it "the sixth accused" in the Reichstag trial. The second gleefully reported the own goals Göring scored in conducting the Nazi frame-up. As Koestler put it, "Never in history had a member of the government of a great power made such a grotesque spectacle ... in a public courtroom." (See Invisible Writing, p.245) In effect, Göring caricatured himself as a political gangster and hardly needing touching up as 'Emanuele Giri' for Brecht's Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui (1941):

Göring displayed most open anger and shaking both fists shouted:
"I will tell you what the German people know. They know that you are behaving in a disgraceful fashion. They know that you are a crook who came to Germany to set the Reichstag on fire. In my eyes you are nothing but a scoundrel, a crook who belongs to the gallows!"

The President intervened to point out that Dimitrov must not make propaganda and to excuse Göring's rage, whereat Dimitrov pointed out that Göring's peroration was nothing but propaganda from beginning to end, and in any case that he was not put out by Göring's rage, that on the contrary he was quite satisfied with the answers.
Dimitrov coolly provoked Göring so that the latter's parting slip revealed Nazi law and order as a front: "You wait till I get you out of the power of this court!"\textsuperscript{101}

The World Committee also assigned Koestler to its refugee children's hostel on a project exemplifying the 'operative principle', Stalinism's equivalent to 'participant observation'.\textsuperscript{102} This meant that before depicting collective farming or the car industry, a writer had to spend several months working in a \textit{kolkhoz} or a factory to get the 'operative angle'. However, as with reportage texts like the \textit{White Sea Canal}, the writer was also subject to the pressure of a 'historically correct' perspective, limiting usable facts. From his field-work Koestler produced a kind of 'Emil and the Young Pioneers', \textit{Die Erlebnisse des Genossen Piepvogel und seiner Freunde in der Emigration}, which was rejected despite "its documentary realism" for "bourgeois, individualistic tendencies" by the Party caucus within the Association of German Writers in Exile (See \textit{Invisible Writing}, p.283). This was led by Ernst Reinhard, but despite eminent members like Gustav Regler, Bodo Uhse, Johannes Becher, Willi Bredel and others, was effectively run by literary bureaucrats. However, also prominent was Kisch, and Koestler recalled how the veteran reporter acted as "a kind of father figure", pleading clemency for his "lack of ideological training". Koestler felt Kisch skilfully managed to keep his reporting 'correct' while preserving its artistic quality, and always avoided doctrinal argument by self-protective ambiguity - "'I don't think; Stalin thinks for me'". He got away with this, because his reputation was such a Party asset. However, behind the mask, Koestler claimed to see "a tired, disenchanted man" with "no illusions about the Party, but even fewer about the world outside"(See \textit{Invisible Writing}, p.283). Koestler
modelled the dilemma of an elderly Communist in *The Age of Longing* (1951) on Kisch's: "Once you've invested all your capital in a firm, you don't withdraw it - not at our age, not after thirty years." Kisch died of heart failure in Stalinized Prague four years before his compatriot and intimate friend, Katz, was executed. It is not unlikely that had 'Der rasende Reporter' lived longer he might have shared Katz's fate.

Koestler then worked at the Institut pour L'Etude du Fascisme which constituted an attempt to document "what Fascism really was" that might have increased the Popular Front's effectiveness. However, the official definition of Fascism was "the overt form of the dictatorship of the finance-capitalists". Consequently, any non-Party organization could be camouflaged Fascism: Socialists were 'Social-Fascists'; Catholics, 'Clerical-Fascists'; Trotskyites, 'Trotsky-Fascists'; etc. (See *Invisible Writing*, pp.296-98) But this lack of discrimination made it impossible for the KPD to understand Nazism's uniquely irrational appeal or to fully embrace potential allies. The Institute thus contained the KPD's whole tragedy "in a nutshell", since its analysis inevitably evoked charges of 'bourgeois objectivism' (See *Invisible Writing*, p.308).

The assassination on December 1st 1935 of Sergei Kirov, the Leningrad Party boss and Stalin's closest rival, was the cue for the Great Purge. Zinoviev, Kamenev and most other Old Bolsheviks, including Bukharin and Radek, principal authors of the new Constitution, were soon executed for counter-revolutionary conspiracy. Ironically, Nicolaiev, Kirov's killer, was as hapless a tool as van der Lubbe in the *Brown Books*, and ensuing events replayed Hitler's 'Night of the Long Knives' on an epic scale. At this time Koestler was writing *The
Gladiators (1939), Part One of his trilogy on “the ethics of revolution and the problem of ends and means”. In the second, Darkness at Noon, the problem was restated in the contemporary setting of the Moscow Show Trials and showed how the bureaucrat of Utopia could act ruthlessly out of 'historical necessity' even if he was himself its victim, although Rubashov realises in moments of clarity that Party reasoning pursued "such a winding, twisted course that the goal finally disappeared in the mist". But Koestler, like Kisch and many others, was temporarily distracted by the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, even though, ultimately, his I-witnessing of the comparable terrorism of Spanish Fascism proved the 'abreaction' which made conscious his repressed misgivings about Soviet totalitarianism.

By August 1936, under cover of a press-card from the crypto-fascist Hungarian regime, Koestler infiltrated rebel Spain. It was a dangerous gamble because only sympathetic reporters were admitted by Franco and he was soon rumbled in the Seville hotel where German Condor Legion officers were billeted, narrowly escaping the same captain Bolin, who captured him five months later in Malaga. However, proof of Nazi intervention was quite literally on the street: Luftwaffe personnel strolled publicly and an English fascist volunteer gave away details of their equipment and operations. Most importantly, Koestler scooped an interview with General Quiépo de Llano, who made "highly indiscreet statements" about foreign aid (See Invisible Writing, p.389). All this was syndicated internationally and provided hard evidence for Münzenberg's London-based Commission of Inquiry into Alleged Breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement in Spain.

Wooing France and Britain against Fascism meant that the Comintern now presented "a New Look of ultra respectability". Nonetheless, the
Popular Front itself did have "the fervent mystique of a genuine mass movement", because Spain seemed "a modern Thermopylae against new barbarism" (See Invisible Writing, pp.395-97). Two major victories for Münzenberg against Goebbels were Katz's Spione und Verschwörer in Spanien, an extension of the Brown Books' documentary principle, and Koestler's Menschenopfer Unerhört, reporting his infiltration of rebel HQ and the war's historical background. English versions were published by the Left Book Club in 1937. Katz's The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain (1937) showed how France would be encircled by Fascist dictatorships if Spain fell, leaving it "at the mercy of the future Nazi war of aggression", while Britain risked losing Gibraltar and Mediterranean access. Katz also documented Nazi intervention as typifying "their work in other countries" - a warning to the democracies "which must be heard" if it was "not to be carried through to its destructive conclusion." Münzenberg believed passionately in the effectiveness of atrocity propaganda, and appended glossy horror photographs to Menschenopfer Unerhört. However, Koestler maintained that compared with the enormity of Fascist misinformation over Spain, "our propaganda was, in the early stages of the war, relatively honest." (See Invisible Writing, pp.407-08)

Returning for the third and last time to cover the Malaga front for the Republican News Agency and London News Chronicle, Koestler was captured after the Italians broke through on February 8th 1937. He had hoped for another scoop, because no foreigner had yet I-witnessed "what happened when the insurgents took over a town" (Invisible Writing, p.414). The resulting Dialogue with Death was written immediately after his release and published as Part Two of the Left Book Club's Spanish Testament (1937) (Part One being the English Menschenopfer Unerhört,
which Koestler later suppressed). This experience made it impossible for him to repress sympathy any longer for Stalin's parallel victims (especially since he had been secretly monitoring Republican reactions to the Moscow trials) and undermined his faith in 'historical necessity'. In solitary confinement in Seville, Koestler witnessed the "beating and execution of ... fellow prisoners and, except for the last forty-eight hours, lived in the expectation of sharing their fate" (Invisible Writing, p.421). His conscious reaction to these events was, however, delayed so that he did not break with the Party until nine months later.

Koestler's alibi in ST maintained that he was "engaged in writing a pacifist novel", but since the war "infected the Press of Europe" with a welter of biased reporting he decided to make an attempt at even-handedness. Thus in the guise of bourgeois liberalism, pro-Fascist propaganda would be countered and the first part of ST, like Von Weissen Nächten und Roten Tagen, was an apparently irrefutable model of conversion through experience of the facts, this time to the Popular Front. Like Katz, Koestler aimed at international opinion. On the steamer bound for Spain, "The Englishmen in the first class", according to ST, were almost convinced by the Daily Mail "that the rebellion was a crusade to save civilization". Consequently, Koestler quoted Lord Lothian's notorious statement about Berlin after the Nazi coup - "The city is quiet, the trams are running, and there are no corpses lying about on the pavements" - to suggest that the order allegedly restored by Franco masked a terrorist reality (See ST, pp.19-21).

ST stressed that Franco's overwhelming reliance on foreign munitions, 80,000 Moorish and 100,000 Italian troops proved his lack of popular support in Spain. In contrast, the meagre amounts of Russian and
Mexican aid that penetrated the League of Nations Non-Intervention blockade went to a legitimate government with the right to defend itself. Similarly, the International Brigades consisted of small numbers of individual volunteers (though Koestler concealed their Party vetting). British and French policy mistakenly treated both sides equally, even though the rebellion's foreign instigation constituted "an open breach of international law, and arbitrary interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state." (See ST, pp.98-99) ST also claimed to disclose the "real facts" of the war's origins and to penetrate the "bloody arabesques traced on the façade of an historical process ... to its structural foundations" in the agrarian problem of 50,000 "feudal magnates" owning more land "than the remaining ninety-nine per cent of the population" (See ST, p.42). Financial backing by the Spanish Church meant that Franco's crusade reeked of "poison gas and incense" (ST, p.60). While Republican anti-clericalism was, therefore, not necessarily irreligious, because Basque and Catalan loyalists were also staunch Catholics. Clinchingly, Koestler represented Spain not as a Marxist but as a long overdue liberal revolution and, consequently, impossible for British and French opinion to ignore without devaluing their own democratic traditions:

The anti-clerical demands of the Spanish Popular Front in the year 1936 were not a whit more radical or "red" than those of the writers of the age of enlightenment: separation of the Church and State, distribution of Church lands among the landless peasants, secular education, freedom of religious worship, freedom of speech and freedom of the pen. (See ST, pp.44-45)

ST also allayed post-Great War qualms about atrocity propaganda by claiming to share "the repugnance felt by every newspaperman with a conscience at the thought of descending into such slimy depths". But "objectivity neurosis" was also dangerous if it meant "maintaining
silence with regard to concrete facts, because these facts are in themselves so crude he is afraid of appearing biased." (See ST, p.84)

Koestler quoted the all-party group of British MPs who witnessed the bombing of Madrid and Getafe which made 'neutrality', journalistic or military, seem an inhumanly inadequate response. If foreign media and governments remained "objective in the face of such bestiality, then Europe is lost." (See ST, pp.175-77) Orwell concurred with him in his review of ST: "I quite agree. You cannot be objective about an aerial torpedo." (See CEJL I, pp.329-330)

The potential ambivalence of ST's statement that "Psychology is the bête noire of dictators" is a clue to the reportage's revelations from Koestler's own political unconscious (See ST, p.213), which, as he put it in his autobiography, "is also subject to inhibitions and repressions". However, like the Freudian one, it is also a "sinister humourist who likes tripping up one's tongue and sticking out its own". Thus its parapraxes sometimes dodged his internal censor in the '30s. He even claimed that he once said at a meeting "comrades, we shall continue the struggle against the Stalinite tyranny - I mean, of course, against the Hitlerite tyranny" (Invisible Writing, pp.100-02 and 333). Similarly, ST yields a sub-text forecasting Koestler's impending 'unconversion'. For example, he noted that "the end justifies the means" was the principle both of the Jesuits and of Fascism's "ultra-modern form of reaction ... bent on driving mankind back to the Middle Ages with the help of tanks and the radio." But Stalin, like Gil Robles, political head of the Spanish Rightist bloc, was a seminary alumnus and there is a similar suppressed symmetry in Koestler's exposé of the systematic rebel terror (See ST, pp.60 and 80-82).

Moreover, Koestler had inside knowledge of how both totalitarianisms
played the same propaganda game, though Münzenberg's men played better than Goebbels', as ST's torpedoing of Burgos' *Red and Yellow Book* (1936) shows. This latter text alleged that Republican atrocities in Andalusia were proof of a planned 'Communist' uprising, though, as ST pointed out, they actually took place after Franco's 'pre-emptive' coup, the identical pretext used by the Nazis (See ST, pp.123-26). Consequently, Koestler easily exposed the *Red and Yellow Book's* partisanship, while stressing the 'disinterestedness' of Münzenberg's Committee. Another pro-Franco text was R. Timmerman's *Heroes of the Alcazar* (1937). The 250 women and children held hostage by the besieged rebels, Koestler claimed, deflated this episode into "a sordid story of blackmail", but his comment that this was a rare opportunity "of catching the distorters of history and manufacturers of myth in flagrante delicto" was richly ironic in view of ST's concealed motives (See ST, p.153). He demonstrated that Burgos's propaganda was "exaggerated, contradictory and unreliable" (See ST, p.140), exactly as Orwell's HTC would show Communist propaganda about Republican in-fighting to be. Indeed, ST illustrates Orwell's maxim, "All propaganda is lies, even when you are telling the truth", perfectly (See CEJL II, p.465).

But when the Republican media hailed the Malagan defeat as victory, Koestler got a foretaste of the ruthless betrayal of those who have outlived their political usefulness. Orwell believed the second half of ST was "of the greatest psychological interest - probably one of the most honest and unusual documents" of the war (CEJL I pp.329-330). The sin of some Leftists, according to Orwell, was wanting "to be anti-fascist without being anti-totalitarian", which Koestler knew but "did not feel free to say" in 1937 (CEJL III p.273). However, DWD does say so indirectly. Because of his prison experience, Koestler came to
believe that psychologically "no concrete, objective truth exists" (Invisible Writing, p.442). And this change is signalled by the way the DWD's preface suddenly abandoned the apparently detached documentary style of the earlier half of the text. Though personal feelings were "the very things a journalist ought not to have", the condemned cell unavoidably made Koestler's own subjective reactions the object of his report (See Preface to DWD (= ST, p.207)).

Koestler felt his experience was in many ways more typical of war's victimization than the battlefield, since war always "consists of ten per cent action and ninety per cent passive suffering". DWD "may perhaps more truly reflect the Spanish tragedy than messages from the front", because it consists of unspectacular, defamiliarizing details that could not be neatly processed by any 'dialectical filter' (See ST, p.207). Hence the guard's fatalistic shrug at torture remained "more vivid in my memory than the screams", and eerie spy-holes in the corridors of cells resembled "an avenue of dead eyes." (See ST, pp.229 and 238) Similarly, as in Orwell's 'A Hanging' (CEJL I, pp.66-71), the incongruity of the body's reactions underlines the obscenity of political murder: "As the heavy lorry started up, we had to hold on to each other and to the civil guards to keep our balance ... they too sought to steady themselves by putting an arm round the shoulder of a neighbour, regardless of whether he was a fellow-guard or a man whom half an hour later they would be shooting, sending a bullet through his eye or his nose." (ST, p.256)

In the cell's introspective microcosm, Koestler experienced apparently stable realities like time and space as paradoxes, and re-learnt the value of mundane things. Reading after a long period of textual deprivation, he felt "like someone who has been bed-ridden and
who in learning to walk anew is acutely conscious of the play of his muscles." (ST, p.295) Similarly, his visual awareness returned on transfer to a cell with a view, like a film cutting from monochrome into colour. The reversal of 'normal' consciousness (because the outside world became "as unreal and inconceivable" to him as life "in an isolation cell is inconceivable to the man outside") made it possible to grasp the internalization process which creates the slave mentality: "I had never believed the saying that a dictatorship or a single person or a minority can maintain its ascendancy by the sword alone. But I had not known how living and real were those atavistic forces that paralyse the majority from within." (See ST, pp.374 and 308-09) Surprised by the elastic limits of suffering, he was ironically most tormented by the possibility that his sentence might be commuted.

Koestler dedicated DWD to an executed peasant militiaman in whom he invested the '30s intellectual's feelings of responsibility and guilt about the working-class. The elegy implicitly contrasted Realpolitik and the sincere desire for a better world it exploits and betrays:

They call it armed rebellion, Nicolas. They call it the hand of Moscow, Nicolas. They call it the instinct of the rabble, Nicolas.
That a man should want to learn to read.
My God, they really should have sent you to Geneva in a cage, with the inscription: "Ecce Homo, Anno Domini 1937." (See ST, p.333 (Koestler's italics))

A Hungarian Fascist on a minor charge, but tricked by Republican inmates into thinking he was also doomed, became Koestler's emotional double, confirming the role his imprisonment under one totalitarianism played in his future refusal to condone 'necessary' murders by its rival. He came to believe that the only way to stop such doublethink was to break down the "dream barriers" constructed by ideology between human beings with reportage that prevented loss of sympathy with the
victims. The way Koestler refracted the nightly horror of the unseen firing squad through his own consciousness is a model for this. The most powerful of these passages is a clash between laconic documentation of numbers killed and the prisoner’s desperate attempts to silence the signs:

I tore strips off my shirt and stuffed my ears with them so as not to hear anything during the night. It was no good. I cut my gums with a splinter of glass, and said they were bleeding, so as to obtain some iodised cotton wool. I stuffed the cotton wool in my ears. This was no good, either.

Our hearing became preternaturally sharp. We heard everything. On the nights of the executions we heard the telephone ring at ten o’clock. We heard the warden on duty answer it. We heard him repeating at short intervals: "ditto ... ditto ... ditto ..." We knew it was someone at military headquarters reading out the list of those who were to be shot during the night. We knew that the warden wrote down a name before every "ditto". But we did not know what names they were and we did not know whether ours was among them.

The telephone always rang at ten. Then until midnight or one o’clock there was time to lie on one’s bed and wait. Each night we weighed our lives in the balance and each night found them wanting.

Then at twelve or one we heard the shrill sound of the night bell. It was the priest and the firing squad. They always arrived together.

Then began the opening of the doors, the ringing of the sanctus bell, the praying of the priest, the cries for help and the shouts of "Mother".

The steps came nearer down the corridor, receded, came nearer, receded. Now they were at the next cell; now they were in the other wing; now they were coming back. Clearest of all was always the priest’s voice. "Lord, have mercy on this man, Lord forgive him his sins, Amen." We lay on our beds and our teeth chattered.

On Tuesday night seventeen were shot.
On Thursday night eight were shot.
On Friday night nine were shot.
On Saturday night thirteen were shot.

Six days shalt thou labour, saith the Lord, and on the seventh day, the Sabbath, thou shalt do no manner of work.
On Sunday night three were shot. (ST, pp.343-44)

The publicity to save Koestler, orchestrated by Katz but centred on England, was so fervent because it was the first Fascist death-threat to a foreign journalist and was regarded "as a further step towards the abolition of intellectual freedom" (See ST, p.445). After his
unexpected release, in exchange for a Fascist hostage on May 14th 1937, he was unable to find any infallibly correct meaning in his experience: "This is a very confused story without a definite thread, without climax or anti-climax. The corpses are not, as is fitting, piled up at the end of the act; they lie about, evenly distributed, here, there and everywhere." (ST, p.369) Instead he realized that any political movement relying on "purely utilitarian ethics" must commit "the same fatal error" (Invisible Writing, pp.434-36). It was precisely because of their alibi of the greater good, that dictatorships of the "Torquemada-Robespierre-Stalin ascendancy" were more disastrous than naked tyrannies. The only solution was to reverse Bentham's maxim: "the least suffering for the smallest number" (Invisible Writing, p.437).

The misrepresentation of the POUM, as in Orwell's case, precipitated Koestler's psychological abreaction. The 'objectivist' argument held that because it split the Republican forces, the POUM was pro-Fascist. However, Koestler made his position clear on his Left Book Club lecture tour at the beginning of 1938: Nin's followers, though wrong, had acted in good faith. For a Party member to say so publicly meant 'Trotskyism by association'. Thus the final KPD writers' discussions on the new slogan 'Write the Truth', which Koestler attended before resigning, were grimly farcical, because the truth was unwriteable when it contradicted the Party line (See Invisible Writing, pp.465-71).

In autumn 1938 Koestler joined Münzenberg's anti-Nazi weekly Die Zukunft, founded after Münzenberg too broke with the Party in March. However, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was used a year later by the wartime Daladier government as a pretext for persecuting anti-Nazi refugees as 'enemy aliens' whether they remained in the Party or not. Koestler was arrested in October 1939 and reported the subsequent
"Kafkaesque events" in *Scum of the Earth*, published by the Left Book Club in 1941, by which time Gollancz too was disillusioned with the USSR, and the Popular Front had collapsed. Thus Koestler's refusal to forget Stalin's *volte face* spoke for the Club:

This book was written in January-March 1941, before the German attack on Russia; yet the author sees no reason to modify his observations on the psychological effects of the Soviet-German pact of August 1939, or his opinion on the policy of the Communist Party in France. To smuggle in elements of a later knowledge when describing the mental pattern of people in an earlier period is a common temptation to writers which should be resisted. (See SOTE, 'Author's Note)

This contrasts interestingly with Katz's *J'Accuse! The Men Who Betrayed France* (1941) which alleged pro-Nazi conspiracy in France, but conveniently 'forgot' the Non-Aggression pact and the Party's anti-war stance before Hitler's June 1941 attack on Russia dragged Stalin into it.

SOTE's epigraph from Robert Neumann's *By the Waters of Babylon* justified mediating 'major' historical events through an openly psychological kind of I-witnessing, by comparing Koestler to "the cameo cutter of Herculaneum" who, during the eruption of Vesuvius, "calmly went on carving at his tiny plaque." As in DWD, Koestler claimed to typify a general condition - those persecuted, exiled and hunted "for reasons of their race, nationality or beliefs" - becoming an exception only by surviving the fate of his kind. Hence the "'I' of this narrative, his thoughts and fears and hopes, and even his incongruencies and contradictions, stand for the thoughts and fears and hopes, but above all for the burning despair of a considerable portion of the Continent's population." (SOTE, p.234)

The "silent pogrom" against ex-Republican supporters in France may have been a sop to keeping Franco neutral, but, to Koestler, it was
symptomatic of the fact that French political life was too rotten with apathy, corruption and potential collaboration to adequately defend itself against Fascism, external or internal:

If there had been a branch of the Mass Observation movement in France or of Gallup's Institute of Public Opinion and if they had established a cross-section of what French people thought of the war, they would have been led to the conclusion that France had morally lost the war long before the actual military collapse. (See SOTE, pp.40-44)

French newspapers made scapegoats of the aliens rounded up as "the real scum of the earth", and Koestler claimed this apparently "puzzling burst of hatred against those who had been the first to suffer from the common enemy" was "one of the main psychological factors" in France's political suicide, because it prevented "the war against Fascism ... becoming an anti-Fascist war". Rather than giving the masses a social stake in victory,\textsuperscript{11} Daladier fell back, ironically, on "a national variation or \textit{Ersatz} of German anti-Semitism", blaming the refugee warmongers for dragging France into the War (SOTE, pp.64 and 78).

Compared to Nazism, French abuse of human rights was minor, but it was a sign of the times that the victims comforted "ourselves with comparisons". The concentration camp at Le Vernet near the Pyreneean border, where the refugees were taken, revealed more about the 'conversion tables' of repression:

In Liberal-Centigrade, Vernet was the zero-point of infamy; measured in Dachau-fahrenheit it was still 32 degrees above zero. In Vernet beating-up was a daily occurrence; in Dachau it was prolonged until death ensued. In Vernet people were killed for lack of medical attention; in Dachau they were killed on purpose. In Vernet half of the prisoners had to sleep without blankets in 20 degrees of frost; in Dachau they were put in irons and exposed to the frost. (SOTE, pp.62 and 87)

However, deprivation was worst in the "Leper Barrack", where remnants of the dissolved International Brigades were interned after the USSR closed it doors to now inconvenient heroes. Despite such
glaring political cynicism, Koestler recalled the doublethinking stubbornness of some internees, like Gerhard Eisler, a KPD Central Committee member, who argued that this 'imperialist' war "is not the concern of the international working class" and that real anti-fascism now "meant support for the Fascists" (SOTE, p.116).

Because of another campaign by writers and journalists against the scandal of the French camps, Koestler was released on 17 January 1940. In June, Pétain signed the Armistice treaty and sealed the fate of the 2,000 prisoners left in "their barbed-wire trap". The rest were handed over with "all confidential records of their past ... neatly filed" to the Gestapo in April 1941 or became forced labour for the trans-Saharan Railway (See SOTE, p.138). Koestler himself was re-arrested in a last round up. only days before France fell, along with the anti-Nazi movement's last leaders, including Heinrich Mann, Walter Hasenclever, Benjamin and Münzenberg himself. However, Koestler was lucky enough to escape to England, determined to fight back.

Occupied France now had to resist Nazi propaganda promising it a privileged place in the 'New Order' for Europe, but, as Koestler noted, "to realise clearly one's own interest is an important step; perhaps the most important in the psychology of the masses." (SOTE, p.237) In wartime Britain, he did not abandon belief in the need for democratic socialism, although "A new movement will have to arise in a new moral climate where the Means justify the Ends" (SOTE, p.252). *Darkness at Noon*, published the previous year, explained the Show Trials' grotesque confessions as the inevitable result of the opposite philosophy of expediency. The paradoxical appeal of persecution by the Party simultaneously combined with martyrdom in its cause, was irresistible if the principles of 'objective' guilt and 'historical
necessity' were shared by both persecutors and victims. Similarly, in 'Anatomy of a Myth', Koestler put the failure of the Communists down to their lack of understanding of unconscious cravings and displacements invested in Stalinism's claims to infallibility. The urge to defend the Party led away from reality, turning into "the mental defence of a creed against the foreign intervention of doubt" - a "new 'Opium for the People'". Koestler's alternative was to check the Commissar's will to power with yogic self-analysis (See YAC, pp.121-35, especially pp.122 and 130).

Koestler had I-witnessed things that were considered abnormal in Britain but had become everyday realities in Europe. The British had a particularly effective mental "protective filter" defending them from such knowledge, highlighting, as many contemporary British writers also felt, the need for effectively alerting reportage (Invisible Writing, pp.520-21). British unimaginativeness, constructed and maintained by particularly uninformative media, might be useful during crises, but failed to prevent them occurring. 'On Disbelieving Atrocities' voiced Koestler's frustration at British incredulity about reports of the extermination camps (See YAC, pp.94-99). An agent of the Polish Government in Exile named Karsky brought I-witness evidence of the Final Solution to Britain as early as 1942 and Koestler helped him broadcast it. Later an excerpt from Arrival and Departure in Horizon (December 1943), based on Karsky's report, produced a barrage of accusations of atrocity-mongering (See IW, pp.521-22). Karsky, depressed by his failure, committed suicide, leaving Koestler to write of the ceaseless difficulty of overcoming the ideological dissociation between mundane consciousness and extraordinary events, of which British scepticism about the death-camps was an extreme instance. People viewed newsreels
of "Nazi tortures, of mass-shootings, of underground conspiracy and self-sacrifice" without linking them "with the realities of their normal plane of existence". Society's consciousness was splitting "in direct ratio as communications expand". Though world facts were made 'accessible' as never before by the technology of the hyperreal, people were "prisoners, each in his private portable cage", because automatization divided those on the road from the "victims in the thicket". And unless these "dream barriers" were broken down "this will remain a phoney civilization." (See YAC, pp.97-99)

Despite Koestler's wartime frustration, there had been a veritable explosion of experiments in new reportage and literature of fact of many kinds in '30s Britain, some more successful than others. Its practitioners and theorists drew both on home-grown traditions and European avant-garde influences in their attempts to connect mundane experience with wider realities, but also came under pressure to conform to Stalinism's historical outlook. I want to map out these developments in the next two chapters, before going on to examine specific reporters, topics and texts in more detail.
Notes to Chapter III

1. There is no exact English equivalent for the German adjective *rasend* although a note to the translation of Kisch's *China geheim* stated that he is known as "the rampaging reporter" in Europe (See Secret China trans. Michael Davidson (London: John Lane/The Bodley Head, 1935), p.58) but, besides frantic speed, it also has connotations of rage, even madness.


3. Ibid., p.107.


5. Balk ibid., p.69.


7. Many of the essays in *Text und Kritik* No. 67 (July 1980), devoted to Kisch, debate whether or not he became disillusioned with Soviet communism under Stalin's brutal orthodoxy. Manfred Jäger's contribution, 'Das Klischee einer exemplarischen >Entbürgerlichung<' (pp.27-34), especially, attacks the tendentiousness of the East German Dieter Schlenstedt's critical biography *Egon Erwin Kisch: Leben und Werk*, which was recently reissued in 1985 and remains the most important full-length study of Kisch (see below Note 14).


9. For example Joseph North compared Kisch to the American John L. Spivak, because both were outstanding social reporters who provided "an analysis of experience, culminating in an implicit course of action" and were "artists in the fullest sense of the term". (See 'Reportage' in *The American Writers' Congress* ed. Henry Hart (New York: 1935), p.8 and below Chapter IV, section i, pp.185-86) Kisch was listed as a permanent contributor to *International Literature* and, consequently, well-known in the Writers' International, British section of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers (MORP). His reportage was also discussed in the pages of the English journal *Left Review* and published in John Lehmann's *New Writing*, along with English new reporters like Orwell and Christopher Isherwood (See below Chapter IV, section i, p.188 and 205). The two major Kisch texts translated into English in the '30s were, as we have seen, *China geheim*, as *Secret China*, and *Asien gründlich verändert*, trans. Rita Reil (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935).

11. Quoted in 'Vorwort' to Egon Erwin Kisch Der rasende Reporter (Berlin: Reiß-Verlag, 1925; repr. Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1983), p.7. (Henceforth, all references to DrR will be given in brackets in the text.) I have decided to refer to the Kiepenheuer und Witsch edition (as opposed to Gesammelte Werke V (see below Note 19)) because it reprints Kisch's original foreword with the text of DrR. All translations from the German are my own. Longer quotations will be translated in the notes and shorter ones given in brackets in the text. The Schopenhauer translates as follows:

"Quite ordinary or commonplace people can produce very important books by virtue of material, if only it is accessible, for example: descriptions of remote countries, rare natural phenomena, experiments they have carried out, history, they have either witnessed, or taken time and trouble to seek sources for, or to make their special study."

12. "The reporter has no tendency, nothing to prove and no point of view. He has to be an impartial witness and to render impartial testimony, as reliably as any statement may be - in any case (for the clarification of facts) his is more important than the brilliant speech of the public prosecutor or the council for the defence."

13. "He is no artist, he is no politician, he is no scholar - he is perhaps Schopenhauer's "commonplace person", and thus his work is "very important by virtue of material"."


15. See Ellul Propaganda, pp.73-75.


18. "He discovered that the everyday, the ordinary could be the greatest sensation, if one represented it in its overall context...Through his typewriter technology became like the detective novel." See Bruno Frei 'Zweimal Kisch', Text und Kritik no. 67, pp.10-15, especially pp.13-14.

19. See Egon Erwin Kisch Gesammelte Werke in Einzelaufgaben ed. Bodo Uhse and Gisela Kisch, and continued by Fritz Hofman and Josef Polacek (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1960-) VIII, pp.205-08. (Henceforth, all page references to the Gesammelte Werke will be given in brackets in the text.) Also Joseph North's comments below in Chapter IV, section i, pp.185-86.
20. "He distinguishes himself from others in that he was not basically a reporter at all, but an artist in the guise, or rather the role, of the reporter."


22. "The places and phenomena, which he describes, the experiments, which he conducts, the history, whose witness he is, and the sources, which he seeks out, do not have to be so remote, so rare, and so inaccessible at all, when, in a world immeasurably overflowing with lies - a world that wants to forget itself and thereby deal solely in falsehood - he keeps his devotion to his object. Nothing is more amazing than the simple truth, nothing is more exotic than our environment, nothing is more imaginative than objectivity."

23. "Emile Zola opened up the endless regions of truth for the novel, he gave the conflicts, the situations, the localities, the shapes of everyday and of the present, placing reportage at the service of large-scale fiction. It might have been expected that journalism would receive reciprocal benefit from him. A mine, the stock-exchange, a railway station, a poor district, a horse-race, a furnace, a theatre, a park, an inn, a laundry, a place of pilgrimage, a police station, a locomotive, the market-halls, a painter's studio - indeed, no one will ever sketch it like this greatest reporter of all time, who, night and day, was devoted to his object..." See Egon Erwin Kisch (ed.) Klassicher Journalismus: die Meisterwerke der Zeitungen (1923; repr. Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1982), p.347.

24. See below Chapter VIII, pp.419-25.

25. "Today talents are bought on the clear understanding that they are to represent those opinions, which the newspaper's publisher and its past and present editors have established on all questions. Everyone has to follow this line."

26. "because of our lack of hate, rebellion, emotional involvement. We are worse than phrasemongers (lit. 'phrasethreshers'), because we have become the willing servants of phrasemongers, servants of compromise, bondsmen to philistine vanity, slaves of the time."

27. See Balk International Literature No.4 (April 1935), pp.57 and 60.


29. See ibid., p.184.

30. "[Readers] were amazed by an author, who today in Cuxhaven boards the record-breaking passenger steamer, Fatherland, on its maiden voyage and in the morning, without any transition, goes off as a hop-picker in the Bohemian countryside - on page twenty he spends the night in a London lodging-house and on page twenty-four he flies over Venice in a hydroplane - all that without transition, without connection, as if he jumped in all directions, regardless of space and time, difficulties and expense, just as it pleased him." See ibid., p.185 and note.
31. John Willett *The Weimar Years: A Culture Cut Short* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p.66. Umbo's photomontage is reproduced on the same page, a photocopy of which can be seen in Appendix B.


33. "The reporter has not rampaged through exotic countries by express and aeroplane, rather he has gone very slowly and with astonishing patience through the suburbs of Lyon, through the backyards of the Leipziger Brühl, through the offices of the Gablonz glass-factories and through the holds of the port of Ajaccio. Kisch has discovered the exoticism of the near-by, the far and unknown lands in near-by everyday places, the blank spaces on our lighthouse-charts. This time the reporter is not equipped with the telescope, but the microscope." Bruno Frei 'Von Reportagen und Reportern: Einige Bemerkungen zu Egon Erwin Kisch's neuem Buch 'Eintritt Verboten', *Der Gegenangriff. Antifaschistische Wochenschrift* (Prager-Ausgabe: M. Schnierer) II, no. 42 (17 October 1934), p.8.

34. Quoted in ibid., p.12.


36. See von der Grün *Text und Kritik* No. 67, p.3.


38. Quoted by von der Grün *Text und Kritik* No. 67, p.4.

39. "To begin with, I can't get hold of them, because now my hand grasps too near and now too far. I certainly heard in school once about the refraction of light in water without believing it. It really is true - I can't find the mussel that I see in front of me."

40. "We are flying low, just 1,400 meters. A ribbed cloth is spread out under us: the sea, azure-colour interwoven with darker stripes, over the material chases a black insect - our shadow. At the edge is a map, dazzlingly colourful. Everything looks almost like real land, only 400-times smaller and the children's hands have joined the neatly cut-out cartons together too obliquely, so that the illusion can be a perfect one. Pictured there is a peninsula in the form of an equilateral triangle. It is a little reminiscent of Istria; really, that must be what the map of Istria looks like! Scale 1:1400. The analogy is so striking, that one seems to be looking down at the projection of an elliptical little town, sticking out into the sea, if not at a circle with a thick point in it and the name 'Rovigno', in needle-script, underneath...Only by the dark green can one tell where the cypresses are, a mere shade distinguishes the yellow acres of grain from the green of the oatfields. The lightness of the main roads cuts brightly through the other colours. Fishing-skiffs, moored at a jetty, look like corals threaded on a string, the moving torpedo boat looks like a guinea-hen with a silver tail, and the yacht resembles a mere splinter of milk-glass. But the most beautiful thing is the emerald band which represents the contour of the coast: it is the shallow sea which sparkles so much.
We can see right down to the bottom. Those tiny speckles are the points of stones and rocks."


42. Quoted in ibid., p.200.

43. "in a world, which will not listen to anything true and, therefore, listens to the radio playing, in a world, which will not look at anything true and, hence, watches the film, preferring the studio-trick to the recording of reality..."

44. See Schlenstedt *Egon Erwin Kisch*, pp.211-12.

45. "A completely ordinary or commonplace person would never be able to write an important book, even if he may have been himself an eye-witness of Noah's flood, chamberlain to Semiramis or a member of Pizarro's expedition...he would never recognise what is important as such."

46. See Leo Lania 'Reportage als soziale Funktion', *Die Literarische Welt* II, no. 26 (1926), p.5. This is also available in a reprint: *Die Literarische Welt* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Verlag Kraus, 1973), II, p.197.

47. See Schlenstedt *Egon Erwin Kisch*, pp.30 and 54.


49. "are rich compared to the homeless, who drag themeselves tiredly through these filthy districts; hopelessly, they hope to get a few pence from the other poor, so that they do not have to spend the frosty night on the Thames Embankment...these most wretched of the wretched are still divided into social-classes, even amongst the homeless distinctions of wealth emerge".

50. "My costume appeared to me almost exaggeratedly ragged as I put it on. A glance at my neighbour taught me otherwise."

51. "So I climb down the stairs into the underworld. while the rich, who were in possession of five pence, could take things easy in the dormitory above...What the city was no longer able to hold in its deepest abysses, what even Whitechapel, this refuge for the desperadoes of every corner of the globe, no longer dared take up, what was no longer suitable for begging and crime, seemed to have been deposited here. There they sit, infecting the warm air. One unbuckles his wooden leg and leans it on a bench. Another takes an inventory of some hundred cigarette- and cigar-butts, spread out next to him. Another takes the things out of his knapsack, which he has indiscriminately picked out of the gutter: pieces of stale bread, the carcass of a pump, screwed-up newspapers (he carefully smoothes them out) the remains of some spectacles, the rudiment of a pencil. One adjusts his truss, one undoes his foot-rags, one digests audibly - every sense is simultaneously tormented."
52. See below, Chapter IV, section i, pp.195.

53. "At last, I think, and breathe in the air. The others cringe before
the first shock of cold."

54. Bertolt Brecht Die Dreigroschenoper (1928; repr. Berlin: Suhrkamp
Verlag, 1955) Scene 9., p.94.

55. "Only outside, in the east-end of the city, the night lives on. The
Jago court, whose horrors were described by Morrison's pen, has fallen,
but its horrors go on. Already behind Houndsditch, the job-goods
quarter, which was angrily portrayed (exactly like it is) in the great
Sydney Street anarchist massacre, and behind the Minories, whose junk-
shops lead to the tower of London, it becomes obvious that here poverty
lives, right, right next to the Bank of England, the stock exchange, the
Lombard bank and Fenchurch Street, to the streets of the commodity—
currency— and gold-businesses and those of colonial trade."

56. "England protects its trade, and millions are stored in this area.
Of course, the crime rate in the docks is nonetheless extraordinarily
high, and police officers are greatly endangered."

57. "Prompted by the melodrama of the Dickensian novel and the preaching
of the Reverends, a few English millionaires have soothed their
consciences with colossal charitable projects: philanthropic
institutions have arisen here, the public building, the hospital, Doctor
Barnados Homes, Toynbee Hall, public libraries, museums, parks and
schools - but everywhere new misery grows rampant from the dung of the
gutter and the slums!

58. "the potential for exploiting this unorganized and legally
unprotected Lumpenproletariat is so great, that capitalism, as far as
they are concerned, does not even bother to consider their solidarity
and the possibility that another estate might abduct its work force...I
accompany them to this new world."

59. See Cathy Porter Larissa Reisner, p.159.

60. "and if we did not know that we were in Essen, if the maps and
street signs had not long since informed us to whom all this belongs,
that we are in the kingdom of..."Kr" Kr.- cemetery, Kr.- infirmary, Kr.-
administration offices, Kr.- co-operative society, Kr.- memorial, Kr.
Kr.- and again Kr.- it does not signify "District", nor "War", nor
"Crown", it all signifies: "Krupp". And this whole dark city and its
inhabitants and their lives only have one name: "Friedrich Krupp Cast-
Steel Works"."

61. "he [von Bohlen Halbach] would- oh, of course, only after vigorous
and brave protestations, only after reservations, only after provisos
and only after years!- provide other armies with just such magnificent
cannons and mortars and torpedoes and ammunition and armour-plate as he
provided for the Germans. Because this bridegroom of Miss Bertha Krupp,
selected by Kaiser Wilhelm, would uphold the tradition of the House of
Krupp as if he were born into it: flawless goods, flawless delivery.
Here were forged all the thousand-fold instruments of death, here all
the arms production records were met, from here they were delivered and
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delivered until one was delivered too. And a hundred thousand laboured here, from childhood to their end in the Kr.- cemetery, in a life to which all the (however, exemplary or famous) welfare-institutions could give no joy. Thus arose this new Essen, swallowing the old centre, so arose this black capital of the black earth."

62. See Willett *New Sobriety*, p.107


65. "broken ointment and food-tins to the metalworks, paper-shreds to the papermills, shards to the glass-blowers, old-iron to the furnace, out of the ripped, yellowed bill of exchange will come another banknote, out of the gnawed bone, a dog biscuit, out of the rusty, bent oven door, an officer's sabre, and from the manuscript of a poet, even toilet paper."

66. "The Phoenix bird has got competition here: everything awakes - just like him - from the ashes to new life."

67. See Fischer *Aus Deutschland berichtet*, p.32.


70. See Christian Ernst Siegel *Egon Erwin Kisch: Reportage und politischer Journalismus* (Bremen: Schünemann Universitätsverlag, 1973), especially pp.61-66. For Benjamin's 1926 views on Kisch and reportage see Benjamin's *Moscow Diary* ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard UP, 1986), pp.23 and note 43. This includes references to the concept of 'logical fantasy' and the possibility of creating a 'materialist encyclopaedia'.


73. See Benjamin 'Theses on the Concept of History' (*Illuminations*, pp.255-266. Also Geyer-Ryan in Timms and Collier (eds.) *Visions and Blueprints*, p.70.

74. See above, Chapter I, Note 58.

75. See Benjamin 'Theses' III in *Illuminations*, p.256.
76. See Geyer-Ryan in Timms and Collier (eds.) *Visions and Blueprints*, pp. 76-77.

77. See this Section, p. 118.

78. See this Section, p. 124.

79. See Geyer-Ryan in Timms and Collier (eds.) *Visions and Blueprints*, p. 78.

80. See Geyer-Ryan in Timms and Collier (eds.) *Visions and Blueprints*, pp. 70-72.

81. "The figures which withstand this trial by fire, may go out into the world. But not every one passes it... Sometimes a figure loses its balance and falls against its neighbour, with which it melts together. We take a look at these porcelain deformities, a whole cabinet of pottery abnormalities: two dogs, which cannot separate from each other, a child with two heads, two apes with four backsides, a herdsboy transformed into a sodomite, a whale with an elephant's trunk."


83. "Partisanship was for the basically politically naive Kisch no one-way-street to the fulfilment of dogma, but the way to a humane Socialism. But precisely because he was naive and impulsive, he also lacked blinkers." Henri Nannen 'Egon Erwin Kisch oder Warum es die Reporter in unserem Land so schwer haben', Henri Nannen (ed.) *Schreib das auf. Deutsche Reportagen. Die Besten Storys aus dem Jahr 1977* (Hamburg: 1978), p. 6.


88. Arthur Koestler *The Yogi and the Commissar* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945), pp. 28-35, especially pp. 29-30. (Henceforth all page references to *YAC* will be given in brackets in the text.)
89. I am, of course, not employing the term 'political unconscious' in the strict hermeneutic sense defined by Frederic Jameson in the preface to his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp.9-14, but as a way of scrutinizing Koestler's own views on the overlap between psychology and politics.


91. See 'On the Difficulties of Writing Biography' in ibid., p.125.

92. See Hubert Renfro Knickerbocker *Deutschland, So oder So?* (Berlin: 1932) trans. as *Germany, Fascist or Soviet?* (London: John Lane, 1932).

93. See Greene Epigraph and Note.


96. See ibid, pp.160-93, especially pp.174-77.

97. For Cockburn and Isherwood's work for Münzenberg see below VIII, pp.395-96 and VII, section ii, p.372, respectively.

98. Münzenberg's own exposé of Nazi propaganda methods (much of which was, no doubt, based on his own) was published as *Propaganda als Waffe* (Paris: Editions du Carrefour, 1937).

99. See below VIII, pp.395-96

100. *The Reichstag Fire Trial. The Second Brown Book of the Hitler Terror* based on the material collected by the World Committee for the Relief of the Victims of German Fascism, with an Introductory Chapter specially written for the book by Georgi Dimitrov, a Foreword by DN Pritt, KC, an Appendix on Murder in Hitler-Germany introduced by Lion Feuchtwanger, and 21 illustrations from original sources (London: Editions du Carrefour, 1934).

101. Ibid., pp.189-90.

102. See below Chapter IV, section i, p.195.


104. Whether the counter-revolutionary conspiracy existed or not, it had the generalized plausibility of a kind of paranoid 'logical fantasy' which could prove the 'objective' guilt of specific individuals. As an NKVD officer reasons in Anatoli Rybakov’s recent novel about the Stalinist repression of the '30s: "What mattered...was not whether
someone was actually guilty. He was concerned with the general version of their guilt. The general version had to be skillfully applied to the particular individual and hence create the concrete version." (See Anatoli Rybakov The Children of the Arbat trans. Harold Shukman (London: Hutchinson, 1988; repr. in pbk. Arrow, 1989), p.206.


110. See below Chapter VIII, pp.412-13

111. See this present section, pp.172-73, below

112. See Arthur Koestler Scum of the Earth, published by the LBC in May 1941 (also London: Jonathan Cape), p.23. Henceforth all page references to SOTE will be given in brackets in the text.

113. For Orwell and the POUM, see below Chapter VIII, pp.406-13.


Chapter IV

i: Graffiti of the People

In the '30s the British new reportage and documentary literature of fact challenged official accounts of conditions and events which were constructed by media controlled either directly, by the National – i.e. basically Conservative – Government (formed after Macdonald deserted the Labour Party in 1931) or indirectly, by the financial interests they represented. According to H. Gustav Klaus and Jürgen Enkemann, the years 1937–38 in particular saw the movement break through "to the level of a cultural form influential amongst and representative of the masses". These years saw the publication of Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (March 1937) by the Left Book Club, the first number of *Fact* (April 1937), the beginning of Allen Lane's 'Penguin Specials' series, Mass-Observation's first 'Day Survey' on the Coronation (May 1937), followed by the London Unity Theatre and the Manchester Theatre of Action productions of the first British Living Newspapers and the first appearance of *Picture Post* (October 1938).

In some respects the theory and practice of avant-garde reportage had spread more quickly and widely in the USA by the mid-'30s, but British Left-culture was developing fast in similar directions. As we have seen, the Reed-legend and the network of 'wcorrs', encouraged by radical journals like *New Masses* produced a counterfactual perspective on American capitalism. This American documentary impulse was then taken up by the Federal Art Project of Roosevelt's 'New Deal', which diluted its radicalism to suit the purposes of liberal reformism. In 1935 there was (as yet) little sense of the coming clash on the American
Left with Stalinism's historical and cultural outlook. Consequently, at the American Writers' Congress of that year, Matthew Josephson, discussing 'The Role of the Writer in the Soviet Union', gave prominence to "reportage and descriptive writing touching on contemporary events", though he was careful to point out that official assignments such as publicizing the State Poultry Trust, though sounding "perilously close to our own advertising and press agenting", actually served a non-profit-making institution "now happily being expanded under the second Five Year Plan". There were also "gazettes and wall bulletins to be gotten out for the workers of factories, and for brigades on collective farms". He mentioned Tretyakov's reporting of the kolkhozi, and praised The White Sea Canal as monumental "documentary history", representing "an experiment in direct collaboration with the social program of the country". Similarly, Jack Conroy in 'The Worker as Writer' commended Those Who Built Stalingrad for giving workers their voice.

Most importantly, Joseph North in 'Reportage' promoted Kisch as "probably the greatest reporter in the world today". North considered that the new reportage had "evolved today into one of the most important forms of the revolutionary movement". Work by Reed, John L. Spivak and Agnes Smedley showed that it was also a thriving sector of contemporary American writing. According to North, it involved "more than surface observation" and deictic questions like "who, why, when, where". It had to "answer those questions ... plus", and the plus distinguished it as "durable literature": "Reportage is three-dimensional reporting. The writer not only condenses reality, he helps the reader feel the fact. The finest writers of reportage are artists in the fullest sense of the term." The reporter, like the film montager, could present a viewpoint
without explicit comment: "They do their editorializing through their imagery." Moreover, to present the fact "in all its open and hidden aspects" involved defamiliarizing it and exposing the whole process of which it was part:

The difference between a feature story, let us say, of the *World Telegraph*, and the reportage of an Egon Erwin Kisch, can perhaps best be indicated by Kisch's coverage of the stock market. The feature writer will describe a certain exciting day on the bourse, give you a picture of the many men frantically bidding for money, will describe some of them, will reproduce bits of their conversation, impart some local colour, and presto! you have the feature story. Kisch on the same scene, not only describes the appearance, the excitement of the stock exchange. When he is through, the reader understands the innermost connections of capitalism. He not only describes what he saw, he describes what was not to be seen by the observer on Wall Street. Kisch gives the big traders and the little traders who were sitting around the ticker in Chicago, Los Angeles, Tokio, Berlin. You see the entire process of production and the accumulation of capital.

The 'plus' was, hence, the new reportage's awareness of the global context of mediation, politics and economics. This meant that, unlike the bourgeois reporter, to Kisch "the fact is no corpse ... Some phenomena have produced it; it in turn produces other phenomena." And North referred to Kisch's own theory of the relationship of facts to method: "The fact is only the compass for the reporter. In his voyage he also needs a rudder - of logical fantasy." Kisch, Tretyakov and Smedley had "much more than the camera eye", in the simplistic objective sense,* North concluded. They were not 'neutral recorders', because their reportage was "both an analysis and an experience, culminating in an implicit course of action."

The 'Chinese Destinies' in Smedley's *China's Red Army Marches* (1934), Spivak's shots of contemporary America for *New Masses*, Dos Passos's travelogue *In All Countries* demonstrated the flexibility of the form, from short sketch to epic. The reporter's I-witnessing presence as
part of the action dramatized Kisch and Spivak's writing, whereas Smedley gave a more impersonal perspective on masses making history. Josephson also emphasised the topical climate of contemporary Soviet fiction, "taking the events of almost the night before last, usually regarded as material for newspaper editorials, and making of them the subject of historical novels." Similarly, North viewed reportage and fiction as necessarily complementary and interdependent: "Reportage can never replace the novel". They were like "the cartoon to the mural", but "the cartoonist's sketches will help him (if the revolution permits of the time) to produce the mural." Meantime, reportage was "a valuable and vital form in this period when the world demands a daily answer to the questions behind the headlines."  

As Paget argues about documentary drama, the avant-garde influence found its way to Britain both through the cultural 'front door', from Europe, and 'back door', from the USA, to find fertile soil amongst native traditions of social reportage. In the same year as the American Writers' Congress, Montagu Slater (1902-56), editor of Left Review and a trained journalist, wrote that "descriptive reporting" was fundamental to creating Socialist consciousness in Britain, because it publicized realities unreproduced or misrepresented in the capitalist media. Slater felt that reportage was something "the tabloid press has almost replaced by wisecracks", but "which the revolutionary press has often no room for" even though it was politically vital because "to describe things as they are is a revolutionary act in itself". Slater emphasized the new reportage's avant-garde strategy of defamiliarizing mundane reality and relating it to collective crises, quoting Louis Aragon: "the work of writers in this human transformation begins at home". His example was a reportage by Brian O'Neill on the
recent Dublin transport strike. Reportage could also be "one of the most effective means of changing an enemy's mind", and Slater was confident that "many Catholics would be severely shaken, whether they admitted it or not, if they were to read Egon Erwin Kisch's description of Lourdes."

At the 'Contributors' Conference', Jack Winocour suggested *Left Review* should become "a kind of working-class Tit-Bits after the style of *New Masses*" and concentrate on the kind of muck-raking exposé practiced by figures like Spivak, author of *Devil's Brigade* (1932), *Georgia Nigger* (1935) and *America Faces the Barricades* (1936). In March 1936, Charles Ashleigh interviewed Spivak himself (who was observing conditions in South Wales, Manchester and Newcastle, after collecting material on starving Carpathian peasants for *Europe Under the Terror* (1936)), pronouncing him "no 'impartial' reporter, but a writer who takes sides, definitely and without hesitation or hysteria."

According to Richard Johnstone, *Left Review* reportage typified the "movement away from authorial didacticism towards a kind of impersonal didacticism" based on factual subjects in which individuals would feel implicated. But analysis of the many forms of '30s British new reportage and literature of fact, as well as the views of those practising them at the time, in no way confirms the objectivist fallacy that personal or ideological viewpoint can be completely expunged from the reality reported. British new reportage was also symptomatic of the obsessions of an I-witness generation, which, in Cunningham's phrase, was "always breaking out into 'My Case-Book' or 'A Personal Digression'." It was an age when autobiographical novels, poems, memoirs, diaries, travelogues, open letters and personal records of all kinds were endemic, part of writers' questioning of the ideology and
standard English their subjectivity was constructed in, which had been badly mauled by the Great War and further destabilized by Modernism. Political salvation for the I-witness, many thought, lay in merging into or, at least, getting to know, the working mass of the population. Hence, the Leftist consensus that bourgeois writers needed to make contact with the proletariat and speak for them, when they were not in the position to speak for themselves, by observing and reporting social conditions as exactly and effectively as possible. But, as elsewhere on the Left, there were competing theories about how to achieve this, ranging from 'artless' documentation to new reportage and hard-line Socialist Realism. Isherwood recalled that when he sketched 'An Evening at the Bay' (1933) he had "a superstitious faith in the power of exact reporting". And he was typical in using scraps "of overheard slang and dialogue", like "spells which could bring an entire scene to life". But this fetishizing of objective recording was clearly only the starting point for a writer who eventually produced Goodbye to Berlin's intricate montage of fact and fiction.

As Ralph Wright concluded in a 1938 review: "What is significant about the books that people are now reading in ever increasing numbers is the fact that they deal with matters, that, whether we like it or not, are everyone's close concern, the intellectual's and the manual labourer's, the mother's, the father's, the boy's and girl's." In a sense, reporting contemporary facts and issues of collective concern assumed the role of Jakobson's 'dominant' in much British '30s writing; it was the 'overdetermining' component, articulating the relationship and function of other elements. Conversely, in Enemies of Promise (1938), Cyril Connolly, always more aesthetic than ascetic, argued that this new sobriety had reacted too far against the 'Mandarin'
experimentalism of Anglophone Modernism and was in danger of impoverishing itself, as if the '20s formal 'boom' were being paid for by a '30s formal 'slump'. He even made the point that narrators were blurring into a standardized, vernacular I-witness persona - the "colourless" reporter - by montaging fragments from Orwell's reportage, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Hemingway's autobiographical novel *To Have and Have Not* and Isherwood's 'documentary' long short-story, 'Sally Bowles', to show how little they clashed in either form or content.\(^{21}\)

On the other hand, Ralph Fox, a prominent apologist for Socialist Realism's simplified prose style, endorsed Chuzhak's "funeral of fictiveness" in the *The Novel and the People* (1937), suggesting that novelists should mediate authentic events and depict figures "who really shape modern life", like Rockefeller or Krupp.\(^{22}\) Fox had contemporary precedents in the biographies which Dos Passos montaged into his documentary fiction and, closer to home, in the thinly disguised portraits of Swedish match-king Ivar Kreuger and British arms-seller Basil Zaharoff in Graham Greene's *England Made Me* (1935) and *A Gun for Sale* (1936). According to Fox, multi-nationalists and media-barons were Socialism's major antagonists in the new global hyperreality: "You cannot separate these men from much of the poetry of modern life, from the conquest of matter that made possible the modern newspaper which can give you a photograph of a king dying from an assassin's bullet almost as soon as the shot is fired." Consequently, the same topical spirit could supply the typical "hero of our times", and what better model was available than Dimitrov, hero of Katz's *Brown Books*, who himself posed the question "Where, in our literature, are the heroes of the proletarian movement ... to be imitated by millions of workers?" to the Soviet Writers' Union.\(^{23}\) Fox's theory also resembled
Tretyakov's and Kisch's in its confidence that the literary possibility of real events - "there are extraordinary subjects crying out for imaginative treatment" - could counteract escapist fantasy. However, the kind of docu-melodrama he proposed stopped short of destabilizing the objectivist myth of "actual history, where surmise has no place, where all is collation, analysis and accurate generalization from observed facts".24

By the decade's end, even the Times Literary Supplement was dubbing the popular fictions of Philip Gibbs 'newsreel novels'.26 It was not that Gibb's texts used avant-garde devices (on the contrary they were radically Conservative in form and content) but that they handled events with almost cinematic speed as in This Nettle Danger (1939) which fictionalized the Munich crisis. Gibbs, a successful journalist, also wrote England Speaks (1935), a Priestleyesque 'condition of England' reportage, from a right-wing populist perspective.28 The Times Literary Supplement's description showed how deeply the currency of reportage and literature of fact had penetrated even establishment literary criticism by then. It acknowledged the general migration from invention towards topicality, from, as Cunningham points out,27 even factual novels like Isherwood's Mr Norris Changes Trains or Orwell's A Clergyman's Daughter, towards reportage scarcely overlaid with fiction, as in Goodbye to Berlin, and towards alternative documentaries like Orwell's The Road to Wigan Pier and Homage to Catalonia.

The origin of John Grierson's use of the term 'documentary' in the French documentaire or 'travelogue'29 was echoed in the vogue for serious travel reportage, and Paul Fussell in Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars (1980) has charted the diaspora of '30s writers with their cameras and their camera-eyes.30 Observers like Kisch
reported Russia, Soviet Central Asia, China, America and Australia, while Dos Passos produced *In All Countries* (1934) and *Journeys Between Wars* (1938), establishing influential role models. Hence, the two branches of the new reportage - the plainly extraordinary and the defamiliarizing - both flourished in the '30s. Though "importance, creative innovativeness, the centres of art and politics" were often felt to be abroad or elsewhere, reporters also journeyed into unknown, or officially unrepresented, Britain, linking the two spheres by a sense of common political and economic crisis.**

'30s working-class I-witnessing began quite literally 'at home' in the collection *Life as We Have Known It: By Co-operative Working Women* (1931). Although not reportage in the avant-garde sense, it represented an important and symptomatic encounter between British Modernism and "hidden areas" of mass-experience like "childhood and family and the lives of women" as Anna Davin puts it.*** Through her friend Margaret Llewelyn Davies, the Women's Co-operative Guild General Secretary, Virginia Woolf became an early cooperator in the project to give the working-class a voice and make their experience culturally visible. From 1916 Woolf ran the Guild's Richmond branch, bringing her into contact with working-women's problems. Miles and Smith argue that "it is difficult not to see her [Woolf's] presence in the book as a continuation of the nineteenth-century practice of middle-class intervention in artisan writing through the means of annotation and editorial representation."** But it is much more than that, if her comments are read in the light of the theories of *A Room of One's Own* (1929).

Woolf's 'Introductory Letter' (See *Life*, pp.xvii-xxxii) stressed that class barriers could be breached by imaginative identification, she
rejected anti-intellectual pastoralizing as false sympathy, because the final object of social equality was achieving "things that are ends, not things that are means". Improving material conditions was a means for opening up ends like culture and self-expression, not discarding them as bourgeois. Proletarian experience was neither more nor less the touchstone of reality than the bourgeois writer's; it was another, equally urgent, aspect of it: "One does not want to slip easily into fine phrases about 'contact with life,' 'facing facts' and 'teaching of experience' ... moreover no working man or woman works harder or is in closer contact with reality than a painter with his brush or a writer with his pen." (See Life, pp.xxvii-xxix) Woolf's Modernism was always concerned with the nature of reality and with unmasking its self-appointed judges. In this text we can see the beginnings of the adaptational importance of social documentation in the '30s in adapting the British Modernist project of representing reality more accurately and self-consciously. For Woolf, political and cultural space were complementary, and her Letter shows how her sexual politics were altering through contact with those of class: the Guild gave working-class women "the rarest of all possessions - a room where they could sit down and think, remote from boiling saucepans and crying children; and then that room became ... a workshop where, laying their heads together, they could remodel their houses, could remodel their lives, could beat out this reform and that." (Life, pp.xxxvii-viii)

Consequently, Woolf laid the snobbish ghost of Bloomsbury aestheticism in defending the text's 'unliterariness', suggesting that its value was as part of a cooperative process that made literature possible, like "those obscure writers before the birth of Shakespeare", echoing A Room of One's Own's argument. Worker and writer needed to
learn from each other, "since writing is a complex art, much infected by life" (See Life, pp.xxxix-xxxx). Thus, of the testimony of a domestic servant, seduced and left with child at seventeen by "a gentleman of good position and high standing in the town", Woolf wrote "Whether this is literature or not literature I do not presume to say but that it explains much and reveals much is certain." It was as if Mrs Brown herself was emerging from "silence into half articulate speech" to give witness to her own socio-economic reality (Life, p.xxxxix).

'Memories of Seventy Years' by Mrs. Layton described growing up in a family of fourteen in Bethnall Green. A child of the Abyss telling her own story, she recalled desperately keeping up class appearances in starvation conditions and described the suicidally unenlightened self-interest of a society ignoring poverty and disease: her neighbours with smallpox made and distributed matchboxes from home. Fated for domestic service at 13, she was offered thrice her wages, to "do wrong". Her i-witnessing also typified the effect of the Guild on working women's lives, showing her politicization and understanding of the causes of her predicament (See Life, pp.1-55). Similarly, 'A Plate-Layer's Wife', Mrs. Wrigley, recalled joining the Suffrage and believed that "if the women could have had the vote" before the Great War, it could have been avoided because "There's no mother or wife in England or Germany that would have given their loved one to be killed." (See Life, pp.55-56) In 'In a Mining Village', Mrs. F.H. Smith produced an irrefutable argument for pithead baths when she described children scalded to death by falling into tin tubs (See Life, p.71). Perhaps most interestingly, 'A Felt Hat Worker' by Mrs. Scott, showed how gender was economically exploited by persuading women they worked for "honour" (See Life, p.88). The text initiated serious consideration of the position of women
in the '30s, which culminated in the highly-comprehensive study *Working Class Wives* (1939) by Margery Spring-Rice, which documented aspects of their nutrition, domestic situation, housing, sex-education and maternity, etc.*

In June 1932 2,740,000 British workers were registered jobless and the total did not drop below 2,000,000 for three years. Even by June 1939, there were still 1,340,000. Such figures are in themselves enough to account for the prominence of unemployment in the writing of the time. A major influence on the method and form of '30s new reportage about unemployment was the American E. Wight Bakke's *The Unemployed Man* (1933). Bakke used 'participant observation' which meant lodging with a working-class family and sharing their life and activities, "to loaf on the streets or at the factory gates as the occasion might require, to go with them to clubs and churches and 'pubs', to join the hunt for a job". 

Participant observation was developed by the Chicago School of Sociology in the '20s (interestingly, Grierson researched Chicago's immigration problems on a 1924 Rockefeller Studentship) in a whole series of surveys documenting the lives of ethnic minorities and marginalized groups like tramps and casual workers from the inside. It was field-work aspiring to scientific objectivity, but also building on the I-witness tradition of American writers such as London, Steffens and Reed. Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, based on participant observation carried out in 1936, was probably its literary culmination in Depression America, but through Bakke it also influenced the method of British texts like Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, James Hanley's *Grey Children* and Mass-Observation's mobilization of the public as observers of themselves.

Bakke based himself in Greenwich, a statistically 'average' borough,
to ascertain "the effect of Unemployment Insurance on the willingness and ability of workers to support themselves" (See Unemployed Man, p.xiii). Crucially, he emphasised the view which the unemployed took of their own situation and its complex factors - replacement by machinery, industrial de-skilling, women and foreign workers, religion, politics, social life, leisure, the media etc. - through interviews and the delegated-reportage of 'diary-time-studies' kept by the men themselves.

Bakke showed that the militant actions of Wal Hannington's National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM) served the unemployed in the same way professional associations and Trades Unions organized "the efforts of the more fortunate groups in society." Though the latter did not require such desperate and 'unrespectable' methods as hunger marches and clashes with the police, the "fundamental nature of the process is the same, the protection and the improvement through organization of the sources of livelihood." (See Unemployed Man, p.19) Hence, Bakke discredited some pernicious myths about unemployment benefit, which had been introduced in 1919. Apart from the fact that the dole probably prevented bloody revolution, he found no evidence that it "retarded the efforts of the unemployed to get back to work", arguing instead that it "removed the cutting edge of desperation which otherwise might attend the search". Unemployment was a systematic problem, not an individual moral responsibility and men would all return to work "not when they are more willing and able" but when demand "calls them back to their jobs." (Unemployed Man, pp.143 and 152) Above all, Bakke documented the cruel irony of the steps the unemployed man took down to the Abyss, often "the result of the need of funds in order that he and his family may be kept alive". Minimal though it was, the dole saved "the necessity of sacrificing 15 shillings to 40 shillings worth" of ties with the normal
life of society and was a barrier against the apathy of pauperism (See Unemployed Man, pp.264-65).

A year after Bakke (and two before the launch of his Left Book Club in 1936) Victor Gollancz published a series of twenty-five interviews from The Listener as Memoirs of the Unemployed (1934). The editors, H.L. Beales and R.S. Lambert claimed to reproduce their "authentic voice"** talking of their situation and its consequences and as Klaus and Enkemann point out, the text's persuasiveness is partly attributable to detailed reproduction of colloquial English."7 The method of Memoirs was based on studies made in Poland and Austria and designed to be as representative as possible of different social types.

Memoirs was so-called 'qualitative', not 'quantitative' social documentation, clothing "the statistical skeleton" of unemployment figures with "typical human experience" and contesting the Chief Medical Officer's 1932 report that there was no evidence "of any general increase" in unhealthiness "as the result of economic depression" (See Memoirs, pp.16 and 24). Thus in "'Nothing I Can Do to Keep Myself Efficient'" a millwright graphically described pre-NHS health amongst the poor, while in 'Seven Years Without Hard Labour' a Rhondda miner's description of robbing the 'dirt train' for fuel showed how efforts to survive unemployment could be downright dangerous. In "'We Would Both Rather Be Dead', a Derbyshire miner's wife admitted secretly starving to feed their working son. The condition of his family described by a London housepainter corroborated the findings of Save The Children's recent report on Unemployment and the Child. On the psychological side, in 'Unemployment and Nerves - A Skilled Letterpress Turner' typified the I-witnesses' frequent feelings of desperation, even thoughts of suicide. Similarly, in 'My Fatal "Inferiority Complex"', an engineer.
felt "like a hunted animal whose holes have been stopped up" and in 'Keeping Up Appearances' a Scottish hotel servant listed "the thousand and one petty, sordid humiliations" of the daily search for work (Memoirs, pp.154 and 255). Apathy alternated with aggression in the same family: 'Fed Up With Life At Twenty-One - The Carpenter's Younger Son' and '"I Feel Violent When I Stop to Think" - The Carpenter's Eldest Son'.

Beales and Lambert claimed that these testimonies were case histories in "a new and grim field of sociological study ... the psychopathology of human communities affected by prolonged disturbances of the basis of their economic life." Thus they anticipated Mass-Observation's diagnostics of collective health, arguing that nations too could contract "hysteria and dementia", which "may even now be secretly undermining constitutions as strong as our own", as evidenced by the recent Nazi coup d'état. Similarly, they shared in the '30s Leftist consensus that ostensibly democratic Britain was too out of contact with itself to recognize its own symptoms: "we have only our own mental inertia to thank for the fact that we are still today without adequate data for the formulation of an authoritative interpretation" (See Memoirs, pp.7-8).

In effect, Memoirs constructed a cross-section of the social scale - 'From a Thousand a Year to Nothing - an Unemployed Business Man'; 'A Life of Drift - A Young Casual Labourer in London' - and of every age group - 'Youth in Search of a Career', 'Too Old at Forty - A South Wales Miner'. Social workers mediated between subjects and researchers, but the I-witnessings were mostly "written by the unemployed themselves" with a minimum of necessary sub-editing "to bring them grammatically into line" (See Memoirs, p.13). Though intended as 'facts without
rhetoric’, the effect of the unemployed’s own words about every aspect of their experience was, and is, illuminating, as in ‘A Skilled Engineer’s Tragedy’: “I view the city where I have lived all my life through different eyes these days. I now think of warm sheltered places like the public libraries” (Memoirs, p.75). Joblessness was, ironically, more stressful than sweated labour for a single mother in ‘I Hate This Nothing-to-do’. A colliery banksman, sacked for winning a University scholarship, described his ‘Frustration and Bitterness’: “often condemnation of a system is transferred illogically to the irksome limitations of the marital state.” His one hope was a successful proletarian novel and his description of its conditions of production was not special pleading but typical of the difficulties of self-expression when “subjected monthly to a Means Test inquisition, knowing neither security nor normal comfort – matters creating a state of mind decidedly incompatible with that necessary for sustained effort.” (See Memoirs, pp.93 and 96) In ‘Housekeeping Without An Income’, the London painter reported the level of conditions the Public Assistance Committee (PAC) could still deem “not in need of assistance.” (Memoirs, p.157) A skilled wire drawer felt ‘emasculated’ as the traditional breadwinner in ‘The Wife Works While I Look After the Home’. Conversely, the Rhondda miner noted deprivation’s equalizing effect, saluting women for “their splendid comradeship” (Memoirs, p.157). “Nobody Bothers About Us” described the vicious spiral of undercutting, and bribing the foreman to retain work.

‘Living on Others’ Charity’ reported an ex-officer’s disillusionment with the justice of the work ethic and portrayed the unemployed, like The People of the Abyss, as mundane casualties of international economic conflicts (Memoirs, p.129). Similarly, in
'Isolated and Hopeless' the village carpenter recalled the wartime promise of 'a land fit for heroes': "We were told then: Your king and country need you! It is no consolation now to be told: Your king and country don't need you!" His sense of morality was economically relative ("If I'm not allowed to earn bread I shall take it") (See Memoirs, pp.182 and 193) and was corroborated in 'From Unemployment to Crime', where an electrician turned burglar regretted losing "the kind of life I had visualised", but admitted he now had some kind of status in a society which based respect on conspicuous consumption (See Memoirs, p.253).

The 'Frustration and Bitterness' of the banksman was exceptional in leading to success. He was in fact Walter Brierley, whose novel Means Test Man (1935) became an instant classic of '30s unemployment. But two other contributions stand as extreme views of the effectiveness of such I-witnessing. The carpenter wrote "the hardest day's work I've ever done in my life is the writing of this" and asked "What's the good of it anyway?", while the London painter anticipated a future "of articulate logical reason and suggestions that will move legislators - national and local - to seek the help of the unemployed in legislating for and administering to their needs." (See Memoirs, pp.254 and 172-73) No doubt, this latter view influenced Gollancz's realization of the need to collect and disseminate factual information for reforming British society through the Left Book Club.** A year after Beales and Lambert another eleven unemployed spoke on the air about their lives for the BBC's progressive Talks Department and the transcripts were published as Time to Spare, ed. Felix Greene (1935). In this way, they helped initiate a trend of documentary texts like Hungry England, Unemployment and the Child, Juvenile Unemployment, The Other Man's Job, Men Without
Work, How the Other Man Lives which also publicized the plight of the '30s unemployed.

Workers' Life and, later, The Daily Worker tried with limited success to build up a British network of worker-correspondents in or out of employment, but many '30s journals besides Left Review sponsored reportage by working-class writers. The short-lived Storm, which ran to only four numbers, though subtitled Stories of the Struggle, featured as much reportage as fiction. It advertised for factual poems and stories "descriptions of the Rank and File 'bus strike, of the Vigilant Movement and the Miners' Struggle", offering a copy of TDTSTW for the best. The first number included 'Solidarity: A Lancashire Miner's Account of the Burnley Weaver's Strike' and A.P. Roley's autobiographical sketch of the Great War 'Goodbye to Gallipoli'. Even Storm's topical fiction, as in lead-worker Rhys J. Williams's 'Struggle or Starve!', enlisted the plausibility of the 'straight-talking' I-witness: "You say this is no story? It has no crisis, no climax like proper stories should. Sorry, mate; I'm no fiction-artist!" Tom Jones's 'The Survivor' made the Depression's mundane crisis seem more traumatic than the war: "Torpedoed once - buried twice - and blown up thrice ... He survived the horrors of war: but the horrors of peace-time capitalism were too much for him." Similarly, Gilbert Bradbury's 'The Mansion' gave a galling account of Maidenhead Borough Council's tactless way of putting NUWM hunger marchers up for the night. Storm Number 2 montaged the first pages of reportages from Italy and Germany: 'The Trial', by an ILP I-witness to proceedings against political prisoners, and 'Hunger and Terror' about Nazi repression, by Gerald Cohn.

Topics set in Left Review writing competitions - 'A Street Scene'.
'An Hour or a Shift at Work', 'Encounter', 'Strike', 'School Days' and 'What Life Means to Me' - also allowed scope for both fiction and reportage. Amabel Williams-Ellis, editor of *The White Sea Canal* and one of the judges along with Arthur Calder-Marshall and James Hanley, prescribed the first scenario - "'a short shot' of a street scene familiar to many workers ... the portrayal of a vigorous but not particularly violent movement of about thirty or forty people". She quoted her own novel *To Tell the Truth* (1933) as an example of a literally 'estranged' view of an everyday event and the required ideological slant: an eviction in England is presented "through the eyes of a young Russian from the Urals". Moreover, she used the fashionable '30s photographic imagery which had special currency for reportage: "the camera can be shifted to any other angle that the competitor fancies." 42

Personal testimony to obscured experiences by whatever means available has some kind of documentary value, as Woolf pointed out, but, notwithstanding, the rudimentary literary quality of much *Left Review* I-witnessing justified John Sommerfield's complaint at the 'Contributor's Conference' that the journal sometimes pastoralized proletarian efforts with "a sort of 'snootiness', as if to say, 'Isn't it marvellous that the workers should be able to write at all?'" 43 However, other prize-winning entries in 'Nine workers describe a shift at work' (besides the L.L. Avery piece already discussed 44) show considerable avant-garde influence and untutored skill, which bears out Montagu Slater's belief that they advanced *Left Review's* aim of making factual writing aesthetically and politically effective. The winners I-witnessings, autobiographical sketches and short stories ('Monday Morning in the Machine Shop'; 'The Morning Start'; 'The Late Duty
Porter'; 'Threshing Day and It Rained'; 'Lunch in a Restaurant'; 'Soap and Clothes'; 'Milk - Before Breakfast'; 'By the Dancing Needles'; 'Clerks Wanted') cross-sectioned factory-, sweatshop-, office-, service- agricultural- and domestic-work, in all their grind, exploitation, petty humiliations and rare moments of satisfaction and companionship. In 'Monday Morning in the Machine Shop', Kenneth Bradshaw, an apprentice tool-setter, used co-ordinating 'cinematic' effects to animate his account of the beginning of a working day:

One by one the workers troop in, and take up their positions by their machines. My boss, the toolsetter, stands beside me. We await zero hour ... Suddenly the 8 o'clock hooter screams. The dynamo starts. Up go the lights. Out go hastily nicked cigarettes. A hundred hands move a hundred levers releasing power into the machines. A hundred starting wheels are put over, and the whole machine shop sighs, rumbles and roars into thunderous life.

And Bradshaw's eye was equally sharp for telling close-ups:

Tiny particles of metal are constantly flying off ... They get up your nostrils where you breathe them in and they do their fatal damage ... They cover your arms and legs like pollen or goldbeaters' dust. They stick in the hot flesh and sting like wasps, and like gold lice work their way right into the skin, clog the oil-stopped pores and stand out like blackheads round the wrist and up the arms. At night, I try to pick them out one by one ... 46

K. Newbury vividly reported the sights and sounds of a dairy - "two streams of milk spurting into the empty can, sounding like a halting buzzer heard from a distance, the note gradually deepening as the milk filled the vessel" - as did Julius Lipton's third-person narrative the state of mind of a worker in the Yiddish rag trade: "Ever and anon, gloomy thoughts would flash through his mind, until his brain became like a quicksand which sucked in every unhappy reflection ... five more days to Saturday ... soon be tea-time ... need rest ... feet tired ... another six hours' work after tea ... wish I had regular hours all
the year round ... sweat your guts out in the busy ... starve in the slack ... "

Such entries more than fulfilled the simple empirical criteria Amabel Williams-Ellis reiterated in her competition report: "the reader was to be made to use at least four of his five senses - he was to smell characteristic smells, feel weights, and the warmth, cold, smoothness, or roughness of tools or utensils, and hear the sounds characteristic of that sort of work", to give "new knowledge of 'What it feels like.'" Echoing Woolf and anticipating Storm Jameson she opined, "There is not a novelist writing to-day who has not got something to learn here" and she hoped entrants realised they had "taken into their hands a new lever" of representation." Interestingly, she described L.L. Avery's entry as if it were a documentary photograph or painting: like "a lighted window seen as you walk down the darkening street", it gave "a quick insight into someone else's life". Similarly, she criticised A. Walter Marsden's 'Clerks Wanted' for not being sufficiently 'cinematic' to dispense with explicit comment. It would be "less remembered than something the reader has the illusion of having heard or seen himself". The Hotel Porter's images, on the other hand, showed "how good propaganda can be when there is no propaganda".

Another vital platform for British '30s textual and photo-reportage, as well as international literature of fact, was New Writing, which sprang from its editor John Lehmann's interest in the cultural dimension of Henri Barbusse's anti-war movement and French journals like Commune, Monde and Vendredi "where politics was interspersed with stories and reportage" by writers like André Chamson, Paul Nizan, Jean Giono and Louis Guilloux, many of whom would also feature in New
Writing's pages. Lehmann was also prompted by the sometimes inferior quality and doctrinal politics of Left Review material to organize his own kind of Popular Literary Front "round which people who held the same ideas about fascism and war could assemble". New Writing continued to breach barriers between middle-class contributors, like privileged New Country fellow-travellers Isherwood and Rex Warner, or public-school dissidents like Orwell, and proletarians, like George Garrett, Sid Chaplin, B.L. Coombes, Leslie Halward and Willy Goldman who "when they wrote of miners, seamen, factory workers or East End tailors, were writing from the inside, out of their own experience", cross-fertilizing their knowledge and styles.

New Writing's first number (Spring, 1936) featured the cross-section 'Different Lives', topical descriptions of individuals from various classes and nations in reportage or thinly-fictionalized form. Charles Harte's 'Blackleg' told the story of the conversion of a strike-busting Ulster engine-driver. Kisch's 'A Woman on the Silk Front', from Asien gründlich verändert, interviewed a Soviet supervisor voluntarily transferred to Central Asia because of her phobia about the 'Internationale': she had been raped while her husband was forced to sing it during the Civil War. John Hampson's 'Good Food', an Orwellian report of starving on the road, was followed by autobiographical sketches from either side of the trenches: in Alfred Kantorowicz's 'To the Western Front', a young Berliner unexpectedly encounters his mother on his way to die, while Tom Wintringham's 'First Love' described an English soldier's simultaneous sexual and political awakening at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. Finally, Anna Seghers's 'The Lord's Prayer (An Episode of 1933)' described the beating and forced praying inflicted on Communists rounded up after the Nazi coup.
Other literature of fact in the first number included Isherwood's 'The Nowaks', later incorporated into his documentary novel *Goodbye to Berlin* and Nikolai Ognev's 'Sour Grapes - and Sweet'. Lehmann, who himself later reported Soviet Georgia in *Prometheus and the Bolsheviks* (1937), contributed 'Via Europe: Scenes from a travel sequence, 1934-5'. A *rasende* montage of people, incidents and places across the continent, sectioned with titles like 'Paris', 'A Jewelled Wristwatch', 'The People of Moscow', 'Oil', 'Never Again', its idiom and content characterized the international currency the new reportage and literature of fact had achieved by then:

Peering from his mica window, the passenger in the great silver-winged machine sees gaps break in the floor of mist, the rain suddenly cease to shiver on the undercarriage. And now he feels the alteration of speed and the rapid approach of earth, over which the rediscovered sun throws a black, wheeling shadow, the outer fields of Paris. The bus swings on from the landing ground, through the untidy rattling suburbs, the street-markets and dripping brasserie awnings. On every hoarding, at every street corner, the kings of profit renew their lurid appeals, to drink, to drive, to be wrapped in their wares ... Here is the centre of the city, where the taxis stream over the dark, rain-slippery avenues, carrying the luxury shoppers to and fro among the plate-glass palaces, the Minister to his official reception, and the Irish spy from his deal with the arms-smuggler. Here, from a hundred eyes, the spider of power keeps watch over the far-stretching lines of his golden web, South over the African sands and East where the Danube flows down through a patchwork of frontiers and peoples. The rain is swept from the sky, and over the river, as the afternoon turns from the sun, the children launch their boats on the fountain-shaken pond. They chatter like birds, and scatter round the rim as the tiny models meander away. Leaning under the yellow-tipped trees, the artist is watching, who sees them as a pattern in which their separate selves and thinking lives can have no part."

Similarly, the fragments implicitly unite at moments of coordination emphasizing the problematic interconnectedness of events and their representations in the modern media:

Geneva. Paris. Rome. Diplomats hurry to and from their trains, as the cameras click and turn. Ministers hold hurried conferences, communiqués are issued, and exchange of notes
made public. In solemn halls, speeches are delivered before the turning cameras and flying pencils, while rumours are whispered from mouth to mouth, like birds that rustle in the bushes round a valley camp. The newspapers echo the voices in confusion, the newspapers and the radio are a babble that hide a few voices demanding, reporting, reckoning, the newsreels repeating the gestures of hurrying diplomats a screen that obscures the real death, among the blood-splashed undergrowth, of the African hit by the fragment of exploding bomb, and the young Italian suffocating in his tank in the blazing deserts.

Much '30s proletarian fiction, despite sometimes rudimentary techniques (hardly surprising, since as Brierley found, lack of leisure and educational privileges maximized its production difficulties), had value in reporting facts of working-class experience from the inside "to a degree no mere bourgeois 'goer-over', however careful an observer and note-taking documentarist he might be, was likely to out-do", as Cunningham puts it. If defamiliarization was an effect of form, as Orwell believed of Ulysses, he also felt that proletarian novels pushed writing "back towards realities" by virtue of their experiential content: "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists ... recorded things that were everyday experience but which simply had not been noticed before - just as, so it is said, no one before 1800 ever noticed that the sea was blue." (See CEJL I, pp.542-43, and II, p.55, respectively) As Croft points out, full-blown sociological surveys "were clearly beyond the resources of most unemployed men". Hence, "the presentation of the lives of working people in fictional form allowed for a much greater circulation and influence". 'Roger Dataller' (Arthur Eaglestone) in his The Plain Man and the Novel (1940) typified this theory of the documentary value of the content of proletarian fiction, arguing of Means Test Man that the "psychological effect of such writing is of immense importance, serving to emphasise, more than the reading of a hundred blue books, the cancer that is wasting the social and economic
body of society". Hence, descriptions of novels as 'social documents' abounded in '30s reviews and works of criticism, but the technical meaning of the term documentary in this context seems to be an apparently detached and unhysterical narrative viewpoint, without explicit propagandizing, rather than the avant-garde, 'cinematic' sense that I will discuss in Chapter VII.

Proletarian novels undoubtedly helped challenge the nation's official self-image and history by making more visible social conditions that were often hardly better than those reported by Dickens. Being "natively familiar with ill-fitting dentures and chip-shops, dole-queues and demonstrations of unemployed workers" proletarian writers were qualified (if anyone was) as "the authentic voice of the British masses". They publicized areas marginalized by metropolitan hegemony, but where the majority lived, worked and suffered the consequences of political and cultural under-representation. Prominent proletarian novels were Lewis Jones's *Cwmardy* (1937) and *We Live* (1939), which covered the South Wales coalfields; James Hanley's *Boy* and *The Last Voyage* (both 1931), together with A. P. Roley's *Revolt* (1933) represented seafaring Liverpool; Harold Heslop's *Goaf* (1934) and *Last Cage Down* (1935) dealt with mining-life in Durham's coalfields, and Brierley's *Means Test Man* (1935) that of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Also notable were Leslie Halward's Birmingham short stories *Let Me Tell You* (1938); the Mancunian Walter Greenwood's classic *Love on the Dole* (1933); Scots James Barke's *Major Operation* (1936) and *Land of the Leal* (1939) and Lewis Grassic Gibbon's trilogy *A Scot's Quair* (*Sunset Song* (1932), *Cloud Howe* (1933), *Grey Granite* (1934)).

As Miles and Smith point out, the working-class novel of the period inevitably "lent itself to a perspective concerned with reportage,
documentary and social investigation. In as much as working-class novels depicted working-class life in certain areas ... they might be read, more or less designedly in each case, within a spectrum of texts reporting in various modes the condition of the distressed areas to the more prosperous parts of Britain." In this way, Means Test Man was "a brilliant achievement in communicating the mental and spiritual experience of unemployment to an audience unfamiliar with it." Despite the novel's lack of explicitly Socialist propaganda, Brierley's protagonist Jack Cook sometimes echoed the rhetoric of London's reportage: "Still, no one could understand who hadn't gone through it; it's like the war, only worse. The women are in the line as well and are being tortured and starved instead of being shot outright."8 ꔀ

Lionel Britton's Hunger and Love (1931) was specifically about the dilemma of working-class writers trying to represent themselves through the bourgeois dominated forms of British literary culture. Britton's text produced a "chilling perception of the erasure of generations from the book of society" and "offers perhaps the most recurrent and deep-seated motivation of the working-class writer" - the need to bear witness to what is excluded from the winners' construction of history. Collectively, the working-class texts of the period, whatever else they achieved "demanded space within the culture for unconsidered histories and unconsidered experiences".9 ꔀ.

Proletarian fictionists often used dialect and slang to constitute their oppositional versions of reality. The interviews in Memoirs of the Unemployed had been patronizingly paraphrased into Reithian idiom for The Listener. However, in many novels proletarian accents challenged the assumed superiority of Standard English with academic assistance from Eric Patridge's democratic lexicography in Slang.
Today and Yesterday; a History and a Study (1933), and his Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, which first appeared in 1937. The problem, as Croft notes, playing on the title of Jack Hilton's Caliban Shrieks (1935), was how to make Caliban speak while retaining his/her authentic accents. 59

Orwell certainly felt that in Hilton's "autobiography without narrative" (an episodic, eclectic blend of reportage and commentary like Orwell's own Down and Out in Paris and London) a 'native' of darkest England spoke out and mapped his own world. And this led Orwell into a generalization about the superiority of proletarian autobiographies over middle-class documentation of mass-conditions. Hilton's reporting had a quality which the objective, descriptive kind of book almost invariably misses. It deals with its subject from the inside, and consequently it gives one, instead of a catalogue of facts relating to poverty, a vivid notion of what it feels like to be poor. All the time that one reads one seems to hear Mr Hilton's voice, and what is more, one seems to hear the voices of the innumerable industrial workers whom he typifies. (CEJL I, pp.172-74, especially p.173)

Significantly, "If all of them could get their thoughts on to paper they would change the consciousness of our race."

Caliban Shrieks, the NUWM president Wal Hannington's Unemployed Struggles 1919-1936 (1936) and Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson's The Town that was Murdered: The Life History of Jarrow (1939) certainly confirm that it wasn't only middle-class writers who successfully extended '30s topical I-witnessing into full autobiographical reports on the crises of their times. A prize-winner of Left Review's 'What Life Means to Me' competition, B.L. Coombes (who also reported for Fact and Picture Post), subsequently produced These Poor Hands: The Autobiography of a Miner Working in South Wales for the LBC in 1939, 60 typifying a whole
generation of more personal proletarian self-portraits like the Communist M.P. William Gallacher's *Revolt of the Clyde* (1936), William Holt's *I Haven't Unpacked* (1939) and the *Daily Worker* editor Harry Pollitt's *Serving My Time* (1940).

Proletarian novelists who also undertook more ambitious documentary work when they could get the funding included Hilton, Walter Greenwood and Jack Common. As a consequence of the impact of his novel *Love on the Dole*, Greenwood edited the cross-sectional *How the Other Man Lives* (1939) for the Labour Book Service, from interviews with thirty-seven working men and women, including a chambermaid, a miner, a hairdresser, a pawnbroker, a coastguard and a housewife. Similarly, in 1938, Common produced *Seven Shifts* a collection of I-witnessings of manual work, by a plasterer, a blastfurnace-man, a steelworker, a gas worker, railway fireman, market-stallholder and unemployed steelworker. Hilton, Simon Blumenfeld, Joe Watson and James Stirling were four of the contributors who had already published in the *Adelphi*. Edited by Richard Rees and Middleton Murray, *The Adelphi* brought together many writers from what Common called "the unprinted proletariat" in the second half of the '30s." Common's introduction echoed Williams-Ellis's comments on the winning entries of *Left Review* writing competitions which *Seven Shifts* obviously resembled: "When you finish you'll have a good idea of what it would be like if you got a job in blast-furnace, in the cab of a locomotive, or round an Eastend market." Hilton contributed the first essay 'The Plasterer's Life' and published the series 'What Life Means to me (A Proletarian's Credo)' in *The Adelphi* from October 1937 to March 1938. However, a sequel to *Seven Shifts* on women workers fell through because Secker and Warburg lost interest, possibly because a text on the economic importance of 'women's work' seemed too advanced." Hilton's
wife Mary was to have written about cotton-spinning. Nonetheless, the couple went on to gather the material for their successful 'internal travelogue' *English Ways* (1940) (discussed below in Chapter VI, Section i).

Experimental novels such as John Sommerfield's *May Day* and James Barke's *Major Operation* featured newspaper headlines, slogans from banners, agitprop graffiti and montages of documents, and thus embodied Leftist aspirations "to oppose the workers' voice to the voices of the undemocratic and hostile media" constructing British hyperreality. However, both bourgeois forms and bourgeois control of forms were hard to undermine, although assembling factual materials through brigades of field workers, it was hoped, would help break down writers' isolated 'homeworker' individualism, as suggested in Tretyakov's article 'Fortsetzung folgt' ('To Be Continued'):

> The individual writer takes infinitely long over his work, limping along far behind life itself. The individual writer works uneconomically; he does not even practise the most minimal division of productive functions. He is a composer, collector of material, reviser and compiler all rolled into one.

Hence, Soviet texts like *The White Sea Canal* and *Those Who Built Stalingrad* were promoted as examples of a new 'collective writing', though, as we have seen, often without full knowledge of their background and authenticity. What was sought in terms of form and content was, in effect, both factually encyclopaedic and a literary equivalent to film's cooperative products. The journal *Fact*, the Left Book Club's alternative publishing project and the Mass-Observation movement all illustrate this tendency in their various ways. These I will examine in the next two sections.
If objectivity remains a modern buzzword partly through being uncritically associated with the dominant tradition of documentary in the '30s, so does fact. As Malcolm Muggeridge wrote at the end of that decade: "Facts were wanted about everyone and everything - cross-sections of society, symptomatic opinions and observations, detailed investigations and statistics ... Let us at all costs be factual ... armed with the facts against the dreamer and the visionary, wary of escapism's pitfalls." But Muggeridge was warier about the factual than some, because "outward appearance is only one among many images of reality, and perhaps not the most significant". Hence, prostration "before facts, appealing to facts for guidance in a time of trouble", credits them "with a validity they do not possess", laying us "open to deceptions greater than any imagination can practice". However, though '30s leftist fact-gatherers lacked the resources to attack the whole social "dish", in Muggeridge's phrase, and deduce "from its total constituents the recipe according to which it had been compounded", they sometimes "put in a thumb and pulled out a plum".

The '30s cult of facts even gave rise to a documentary journal, aiming to create a British version of Tretyakov's "fact factory". Fact was founded on the ambitious principle of Denis Diderot's Encyclopédie, which in gathering and disseminating information about the Ancien Regime's social, political and economic abuses "produced action". As the editorial 'Ourselves' in Number 1 (April 1937) put it, the "essential work was the spreading of information in a form and in a language that any one could understand":
To-day, all professions, men of all trades, are aware that the present system does not work, that it means misery, stagnation, and starvation. But they do not, always, know exactly how much and where it does not work; how in every part of human life from the films to heavy industry, from family life to parliament, it is stopping development and making failure certain. It is our objective to show how this is, and from that information to provide ... the knowledge of how to make a much more fundamental change than the French Revolution.*

Consequently, Number 4 projected a survey of conditions in "typical parts of Britain", which would demonstrate the mundane nature of crisis and undermine undemocratic conceptions of national identity:

You have read, no doubt, plenty of statistical and economic accounts of this or that industry. But have you ever considered the place in which you live and the trade in which you work, with the impartial and distant eye of an anthropologist? Suppose, instead of going to work one day without reflecting on what was before you, you were to watch and listen, to observe the buildings, the dress, the habits, the conversation, the food and the taboos of your fellows as conscientiously as if you were walking for the first time into an African village. What would you see? And what would you, a new Doctor Livingstone, think could be made of this tribe? (FACT No.4 (July 1937) pp.5-6)

Fact's approach to its subjects, including a farming village, a suburban district and a fishing port, is characterized by statistician and economist Phillip Massey's comprehensive 'Portrait of a Mining Town' in Number 8, which indicates the degree to which Fact shared in the naive faith that data in themselves could change opinions and conditions. Massey presented his facts as a catalogue, using a conscientiously quantitative, metonymic mode, but in a rhetorically inert, un-self-conscious way, as in his opening description:

The Urban District of Nantyglo and Blaina ... is in the valley of the Ebbw Fach ('little Ebbw'). It is bounded on the north by the Brynmawr Urban District (which is in Breconshire), and on the south by the Abertillery Urban District ... Nantyglo and Blaina form one administrative area and, in effect, a single town. Nantyglo is the older locality and was described by the Medical Officer of Health for the district, eleven years ago, as 'a dreary scattered wilderness of colliery tips and broken-down dilapidated over-crowded gloomy hovels.' A hundred years ago it was a great industrial centre. At the
height of their prosperity the works at Nantyglo and Beaufort, both of which belonged to Joseph Crawshay Bailey, employed over 3,000 men ... (Fact No.8 (Nov. 1937) p.7)

Massey documented the locality's geology, industry and demography using statistics, maps and graphs, in a mode objective to the point of dehydration. The all-round desperateness of Nantyglo's situation was indeed represented - the slums, malnutrition, living and working conditions that were indistinguishably appalling, the views of old and young, in or out of employment, local customs, culture and politics - but his discourse did not achieve the kind of critical defamiliarization that Fact ostensibly aimed at.

However, more successfully, Fact featured some strikingly 'qualitative' I-witnessing. Number 1 carried the inside story 'Behind the Swing Doors' by the assistant manager of a fashionable hotel, describing exploitative conditions and blacklisting similar to Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London (Fact No.1 (April 1937) pp.81-92). But most controversial was Number 2's 'I Joined the Army' by Private XYZ (Fact No.2 (May 1937)) and the editors justified this departure from their brief: "FACT does not set out to be a sensational paper. But if the facts are sensational, FACT has no duty to alter them." (Fact No. 2 (May 1937), p.6) The enlisted man painted a shocking and degraded picture of life in the Royal Tank Corps, culminating in the breaking of a prisoner in solitary confinement:

Jones stuck this well for about a month, and then the rigour and hardship began to wear him out. The food made him feel sick soon after he'd eaten it. The culminating moment arrived one night when he was scrubbing out his cell, and he vomited over the floor. The warder present jeered at him and made him clean it up immediately. This was about equivalent to a dog eating its own spew. Jones was sick again. Some of it splashed on the warder's boots ... he struck Jones a terrible blow in the mouth ... Jones went down like a log, and the pail of water upset under his body as he lay on the boards. (Fact No.2 (May 1937) pp.75-76)
Consequently, Fact's original printers and distributors dropped it, prompting the editors to point out that this kind of unofficial censorship though not the product of a conscious conspiracy was an example of a more automatic and insidious "instinctive and natural censorship within the capitalist system". The accusation that they had fabricated Private XYZ, made by the right-wing journal Truth, led to Frank Griffin's letter disclosing his alias and to the publication of a book-length version of his testimony later that year (See Fact No.3 (June 1937), pp.6-7).

Other Fact reports, by documentary researchers, participant observers and/or I-witnesses included Raymond Postgate's 'A Pocket History of the British Workers to 1919' (No.5 (August 1937)), A Morgan Young's 'Japan's War on China' (No.9 (Dec 1937)), Evelyn Land's 'The Underground Struggle in Germany', Harold Paton's 'The Russian Trials and the Role of Trotsky' (both in No.10 (Jan 1938)), Mark Benney's 'The Truth About English Prisons' (No.12 (March 1938)), Hemingway's 'The Spanish War' (No.16 (July 1938)), Herbert Hodge's 'I Drive a Taxi (No.22 (Jan 1939)), 'I am a Miner' by B.L. Coombes (No.23 (Feb 1939)) and Wal Hannington on NUWM propaganda stunts against benefit regulations, 'Black Coffins and the Unemployed' (No.26 (May 1939)).

Number 4 (July 1937), 'Writing in Revolt: Theory and Examples', contained crucial attempts to map out Balk's "Wild West of literature": the new reportage. Storm Jameson's article 'Documents' (Fact No.4 (July 1937) pp.1-18) was much closer to the thinking of LEF than to Socialist Realism, which she regarded as a prescriptive formalizing of what socialist writing might be. Storm Jameson had been a member of the British delegation to the 1935 Paris Writers' Congress at which Kisch spoke about the writer's role in fighting Fascism. The following year,
the Congress of the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture was devoted to the French delegation's proposal for an international encyclopaedia with progressive humanist aim like that of the eighteenth-century. As Croft notes, it was intended "as part of the intellectual offensive against fascism, the Age of Reason versus the Age of Unreason". Consequently, this international agenda seems to have influenced Jameson's view in 'Documents' that only radical and comprehensive reporting could stimulate necessary changes in social consciousness to produce a new culture that would both safeguard society from Fascism and facilitate Socialist transformation. Moreover, the reporter had to use an imaginative, shorthand method that would compete with alienating fantasy. Where Jameson differed from LEF and Kisch was in limiting reportage to the instrumental function of laying the factual basis for future literature, rather than allowing it literary status in its own right, because "The conditions for the growth of a socialist literature scarcely exist. We have to create them. We need documents, not, as the Naturalists needed them, to make their drab tuppenny-ha'penny dramas, but as charts, as timber for the fire some writer will light tomorrow morning." She did not advocate the "funeral of fictiveness", just its temporary suspension (See Fact No.4 (July 1937) p.13). Even documentary novels as proposed by Fox could not be successfully created "under the eyes of the living Dimitroff". She also thought it fallacious to believe that only writing by or about proletarians was politically relevant, because even biographies of Lord Invernairn or Krupp could be written from a socialist standpoint. Similarly, Jameson, like Kisch, believed that every particle of society encoded its underlying processes somehow or other. It did not matter where the factual cross-section was made "if you know what you are
looking for" (Fact No.4 (July 1937) pp.9-10).

Jameson considered that it was particularly absurd for bourgeois writers to use a hypothetically Socialist form without first gathering the necessary information about the lives of working men and women. She demanded that writers become participant observers without feeling heroic, adventurous, or even "curious about their own spiritual reactions". She was also astute about the importance of 'photographic' technique for revealing the "stirring" or symptomatic in mundane realities without direct authorial interference (Fact No.4 (July 1937) p.10). Hence, she deplored the automatized language of a Times article on the Durham coalfields, similar to 'Portrait of a Mining Town', suggesting instead that "As the photographer does, so must the writer keep himself out of the picture while working ceaselessly to present the fact from a striking (poignant, ironic, penetrating, significant) angle". Her ideal reporter was not only a camera-eye/I-witness, but an editor as well, "coldly and industriously presenting, arranging, selecting, discarding from the mass of his material to get the significant detail, which leaves no more to be said, and implies everything." (Fact No.4 (July 1937) pp.15-16)

Thus writers would become "field workers in a field no smaller than England, our critical values implied in the angle from which we take our pictures." All that remained was "the extreme difficulty of finding phrases ... compressed and highly selective" that would lay bare "in such a way that they are at once seen to be intimately connected, the relations between things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex." Hence her theory extended logically into a use of literary montage to radically defamiliarize social life, relating classes to commodities and means of production without totally
disrupting mimetic plausibility: "At certain levels of the mind we see and feel connections which we know rationally in another way. In dreams things apparently distinct are seen to be related (but Surrealism is not the solution). We may stumble on the solution in the effort of trying to create a literary equivalent of the documentary film."

(Fact No.4 (July 1937) pp.17-18)

Jameson herself suggested a "double-sided record" comparing family routines in the West and East End (Fact No.4 (July 1937) p.15). An example of the literary use of 'filmic' devices (to reveal the social history of a mundane commodity and the syntax of economic relationships linking "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex"), which she probably had in mind, was the first half of Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier.* Equally, the second half may have prompted her tirade against the "self-analysis" nailing the bourgeois writer up "inside his own small ego at the moment when what is individual to each man is less real, less actual, than that which he shares with every other man" (Fact No.4 (July 1937) p.12). She had already castigated Orwell (see 'Socialists Born and Made' Fact No.2 (May 1937), p.87) for reporting poverty 'subjectively', in contrast to Hannington's *Unemployed Struggles.*

Arthur Calder-Marshall's essay 'Fiction' in the same Number also celebrated the "funeral of fictiveness" and saw factual fiction converging with reportage, winding up with the famous exhortation that "The ivory towers are draughty nowadays. It's warmer in the street." Under 'Examples', he listed a deposition about a notorious colliery disaster, followed by three proletarian stories: Fred Urquhart's 'Sweat'; Leslie Halward's 'On the Road', and 'Episode' by James Hanley. He claimed the deposition from the HMSO *Report of the Causes and*
Circumstances attending the Explosion Which occurred at Gresford Colliery, Denbigh showed "a command of language and vividness of description similar to Hemingway or Dos Passos" (See Fact No.4 (July 1937) pp.38-44, especially pp.44 and 39). By Number 20, Spender was holding up André Malraux's Days of Hope, John Lehmann's Evil Was Abroad and J. Singer's The River Breaks Up as models for the novel deriving "from a basis of factual material such as might form a number of FACT itself", the only kind of uninvented fiction he deemed worthy of review henceforth (Fact No.20 (Oct. 1938) p.75). Spender had already discerned "two approaches to the contemporary political scene" in 1936: "The one is direct or partially satirical representation; the other is fantasy or allegory." But by his Forward from Liberalism (1937), he had come to prefer the former, confidently predicting that the coming revolution would confirm the primacy of content over form and the 'objective' over the personal by the "documentary literature" it would produce. "Such books", he claimed, "will have their propagandist effect, will be produced in great quantities (as they are now in Russia)" and might even "take the place of sensational journalism" in a world which had far more leisure "to contemplate the significance of what is going on".

Perhaps the most successful "fact factory" of the period, constructing an alternative, Leftist hyperreality, was the Left Book Club (LBC) founded by Victor Gollancz in May 1936 on the same principles as the Weimar Socialist book clubs. It aimed essentially to create a British Popular Front (the first LBC text was France Today and the People's Front (May 1936) by Maurice Thorez, General Secretary of the French CP) and to publicize the political time-bomb set ticking by the Treaty of Versailles. It intended to achieve this by gathering and disseminating encyclopaedic information about conditions in Britain and
abroad through its texts and network of ancillary enterprises like *Left News* (carrying Gollancz's editorials, reviews and articles on the 'topic of the month') 1,500 Left Discussion Groups, lecture tours and summer-schools. Its membership peaked at 57,000 at the outbreak of World War II, but its influence was still potent in 1945, when books like Simon Haxey's exposé of capitalist interests in Parliament *Tory MP* (1939), the chronicle of National Government appeasement by 'Cato' (Frank Owen, Michael Foot, Peter Howard) *Guilty Men* (1940) and *Can the Tories Win the Peace?* (1945) by 'Diplomaticus' (Konrad Zilliacus) contributing to the electorate's decisive rejection of the Conservative Party in 1945.

LBC books, as John Lewis notes, basically dealt with three related crises - fascism, the threat of war, and poverty, intending to resist the first, oppose the second and advance socialist reconstruction to cure the third. They were selected by Gollancz, John Strachey and Harold Laski, and distributed at a low monthly price (half-a-crown) to LBC members. Gollancz's stint as a teacher convinced him of the democratic necessity for education and information, though in a more radical way than John Grierson. Without them mass-civilization was "at the mercy of any unscrupulous demagogue or shrieking newspaper". As he wrote in *Left News* (Aug. 1945) there was no need for British state censorship, because capitalist media control, created "an invisible barrier across which it was almost impossible to get progressive literature into the hands of the general public". The LBC thus provided a subsidized platform for radical works; its project was openly agitation propaganda, but generally conducted as objectively as possible.

The overwhelming majority of LBC members were political newcomers
"shocked at the overthrow of constitutional government in Spain, deeply concerned at the persisting poverty in the distressed areas of Britain", and ranged across the social spectrum. The Hackney Group consisted of six factory workers, a railway guard, two office workers, one manager, two bank clerks, an analytical chemist and five housewives. Special groups sprang up amongst taxi drivers, journalists, doctors, architects, scientists and in Evening Institutes, triggering an enormous volume of correspondence and debate because the readership was more numerous than individual subscriptions. There was soon an international network of groups in Europe, the USA and the Commonwealth. However, political friction led to the creation of a rival Labour Book Service in March 1939, though the LBC had published Clement Atlee's *The Labour Party in Perspective* (August 1937) and its largest bloc of members were Labour left-wingers.

Books of the Month were systematically discussed alongside supplementary texts, the first of which was G.C.M. McGonigle and J. Kirby's *Poverty and Public Health* (Sept 1936), which made the statistical connection between income and health/death rates indisputable. Contemporary events featured predominantly in the LBC's first year. *France Today* demonstrated how the threat of a Fascist coup had been prevented by the French Front populaire, and R. Palme Dutt's *World Politics, 1918-1936* (July 1936) put the issue of collective security into a global context. Rudolf Olden's *Hitler the Pawn* (June 1936) examined the military-industrial factors behind Nazism and Gaetano Salvemini's *Under the Axe of Fascism* (Oct. 1936) contrasted the propaganda of Mussolini's regime's with its reality. Club Choice for December 1936 was *Spain in Revolt* by the Americans Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, reporting the international crisis through which the
LBC would make its first widespread impact on public consciousness. This was followed in January 1937 by Katz's anonymous exposé of *The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain* and, in December, *Spanish Testament* made Koestler's name in Britain as a reporter. The LBC was substantially responsible for counteracting Francoist propaganda, organizing rallies and raising money for medicine and food-shipments and its agitation against 'Non-intervention' was typified by Koestler's nationwide lecture tour in January 1938. In October 1937 the LBC also spotlighted the Sino-Japanese War, and the internecine struggle between Kuomintang and Communists paralysing Chinese resistance, through Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*. Agnes Smedley's *China Fights Back* (December 1938) then reported Mao's subsequent offensive, once temporary accommodation with Chiang Kai-Shek was reached.

The LBC also published novels for their factual value, as with Jan Petersen's *Our Street* (Feb. 1938), depicting everyday Nazi repression, allegedly smuggled out of Germany baked in chocolate cakes. It saw international Fascism as the desperate resort of capitalism in crisis and, therefore, as closely connected with social and economic conditions at home. Hence, it sponsored some of the most influential '30s I-witnessing on topics of special urgency and reportage played a vital role in its campaign. Wilfred MacCartney's *Walls have Mouts* (Sept 1936), a grim account of his prison experience, was supposedly instrumental in leading to reform of the penal system. Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (March 1937) was one of the LBC's most successful social documentaries, selling over 40,000 copies, and Labour M.P. Ellen Wilkinson's proletarian "autobiography with a thesis" *The Town That Was Murdered* reached an equally wide readership. Jarrow was one of the unemployment blackspots of the '30s and Wilkinson made it a concrete
example of the disastrous neglectfulness of the National Government. She showed how under capitalism "vast changes can be made which sweep away the livelihood of a whole town overnight, in the interests of some powerful group, who need take no account of the consequences of their decisions." Officially euphemized as a 'Special Area', the town's principal industry had been bought by the cartel National Shipbuilders' Security Ltd. and immediately subjected to its 'rationalization' policy of scrapping temporarily unprofitable yards in order to prevent overproduction and raise prices, with the chain-reaction close-down of local coal and steel plants and businesses dependent on the earnings of the workforce. Wilkinson argued that pre-war Britain already was a 'welfare state' - for the rich - "pouring out gifts ... in the form of subsidies, tariffs and quotas", while doing the cosmetic minimum for depressed areas. Ironically, Sir John Jarvis, stepping in "like a rich Santa Claus" with the promise of a new tube works, gave Government and media the pretext to prevent Jarrow being seen as part of a pattern of crisis demanding planned economic reorganization. In the South, Jarrow's plight was perceived as "a local problem", not "the symptom of a national evil", exacerbating the "two-Englandism" which, ironically, in an age of communications technology, put democracy, ever more effectively, out of touch with itself. Chapter 12 'Jarrow Marches' I-witnessed one of the legendary events of the '30s. In October 1936, backed by the town's citizens "from Bishop to business man", the Jarrow Crusade to London, whatever it achieved concretely, became symbolic of popular resistance to the PAC and the indignity of Means Testing.

Wal Hannington's The Problem of the Distressed Areas (Nov. 1937) and Ten Lean Years: An Examination of the record of the National
Government in the field of Unemployment (March 1940) dealt with problems behind the Special Areas Bill of 1934 and with its failure to produce more than self-help groups and craft centres for long-term jobless, while Charles Segal investigated the situation of deprived children in Penn'orth of Chips (May 1939). Typically the LBC balanced contrasting and complementary kinds of documentary discourse, quantitative/statistical and qualitative/I-witnessing. Professional research like Ernest Davies's National Capitalism (August 1939), on the monopolism devastating Tyneside and South Wales, was issued simultaneously with texts like miner B.L. Coombes's These Poor Hands, showing the effects through personal experience of "victimisation, overwork ... accidents, the dust-choked lungs of a silicosis victim, and all the rest". Reader response to such accounts started LBC schools in places like Stepney and South Wales, enabling them to become field workers themselves, culminating in a special Distressed Areas Group visiting collieries, factories, Unemployed Clubs, TUs and workers homes. A survey thus produced showed that nearly a third of Merseyside's working-class fell below the minimum established by Seebohm Rowntree's The Human Needs of Labour (1937) on BMA nutritional guidelines.

In June 1938 the LBC tried to alert British opinion to Appeasement's inevitable consequences through Lieutenant Commander Edgar Young's report on Eastern Europe's last democracy, Czechoslovakia, but 1939 was the crucial year. Gollancz wrote in January's Left News that LBC members needed to make opposition to Appeasement "so strong that it bursts the dams and carries all before it." In February, G.E.R. Gedye, The Times correspondent in Vienna and Prague pointed out in Fallen Bastions the strategic danger of throwing open Europe's Eastern
flank by disbanding the Czech army. Ironically, however, the LBC objective of Collective Security was never achieved, partly because of the reluctance of French and British Governments to ally themselves with Soviet Russia and, finally, the Non-Aggression Pact Molotov concluded with Ribbentrop in August 1939.

The LBC was also indirectly implicated in totalitarian manoeuverings, but, as Lewis points out, Gollancz became increasingly anxious that the Club was subordinating factuality to "the doctrine that the end justifies the means" and tolerating "coercion and violence as inevitable in the transition to socialism." Idealizing the Popular Front made it tempting to see criticism as 'objective' support for Fascism, as in Gollancz's rejection of Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* in 1938. Between 1936 and 1939 the LBC issued 15 books and many articles reporting Stalinism in a quasi-Utopian light and expressing the '30s Left's attraction to "the intellectual elegance of the Soviet system on paper". These included Pat Sloan's *Soviet Democracy* (May 1937), Sidney and Beatrice Webb's monumental *Soviet Communism, A New Civilisation?* (October 1937), the Dean of Canterbury's *The Socialist Sixth of the World* (December 1939) and *Comrades and Citizens* (November 1938), documenting 'ordinary' Soviet life by Seema Rynin Allan. The LBC also organized Soviet study trips, until 1938 when visas were discontinued, ostensibly because of international tension, but probably because Comintern found it more difficult to manage individual I-witnessing than propaganda at a distance.

The LBC position on Stalinism, expressed in Dudley Collard's *Soviet Justice and the Trial of Radek and Others* (March 1937), had not changed substantially when J.R. Campbell's *Soviet Policy and Its Critics* was published in February 1939. Both texts were partly examples of the
suppression of doubt for the, apparently, best possible reasons - the need for collective security and the unity of the Left. However, these reasons were themselves unexpectedly undermined by the Non-Aggression Pact, which was the LBC's watershed and resulted in a reappraisal of its function. The LBC's policy was meant to deter Fascism's march to war, and, therefore, the outbreak of hostilities with Germany in September caused a schism from which it never fully recovered. Though Gollancz wrote "the duty of all members ... is to do all in their power to win the war and defeat Fascism", there was considerable disagreement with Communist members, now opposing action against Hitler as 'imperialist aggression'.

The loss of the LBC's political innocence was implied by Leonard Woolf's Barbarians at the Gate (November 1939), which if not exactly a straightforward polemic against totalitarianism, Right or Left, was distinctly queasy in its attempt to reconcile Stalinist means with liberal ends. It was the first choice objected to by a selector, the Communist theorist John Strachey. Nevertheless, even he eventually contributed to Gollancz's symposium The Betrayal of the Left (Feb. 1941) with Orwell and Laski among others, and by July 1946, Gollancz was warning in Our Threatened Values that Soviet totalitarianism was the main danger to democratic socialism.

Samuel Hynes has suggested that precisely because of its topicality the LBC "belonged to its time, died with its time", leaving "virtually nothing behind." But this is only partly true, because it helped create an alternative account of British history 'from below', as in the case of Hannington's Short History of the Unemployed, A.L. Morton's People's History of England (May 1938) and Hymie Fagan's Nine Days that Shook England (August 1938) on the 1381 Peasants' Revolt against the
poll tax. It laid extensive and permanent foundations for future counterfactual reportage and documentation. Moreover, though the Club gradually declined into extinction by 1948 (long after Fact ceased publishing in 1939), there was no doubt that the encyclopaedic oppositional consciousness it helped raise made the post-war social-democratic reconstruction possible. Moreover, Gollancz's blueprint for public political education through cheap, accessible editions, paralleled by Allan Lane's Penguin Specials, remains relevant today.

iii: Anthropology Begins at Home

Mass-Observation

The LBC's schools enabled some of its members to become reporters, but Mass-Observation (M-O) was the '30s most ambitious project for mobilizing the public as producers/consumers of unofficial information by and about themselves. The essay 'Press, Radio, and Social Consciousness' by Charles Madge, one of M-O's founders, which appeared in The Mind in Chains (1937), is vital for understanding how and why this alternative "Nationwide Intelligence Service" came into being. Madge argued that the so-called media of mass-communication were actually media for one-way mass-publication. Though "listeners are legion ... the voices which speak are few". In the '30s the "full blast of the written and spoken word" had been loosed on the population coupled with the persuasiveness "of music on the air and of giant pictorial images", blending "Instruction, entertainment, propaganda, advertisement in such a way that it is impossible to disentangle the
twisted skein." (See *Mind in Chains*, pp.147-49) Social consciousness was unavoidably founded on "exchange of information and ideas", but in British society this was done largely from the perspective of capitalist newspapers "for mass consumption". The press manipulated subconscious repressions, social jealousy and criminal tendencies, to compensate a "habit-bound, automatist population" with "vicarious experience of what is denied them in real life" (See *Mind in Chains*, p.150). People were sceptical about press reporting, yet were unavoidably influenced for lack of alternative sources. The press mostly provided narcotic sensation not objectivity and Madge quoted the *Daily Mirror*'s 'true story' of October 26, 1936, the 'Human Mole', to show how the idea of the reporter, "the anonymous and impersonal 'I' who tells the story", was exploited to connect "the real world with this world of poetic fantasy" (See *Mind in Chains*, pp.161-63).

Furthermore, Madge realised what the overall cultural function of the popular press was, even though he probably didn't know Gramsci's terms for it. As Miles and Smith argue:

> The concept of cultural hegemony describes the way in which a dominant class, as well as having economic primacy, must also generate and maintain intellectual and moral leadership. To maintain this intellectual and moral leadership, the class must be prepared to make compromises with its opponents, to negotiate its continued leadership and thus generate continued consent.

The way the popular press absorbed and represented the new mass-consciousness was part of the hegemony's ability to forecast, adapt to and neutralize change. The rise of popular papers like Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* represented a delicate compromise between control and subversion, constructing a plausible account of social reality but at the same time keeping democracy out of touch with itself. On one hand, by giving the masses "news about themselves and their own world"
it allowed them "some data on which to form collective opinions, however false or incomplete". On the other, Madge argued that the popular press pandered to the "most rapidly excited" emotions which were likely to be conditioned reflexes. Thus, competition for circulation meant "progressive debasement of the public mind and judgement" upon which social health depended. But it was social and political repression, not newspapers themselves, that was the root cause (See *Mind in Chains*, pp.152-53). Press barons had to satisfy "the requirements of the mass" as much as their own, and every newspaper was thus an ideological "compromise between these two aims", although, self-fulfillingly, "the mass is already largely what it has been made by the Press and the rest of capitalism." Most importantly, the press inverted "the proportion of class interests in the population of the country" and even the Labour *Daily Herald* depended on capitalist advertisers, who would hardly subsidize a paper seriously intending the system's overthrow. Though it was difficult thing to estimate, Madge was confident that the "full scope of the demand for genuinely working class news" was potentially enormous (See *Mind in Chains*, pp.154-55). It was this demand M-O would try to satisfy.

If commercial reporting had become an art "of sugaring the capitalist pill", the state-owned BBC's method set up instead "an idol of quite illusory impartiality". Apparent "purity of motives" made it imperative this "should be as widely realised as possible." BBC integration propaganda was broadcast through soft music and polite backchat: "Baldwin speaks to the nation between a variety show and a Wurlitzer organ." But the BBC's genteel censorship was revealed by the man interrupting a programme during the Abdication crisis with the shout "Mrs. Simpson", which Madge psychoanalysed as an act of
parapraxis, symbolising the mass-desire "to break down official reticence" (See Mind in Chains, pp.156-59). Similarly, M-O would claim the Cenotaph broadcast incident of 1937 punctured the repressive illusion of consensus on the Great War projected by the media.

Madge believed his experience as a Mirror reporter from 1935 to 1937 helped him understand the peculiar "poetry" of newspapers and advertising, rather than snobbishly dismissing it. Their potential saving grace, "as vehicles for the unconscious fears and wishes of the mass", might be fully and consciously realised when it was "free to express its wishes in action" (See Mind in Chains, p.160). Instead of being merely the passive reader's of newspapers, they would be mobilized as democratic reporters. M-O was, therefore, partly an attempt to let ordinary people "speak for themselves", as a recent anthology title puts it, through a new, highly self-conscious medium for genuine, two-way mass-communication. Maurice Richardson's review of May the Twelth (1937), their first substantial publication, encapsulated M-O's ideals, however it may exaggerate the text's actual achievements. He claimed their I-witnessings of George the VI's coronation were "infinitely superior to the false and specious over-simplifications" of "newspaper reporting of public scenes" and showed "that talent for straightforward description which is probably dormant in the vast mass of unliteracy people".

M-O was a hybrid of the interests of its three prime movers. Tom Harrisson (1911-76) had done anthropological field-work in Melanesia (in 1937 the Left Book Club reissued his report on it, Savage Civilization) and then 'gone native' in Bolton, as a lorry-driver and millhand, studying Lancashire customs. J.B. Priestley reckoned that the urban desolation of Bolton in his English Journey (1934) "challenges you to
live there. "** Harrisson evidently took up the challenge, but also chose Bolton as the birthplace of Unilever's founder. The Melanesians only knew of Britain was through Unilever's chemical interests in the South Pacific and Harrisson determined to follow up the links of this imperial nexus."** Humphrey Jennings, (1907-50) had made GPO documentaries (in 1939 he directed M-O's *Spare Time* for the GPO), and Charles Madge (1912- ) was a Surrealist poet. They had permanent teams led by Harrisson and John Sommerfield in Bolton, or 'Worktown', where *The Pub and the People* (1943) was researched (by contrast, M-O's 'Sex in Blackpool'** survey was carried out in 'Holiday Town') and by Madge and Jennings in Blackheath. But M-O depended most on a national network of volunteers, who recorded their daily life, activities and feelings on the twelfth of each month. Popularly scientific, M-O's merging of modern documentary techniques with those of psychology was typified by its deployment of a photoreporter like Humphrey Spender,** on the one hand, and of ideas from Freud's *Totem and Tabu*, on the other. Observers' unconscious were themselves probed in the survey of 'Fears and Dominant Images' and M-O (following the kind of psycho-social diagnostics practised by Beales and Lambert) intended its texts as a kind of therapy, "to work in the collective mind ... dissolving repressions, disentangling complexes" as David Pocock puts it.** Harrisson psychoanalysed his own M-O interests as "dislike for... authoritarianism and father situations sublimated into sympathy for the mass of people".** There was, however, something potentially patronizing in editorial interspersings analyzing features of street-level reports "as though they were images in a dream or in a symbolist poem".**

M-O was greeted with scepticism by professionals: the sociologist
T.H. Marshall entitled his review of *May the Twelfth 'Is Mass-Observation Moonshine?'* Equally, the conventional news-media, which M-O threatened to override, were hostile. *The Evening News* considered M-O gave "unequalled opportunities for the pettifogging, the malicious, the cranky, the interfering, the mildly dotty." Similarly, during the War *The Daily Express* campaigned against the Government's Social Survey Unit, nicknaming them "Cooper's Snoopers" (after Duff Cooper, head of the Ministry of Information). As Orwell pointed out such responses were hardly motivated by disinterested concern for "individual liberty", but by fear that facts might show "mass sentiment on many subjects" was unlike that represented by Rightist papers like the *Express* (See CEJL IV, 356) M-O found more favour in the *Daily Mirror* where Harrisson personified it as 'Public Busybody No 1', using a photo of himself with notebook squinting through a keyhole. Harrisson's article, on M-O's investigation of the Halifax Slasher, encapsulates M-O's more dubious interaction with the press, because it helped stimulate interest in a sensational media 'fiction', in Lippmann's sense, while, ostensibly, seeking the scientific truth behind it. Similarly, the charismatic Harrisson quickly became a personality in newly-opened BBC TV. However, M-O certainly raised an alternative social consciousness of some sort. Like other Penguin Specials, *Britain by Mass-Observation* (1939) was highly successful, and reputed to have sold 100,000 copies in ten days. M-O let the nation "listen to the movements of popular habit and opinion" in a way which at least posed a challenge to the conventional media in the late '30s, even if it could not rival them in the scale and regularity of its coverage. As *Britain* put it, "The receiving set is there, and every month makes it more effective." *(Britain, p.10)"
The New English Weekly, commented that May 12th was like "so many film shots to be put together by a process of editing . . . by a process of juxtaposition", but M-O claimed to be "more than journalism or film documentary because it has the aim in view not only of presenting, but of classifying and analysing, the immediate, human world". Editing raw 'footage', however, didn't necessarily fall to individual observers and their reports were often montaged, like documentaries and newsreels, within a commentary imposing an overall view. First Year's Work 1937-38 claimed that observers were "the camera with which we are trying to photograph contemporary life", but also assumed them to be subjective cameras, each with its own distortion: "They tell us not what society is like but what it looks like to them". M-O was a collective enterprise aiming to outdo isolated individual reporting of the masses' "actual behaviour under normal living conditions" and provided an organized response to Jameson's call for "field workers in a field no smaller than England".

Observers made frequent expeditions into unknown social and cultural space, as in the analysis of the Lambeth Walk craze in Britain. The song's lyrics - "Lambeth you've never seen" - emphasised their basic argument about the organized ignorance "of one section of society about how other sections live and what they say and think": "If the song had been a rumba and the words had been "Cuba you've never seen", there would be reasons of distance to explain why", but "there is the equivalent of Lambeth round every corner." Similarly, "Everywhere we turn in the British scene, we are faced with no data, or data utterly inadequate for any scientific or long-term judgements". Conventional science was moving rapidly towards Armageddon, to the neglect of "the science of ourselves". Madge and
Harrison's claims that M-O's method transcended both "individual" and "mass-consciousness" through a privileged "objective" consciousness, were, as Angus Calder notes, exaggerated (Britain, p.xv). However, M-O typically saw itself as detective work on "motives and behaviour" in which "there is no criminal and all human beings are of equal interest", or as defamiliarizing science in which even "the drab and sordid features of industrial life will take on a new interest" and the "squalid boarding-house will become...what the entrails of the dog-fish are for the zoologist".\(^{112}\)

M-O pointed out that the study of 'mass' susceptibilities for the exploitative ends of press-barons and marketeers, monopolized the best "empirical anthropologists and psychologists in the country", as Gallup's British Institute of Public Opinion, founded in 1936, showed.\(^ {113}\) Alternatively, it demystified the undemocratic power of media 'fictions' and their colonization of the public unconscious. It was because of "the urgency of fact, the voicelessness of everyman and the smallness of the group which controls fact-getting and fact-distributing", proclaimed Britain, "that this book came to be written." (Britain, p.9) May the Twelth mediated a national event unofficially, through its documentary montage of I-witness reports and statistics. Pomp and circumstance collided subversively with views of Leftist newspapers like the Daily Worker, simultaneous bulletins on the London bus strike, and overseas crises, like the Spanish War. Importantly, Britain later analysed Neville Chamberlain's "sky-journey" to Munich in September 1938, to show how both Nazi belligerence and the politics of Appeasement manipulated media 'fictions' for their own ends. Hitler's aerial touchdown in Leni Riefenstahl's Nürnberg Parteitag film Triumph des Willens (1935) made him, in Cunningham's phrase, "the latest of
history's triumphant Übermenschen". According to M-O, Chamberlain diverted British concern over the Sudetenland crisis by a similar super-human gesture, "a piece of myth-making" (*Britain*, pp.63-64). On his return to Heston airport "Millions were eager to see his photographed smile, hear his wax-recorded voice" and experience the "sense of sharing in events" through sympathetic media magic, "replacing the Golden Bough by a Paper Symbol" of "peace in our time". (*Britain*, pp.68-69, 83 and 102) Consequently, the violent about-turn in opinion when the cost became known was blamed by M-O on collusion between media and state. M-O concluded that a misinformed public was dangerous to democracy, because more susceptible to the hysterical wish- or fear-fulfilments on which Fascism thrived. (See *Britain*, p.113)

Hence, to M-O the fundamental crisis was the mundane crisis of fact. Bronislaw Malinowski, arguing that "anthropology begins at home" in *First Year's Work*, diagnosed "Our culture is sick. The symptoms of this are unmistakeable. Since 1914, most of the historical events have meant destruction or disintegration." And M-O believed the source of Britain's disease was the disproportional media representation of dominant interests as if they were those of society as a whole. *Britain* pointed out the contradiction between the distribution of votes and "higher education or wages". Though "on polling day the professor's vote is as good as the miner's", the rest of the time their ability to represent themselves *culturally* was grossly unequal. (*Britain*, p.109) 'Two-Minute Storey', thus highlighted the subtle suppression of the majority voice. A protestor interrupted the BBC Armistice Day broadcast in 1937, during the "two-minutes' silence", a symbol of an illusory national consensus reaffirming "confidence in the motives which led to this country joining in the Great War" (*Britain*, p.199). M-O questioned...
the right of official claims to speak for the unknown soldier, the
permanently silenced type of the Massenmensch.

Rulers were out of touch with the ruled, precisely because of lack
of two-way communication, creating "a gulf- of understanding, of
information and of interest" (Britain, pp.25-26). The suggestive power
of newspapers over the public-opinion they ostensibly recorded was
underlined in an interview from New Cross on September 22nd, 1938:
"We've let them [the Czechs] down good and proper. That is the opinion
of all working-class people. You should read the Star to-night and see
for yourself." The Star's editor, R.G. Cruikshank's pseudonym was "The
Man in the Street". Hence, even relatively liberal newspapers failed to
be "scientific on this all-important question" (See Britain, pp.32-34).
All this ventriloquizing through the Massenmensch might lead to the
kind of society where one man could say, "I am the spokesman of the
German nation and I know that every one of a people of millions agrees
with my words and confirms my views." (Hitler quoted in Britain, p.25)
And Britain drew a distinctly Orwellian inference about documentary
fabrication of mass-opinion and future history:

The month of September, 1938, will provide the historian ... with a supremely illuminating insight into sense and
statesmanship and the status quo. But if, as has been the
custom in the past, the historian accepts as statements of
fact the numerous published assertions as to what the public
of England are thinking about it all, he will ... be a
typically lousy historian. (Britain, p.103)

The M-O artist Julian Trevelyan wrote in 'Mythos' that "the city is
in fact a compound of metaphor and symbol, a new kind of myth". M-O
analyzed the mythology of modern, urban civilization, intending to
awaken Orwell's nation of sleepwalkers to an awareness of the
"unwritten laws and invisible pressures and forces" they unconsciously
lived by. It analysed surviving folk-rituals for messages from the
'mass-unconscious'. 'A Slight Case of Totemism' reported the annual "Keaw Yed" (cow's head) festival at Westhoughton, Lancashire, demonstrating its continuity with a whole complex of modern fetishes: "If Lupino Lane, the BBC, the newspapers and Oxo, wanted to make the Keaw Yed a national Saturday, it is probable they could succeed. John Bull, Roast Beef of old England, and the Mustard Club's Baron de Beef." (Britain, p.197) And this obscure festival provided an insight into a contemporary media 'fiction'. M-O reprinted a cartoon showing the dismembering of Czechoslovakia: John Bull saws the leg off a sailor which is gripped by a Nazi octopus, just as the mythical farmer decapitated his cow to release it from a gate (Britain, p.198).

Kathleen Raine claimed that Madge "saw the expression of the unconscious collective life of England, literally, in writings on the walls, telling of the hidden thoughts and dreams of the inarticulate masses." 118 According to him, observers' reports were democratic, surrealist poetry made from everyday language and events, transforming mass-culture, cooperatively, from inside, while the conventional poet "inverts the responsibility", asserting "a new sort of public has got to be CREATED" and ignoring "existing mass movements, like the weekly football pool, All-In or the Lambeth Walk." (Britain, p.229) However, as Cunningham argues, it is sometimes hard to distinguish "what Madge offered as new and special" over Left Review, Fact and New Writing, because such "flat, objective, documents were ... one of the period's commonest written products", though with strenuous editing they could occasionally become cinematically dynamic. 119 Much M-O reportage wasn't necessarily more 'poetic' than the worker correspondent writing it often resembled, as in a machinist's account of his day, billed as an example of the "breaking through of the ordinary past the official"
(See Britain, p.210).

However, M-O pioneeringly anticipated the revelations about the political function of standard language and culture in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) and, Calder notes, predated serious interest in popular culture "by some two decades", combining journalist's and folklorist's skills with 'oral history' (Britain, p.xii). 'All-In, All-Out', fieldwork on Worktown wrestling, for example, (supervised, by Dr. G. Wagner of the Pilgrim Trust's *Men Without Work* (1938)) substantiated Orwell's hunch that "People worship power in the form in which they are able to understand it." (CEJL III, p.259)) All-in provided the thrill of "dream-wish fulfilment" and the wrestler was the vehicle for constructing masculine fantasies about being "strong and vigorous and not afraid of an opponent" (Britain, p.137), sublimating the crowd's discontents and making it manageable. Similarly, the Lambeth Walk craze, started by Lupino Lane in *Me and My Girl* threw ambivalent sidelights on '30s proletcult, which affected West End theatre-goers as well as Leftist reporters. M-O quoted Empson's *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), to explain the musical's consolatory myth - "The contrast between the natural behaviour of the Lambethians and the affectation of the upper class": "The essential trick of the old pastoral, which was felt to imply a beautiful relation between the rich and the poor, was to make simple people express strong feelings ... The simple man becomes a clumsy fool who has yet more 'sense' than his betters" (Quoted in Britain, pp.157-58¹⁸⁰). This was licensed saturnalia, temporarily inverting hierarchy to reinforce it in the long term. Its pastoral was displaced, urbanized ("'The skies ain't blue and the grass ain't green', is a far cry from 'nature' in the ordinary sense.") and marketed through the media: 41% heard about it through the
wireless, 15% through newspapers and 10% through "other sources" like newsreels. No wonder M-O commented, "included in the simple fact of its popularity are many contradictions." (Britain, p.174) But whether their conclusion that giving "the masses something which connects on their own lives and streets" could create genuine popular feeling was a recipe for demystification or more effective narcotics is debatable. M-O never really clarified whether it was "observation of the masses or by the masses" (Britain, p.xiii). Similarly, other phenomena M-O investigated were 'popular' only in the sense of being mass-consumed, not originated by the people. The Daily Worker urged that the new "song-consciousness" could be used subversively (the LBC published Alan Bush and Randall Swingler's Left Song Book in March 1938) and Labour produced an electioneering version of the Lambeth Walk song ("Come on out and on your way/For it's polling day to-day,/Do yourselves good/Swelling the Labour vote." (Quoted in Britain, p.176) However, the essential mechanisms for publishing and distributing 'mass-culture' remained in commercial hands, because understanding of the positive implications of popular culture was not widespread on the Left in the '30s. Moreover, like other Leftist documentary projects, M-O itself encountered the ultimate and apparently insuperable problem of indirect economic censorship. Hence, its deployment of statistics, as Calder points out, does not bear close inspection because it generally "lacked funds to mount surveys with adequate samples" except when funded to do market research, as it increasingly was after becoming a public limited company in 1948 (Britain, p.ix-x).

The original 50 observers, M-O claimed, soon became a thousand, but genuine proletarians - a spinner, a machinist, a miner, a dockyard armament fitter, a coalman - were conspicuously publicized, because
only 12% were either working- or upper-class. Most fitted the readership of Madge's launching letter in the New Statesman, 'Anthropology at Home'. M-O's situation typified the difficulty of organizing support for '30s 'mass' projects. Left Review, for example, (selling only 3,000 per issue), was also claimed by Simon Blumenfeld to be "the voice of the inarticulate", thus coming close to the very ventriloquizing Leftists rightly condemned the capitalist media for.

However successful or unsuccessful M-O may have been in creating a genuine democratic reportage, it sometimes adapted Modernist techniques brilliantly for defamiliarizing mundane Britain. Its original list of subjects for investigation showed no preconceptions about what might be significant, ranging from the encyclopaedic to the apparently wacky: Behaviour of people at war memorials; shouts and gestures of motorists; the aspidistra cult; the anthropology of football pools; bathroom behaviour; beards, armpits, eyebrows; anti-semitism; the distribution, diffusion and significance of the dirty joke; funerals and undertakers; female taboos about eating; the private lives of midwives. Its 'collective' texts resembled both film editing and the documentary montages of the Russian and German avant-garde. Similarly, the Surrealist Julian Trevelyan reported 'Worktown' visually, making collages of cotton mills and terraces from the objets trouvés of its streets, alongside Humphrey Spender and the neo-realist painters William Coldstream and Graham Bell. Interestingly, Madge, reviewing Problems of Soviet Literature (1935) concluded that Joyce had arrived at a radical reconstruction of 'reality' which must be the starting point for new proletarian art. Consequently, passages in May the Twelth, shifting from one observer's perspective on the royal procession to another, resemble nothing more than Ulysses's 'Wandering Rocks'
chapter, which freely used 'cinematic' cross-cutting to subvert a similar civic event and media fiction, the viceroy's procession across Dublin.125

Observers' diaries and surveys contributed to the War effort by supplying the Ministry of Information's Department of Home Intelligence with information about conditions and behaviour in blitzed cities from 1940, including the reaction of cinema audiences to newsreels and Government propaganda films.127 But this accommodation with officialdom produced an internal crisis. Madge resigned, feeling M-O was being turned into morale-monitoring espionage. The class-biased official air-raid theory of the time argued that the ordinary citizen's patriotic resolve would quickly crack into panic and social disorder by 'them' unless their 'morale' was maintained by 'us'. This was yet another example of what Miles and Smith call "that depressed faith in the masses that coloured so much of the established mode of thinking in the years after the Great War and the Russian Revolution."128 However, as Harrisson's post-war compilation of M-O documents Living through the Blitz shows, when the Luftwaffe finally lifted the social carpet and exposed the poverty and mismanagement swept underneath in the '30s, Britain's leaders still considered M-O's view-from-the-ground feedback subversive or embarrassing enough to be frequently overridden or suppressed. Hence, Living through the Blitz, along with Angus Calder's The People's War,129 using the material of the Archive at the University of Sussex, has demonstrated M-O's continuing value in questioning the 'finest hour' myth of wartime unity created by official accounts at the time and by organized historical forgetting since.

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Notes to Chapter IV

1. Oliver St.John Gogarty's term discussed by John Grierson in Grierson on Documentary, p.161.

2. H. Gustav Klaus and Jürgen Enkemann 'Let the People Speak for Themselves: On the Documentarism of the 1930s and 40s', in H. Gustav Klaus The Literature of Labour: Two Hundred Years of Working-Class Writing (Brighton: Harvester, 1985), pp.133-34.

3. For New Masses and the worcorr movement, see Chapter II, section i, p.74.


5. See Jack Conroy 'The Worker as Writer' in ibid., pp.83-86.

6. All quotations below, until otherwise indicated, are from Joseph North 'Reportage' in ibid., pp.120-23.


8. For Dziga Vertov's alternative concept of the kino-eye, see below Chapter V, pp.255-59.


10. Cf. Storm Jameson, who prioritized the novel on scale of values but not in point of time below section ii, p.217, of this present chapter.


13. Kisch's reportage on Lourdes was published in International Literature No 4 (10) (Sept 1934), pp.57-65, as 'Bath in Healing Waters: A Noted Reporter Sees the Church in Action', trans. S.D. Kogan.


17. Cunningham British Writers, p.120.


20. See Chapter I, section. i, p.37 and Note, below.


24. See Fox *Novel and the People*, pp.130-32.


26. See below Chapter VI, section i, pp.312-14

27. See Cunningham *British Writers*, p.304.

28. See *Grierson on Documentary*, p.13.


30. See Cunningham *British Writers*, p.341 and the 'internal travelogues' discussed below, Chapter VI, section i.

31. See *Life as We Have Known It: By Co-operative Working Women* (ed. Margaret Llewelyn Davies, with an introductory letter by Virginia Woolf (London: Hogarth, 1931; repr. with a New Introduction by Ann Davin: Virago, 1977) pp.vii-ix, especially p.vii. (Henceforth all page references to *Life* will be given in brackets in the text.)


35. E. Wight Bakke *The Unemployed Man: A Social Study* (London: Nisbet, 1933), pp.xiv. Henceforth, all page references to *Unemployed Man* will be given in brackets in the text.
36. See H.L. Beales and R.S. Lambert (eds.) *Memoirs of the Unemployed* With Appendices on How the Workless Spend their Money and on the Psychology of the Unemployed from the medical point of View by Ruth Bowley and Morris Robb, MD (London: Gollancz, 1934), p.12. (Henceforth, all page references to *Memoirs* will be given in brackets in the text.)

37. See Klaus *Literature of Labour*, p.149.

38. See below present Chapter, section ii, pp.220-21.

39. See *Storm: Stories of the Struggle* No.1 (Feb 1933), p.5.

40. See Rhys J. Williams 'Struggle of Starve' ibid., pp.31-32.


42. See *Left Review* Vol I, No 1 (Oct 1934), pp.40-41. Amabel Williams-Ellis's *To Tell the Truth* was published by Jonathan Cape. Written after visiting the USSR and set in the near-future (1940), it depicted the comic education of a Russian in a Britain where early '30s unemployment and poverty levels have increased exponentially. Hence, he gradually loses the illusions about 'bourgeois freedom' for which he originally defected.


44. See above, Chapter I, section ii, pp.41-42.


46. Ibid., p.213-15.

47. Ibid., pp.217-20. For Woolf and Jameson this present Chapter, section i, pp? and section ii, pp?


49. See *New Writing* (Spring, 1936) (London: John Lane/Bodley Head), pp.193-202, especially pp.193 and, below, p.197.

50. See Cunningham *British Writers*, p.313.


54. See Cunningham *British Writers*, pp.315-16.

55. Croft's *Red Letter Days* is the most recent full-length study of such writers.


58. See Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, pp.140 and 160.


60. For a discussion of *These Poor Hands* see below Chapter VI, section ii, pp.325-28.


64. See Cunningham *British Writers*, pp.317.

65. Tretyakov quoted and trans. in Klaus *Literature of Labour*, p.133.


67. 'Ourselves' *Fact* No.1 (April 1937), p.7. Henceforth, all page references to *Fact* will be given in brackets in the text.


70. For the use of montage in Vertovian and Griersonian documentary film and its literary repercussions, see below Chapter V, pp.255-59, Chapter VI, section ii, pp.334-36, and Chapter VII, section i.

71. The deposition Calder Marshall refers to begins on p.57 of the same No. of *Fact*. Also for Heinemann and Cockburn on Gresford, see below Chapter VI, section ii, pp? and Chapter VIII, pp?


77. Lewis *Left Book Club*, p.26


79. See ibid., pp.205, 211 and 283, respectively.

80. See ibid., pp.291-213.

81. Lewis *Left Book Club*, p.60.

82. See ibid., p.59.


84. Lewis *Left Book Club*, p.107.

85. See below Chapter VIII, pp.412.

86. Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, p.199.


The Birth of Broadcasting, pp.5-6. Also for M-O both on, and about, radio, see Vol.III The War of Words, pp.59-61.

91. Miles and Smith Cinema, Literature and Society, p.9.

92. See below Chapter V, p.252, for Grierson on putting democracy in touch with itself. Madge based his argument on Norman Angell's The Press and the Organization of Society (Cambridge: CUP, 1922; repr. 1933).

93. See below this present section, pp.236-37.


98. Repr. from the Tom Harrisson M-O Archive at Sussex University in Calder and Sheridan (eds.) Speak for Yourself, pp.48-64.

99. Spender's M-O work is discussed below in Chapter V, p.282.

100. See May the Twelth: Mass-Observation Day Surveys 1937 ed. Humphrey Jennings, Charles Madge et al. (London: Faber, 1937; repr. with an Afterword by David Pocock (Director of the Tom Harrisson M-O Archive), 1987), p.416.


106. See above, Chapter I, section i, p.34, and Note 34.

107. See Britain by Mass-Observation arranged and written by Tom Harrisson and Charles Madge (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939; repr. with an Introduction by Angus Calder, London: Cresset, 1986), p.vii. (Henceforth, all page references to Britain will be given in brackets in the text.)


110. See Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson (eds.) *First Year's Work*, p.66.

111. See Harrisson *Britain Revisited*, p.17. Also Jameson 'Documents' Fact No.4 (July 1937), p.18.


113. ibid., p.20.

114. See Cunningham *British Writers*, p.189.

115. See Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson (eds.) *First Year's Work*, p.120.


117. See Chapter I, section i, p.29. Also see Madge and Harrisson *Mass-Observation*, p.48.


119. See Cunningham *British Writers*, pp.337-38.

120. The passage was taken from William Empson *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1935), pp.11-12.

121. See Klaus *Literature of Labour*, p.167.


125. For further details on M-O and the visual arts see, among others: Lynda Morris and Robert Radford's *The Story of the AIA: Artists International Association 1933-1953* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1983), especially pp.44-47; Edward Lucie Smith *Art of the 1930s: The Age of Anxiety* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), pp.198-200; Jeffery *Mass-Observation: A Short History*, p.25. Also see next Chapter which also discusses M-O and photography. Useful profiles of individual artists and movements active in the '30s, plus examples of their work,
can be found in the catalogue to the 1979-80 Hayward Gallery exhibition: 


128. See Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, pp.222-23.

Chapter V
Projecting Whose England?
Film- and Photo-reportage

As we have seen, by the '30s the filmic image had become the most privileged form for factual representation, one which was both extensively emulated and investigated by the new reportage and literature of fact.

For Benjamin, film technology was also the key to more genuinely democratic political and cultural representation of the socio-economic structure, but it had already become an instrument of control. In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', he argued that "In western Europe the capitalistic exploitation of film devices denies consideration to modern man's legitimate claim to being reproduced." Similarly, as Miles and Smith argue, in inter-war Britain the net function of the mass-media was as "a primary agent for ideological legitimization of the social formation, not simply by crude class propaganda but by constructing a hegemonic world view which sought to disguise, in its refraction, the real nature of class exploitation." In older arts "the act of creation was not directly reliant on money. In film, in direct contrast, finance was from the very start a quite basic issue." Hence, one of the most important and equivocal applications of film in the '30s was the Griersonian documentary, which though going some way towards fulfilling Benjamin's legitimate claim, also effectively reinforced fallacious truth-claims about recording reality objectively.

John Grierson (1898-1972) was impressed by Robert Flaherty's projection of the natural world in contrast to Hollywood's studio
reconstructions, but it was through Eisenstein and, more importantly, Dziga Vertov that Grierson learned the principles of dynamic editing by which the photomontage image could be expanded in film to take visual reality to pieces and make challenging cross-connections between "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or the social complex", in Jameson's phrase. Grierson took the term 'documentary' from the French documentaire or travelogue as a noun to signify "the creative interpretation of actuality", although its use goes back much further. In 1898, the Polish film maker, Boleslaw Matuszewski, was already suggesting a film archive of "documentary interest" comprising "slices of public and national life". Hence, Grierson did not originate documentary as a cinematic concept, although he did employ it in a particularly influential way, so that by 1935 Graham Greene was stating as the Spectator movie critic, that "the only important films ... made in England today come from Mr Grierson's system of film units". Paul Rotha's elaboration of Grierson's definition in the second edition of his Documentary Film indicated how the concept had evolved by 1939: "the use of the film medium to interpret creatively and in social terms the life of the people as it exists today.

Griersonian documentary had become a movement which would spread the use of film for social comment globally and from cinema into television.

Like M-O and the LBC, though for less radical ends, Grierson felt accurate provision of information on which to base collective judgement and action was vital and his social scientist's interest in the civic and media theories of Walter Lippmann convinced him of the need for a method to put "democracy at long last in contact with itself". Film happened "to be the most convenient and most exciting" medium available for putting this idea into practice. But as Miles and Smith note
"Grierson hoped to create ... an alternative cinema within a capitalist structure, not to undermine it in any way but rather to strengthen those principles of liberal democracy which he held so dear." He hoped to achieve this through "a specifically new art form ... celebrating technology just as pre-industrial art had celebrated pastoralism", and using a medium that was itself a product of technology.*

Film had immense power for shaping opinion, but from the start, Griersonian documentary's political role was ambiguous, since his first practical opportunity was a commission from the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), a Government agency set up in 1926, whose secretary, Sir Stephen Tallents, recognized cinema's propaganda potential. The result was Drifters (1929), a film about trawling, which seemed revolutionary in its rough reality, because its dramatizing of workaday Britain was so unfamiliar. Grierson did not continue making films personally, but recruited the EMB Film Unit's personnel to develop his innovations. With the EMB's demise in 1933, it transferred to the General Post Office (GPO). Soon Grierson's protégés were setting up their own companies - the Realist Film Unit, Strand Films, Associated Realist Film Producers and the Progressive Film Institute.

The GPO Film Unit produced the highly influential Night Mail (1936), reporting the journey of the mail train between London and Scotland, to which Benjamin Britten and W.H. Auden contributed music and poetic commentary. Night Mail 'cross-sectioned' the complex processes and infrastructure of Britain's transport and communications and exemplified the movement's joint aesthetic and informative aims. Films like Night Mail - "an epic celebration of mundanity" - certainly heroicized the routines of working people, but stopped short of a radical, on-screen examination of the system that worked them.¹⁰ The aestheticization of
industry and the corporate life, in the Griersonian "creative interpretation of actuality", often begged the pressing political questions of the time. As Miles and Smith argue of *Nightmail*: "Not only is the mail-run reliant on no single person and on no single machine, but rather on the accumulating input of every man and every machine involved, its very role in scooping up, sorting and distributing the national mail becomes mediatory." An apparently factual report on how the mail trains work "becomes an ideological map" of what P. Colls and R. Dodd call the "national-collective myth", the hegemonic capture of corporate identity by projecting a particular England, that while acknowledging social interdependence, simultaneously subsumed class-conflict and economic inequalities. ¹¹

Grierson set out his principles in articles in *Cinema Quarterly*, but Sir Stephen Tallent's nationalistic pamphlet *The Projection of England* (1932) shows much more explicitly how far the Unit's work was mortgaged to the established economic base. However, the movement did spread beyond Government sponsorship and expressed social concerns in films like *Housing Problems* (1935), *Enough to Eat?* (1936), *Children at School, The Smoke Menace* (both of 1937) and *The Londoners* (1939). Consequently, during World War II and Britain's post-war reconstruction into a welfare state, there was a generation of film-makers available which was trained for informational and inspirational projects. Many of them joined the GPO Unit's successor, the Crown Film Unit in 1940, which later helped to eradicate the five public evils identified by the 1942 Beveridge Report, "Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, Idleness", just as in the USA, the parallel documentary films of Pare Lorentz served the liberal reformism of the New Deal. ¹²

Grierson's starting-point was the belief that reproductive
technology need not be undemocratic if new imaginative forms could be found to bridge the gulf between the individual's mundane reality and his/her economic context. Like the new reportage, documentary's "very essence" should not be sensational, yet it had to make the "intimate and human terms" of its mundane subject matter more interesting than the alienating fantasy offered by commercial cinema (See Grierson on Documentary, pp.231-32). He came to see that liberation from the fixities of classical perspective through Vertovian "montage in space and time" would enable the film-maker to co-ordinate normally dissociated aspects of the collective.

However, Marx's Third Manuscript of 1844 had denied the possibility of ideologically innocent eye/I-witnessing in the pre-cinematic age, arguing that only the end of capitalism could emancipate "all the human qualities and senses", because they too "have become human, from the subjective as well as the objective point of view": "The eye has become a human eye when its object has become a human, social object, created by man and destined for him. The senses therefore become directly theoretical in practice." Consequently, Dziga Vertov's theory of the kinoglaz or 'cinema-eye' was an attempt at an alternative way of seeing that would subvert the visual reality made in the image of such alienated socio-economic relations. As Vertov explained in Lef in 1923:

I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it.
Now and forever, I free myself from human immobility, I am in constant motion, I draw near, then away from objects, I crawl under, I climb onto them. I move space with the muzzle of a galloping horse, I plunge full speed into a crowd, I outstrip running soldiers, I fall on my back, I ascend with an airplane, I plunge and soar together with plunging and soaring bodies. Now I, a camera, fling myself along their resultant, maneuvering in the chaos of movement, recording movement, starting with movements composed of the most complex combinations.
Freed from the rule of sixteen-seventeen frames per second, free of the limits of time and space, I put together any given
points in the universe, no matter where I’ve recorded them. My path leads to the creation of a fresh perception of the world. I decipher in a new way a world unknown to you. (Kino-Eye, pp.17-18)

Vertov’s project, according to Annette Michelson, was to render "in a series of kinetic icons, that philosophic phantasm of the reflexive consciousness: the eye seeing, apprehending itself as it constitutes the world’s visibility: the eye transformed by the revolutionary project into an agent of critical production." (See Kino-Eye, p.xxiii) In 1918, Vertov (1896-1954) became editor of the first Soviet newsreels or KinondelSa ('Film-week'). From 1919-20 he followed the Civil War by propaganda train, returning with a series of documentary films, and began producing his own newsreel magazine: Kinopravda ('Film-truth'). His film Kinoglaz (1924) retained the newsreel’s episodic structure and reported the formation of cooperatives, distribution of grain and meat, socialization of the young through the Young Pioneers, public services and health care.

Vertov called his most famous work, The Man with the Movie Camera (1929), “an attempt to present the facts in 100 percent film-language.” (See Kino-Eye, pp.92-101) It constructed a typical, interdependent ‘modern city’ from footage of Moscow, Kiev and Odessa, joining, as Michelson puts it, "the human life cycle with the cycles of work and leisure of a city from dawn to dusk within the spectrum of industrial production", including film-making itself, communications, mining, steel, construction, hydroelectrics and textiles. The organizational integrity of the metropolis was continually asserted by every technological strategy available, "visual analogy and rhyme, rhythmic patterning, parallel editing, superimposition, accelerated and decelerated motion, camera movement". Moreover, "the fragmentation and
contradictions "naturally" generated by the industrial system" were bridged by the corporate "rhymes and rhythms that link and propel them all" rendered visible by the cinema-eye's self-reflexive participation in society's constructive project (See Kino-Eye, p.xxxvii).

Vertov's *kinoki* or 'cinema-eye men' (from 'oko', archaic word for eye, and 'ok', suffix for male agent) also produced their own weekly photomagazine, and he was already aware of the potential power of television in the mid-'20s. All this constituted a practical correlative to Benjamin's belief in the need to turn the media technology developed under capitalism against it, making the cinema-eye the ultimate 'rasende Reporter', montaging through space and time from one subject to another and revealing the cooperative labour and living underlying them all.¹⁴ According to Vertov, everyday life would thus no longer be 'prose', but 'written' into a poetic organization. "The unusual flexibility of montage construction enables one to introduce into a film study any given motif - political, economic, or other."

Vertov's concept of documentary was both avant-garde and encyclopaedic: "Into the jumble of life resolutely enter." (See Kino-Eye, p.21 also above) As he proclaimed: "Revolutionary cinema's path of development has been found. It leads past the heads of film actors and beyond the studio roof, into life, into genuine reality, full of its own drama and detective plots." (Kino-Eye, p.32) His film *Kinoglaz* thus celebrated the "funeral of fictiveness" on the cinematic front as "a film-object without the participation of actors, artists, directors; without a studio, sets, costumes. All members of the cast continue to do what they usually do in life." Thus it represented "an assault on our reality by the cameras and prepares the theme of creative labor against a background of class contradictions and everyday life":

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In disclosing the origins of objects and of bread, the camera makes it possible for every worker to acquire, through evidence, the conviction that he, the worker, creates all these things himself, and that consequently they belong to him.

The spectator's imaginative co-operation was also activated in constructing the radical connections of Vertov's "film phrases". Hence his "theory of intervals" was an explicit politicization of collision montage, as in other forms of Russian avant-gardism (Kino-Eye, pp.34-35, also above). He laid ambitious and elaborate plans for an alternative mediation of reality, co-ordinated by "montage in space and time", with projects like *A Day Throughout the World* and *4 Minute of the World* which would establish "a visual (kino-eye) and auditory (radio-ear) class bond between the proletariats of all nations and all lands on a platform of the communist decoding of world relations." In this proposed alternative hyperreality the "influence of facts upon workers' consciousness" would be primary and "so-called art" relegated "to the periphery of consciousness" (Kino-Eye, pp.50 and 66, also above). However, like the rest of LEF's ambitious programme, it was never achieved. *Symphony of the Donbas* (1930), Vertov's film on the first Five Year Plan, was attacked by Radek, and by 1935 Vertov was in a state of virtual expulsion within the Soviet film industry. Denounced as a 'Formalist' by ex-colleagues like Eisenstein, who never returned to the collision montage of his early *Strike* (1924), Vertov was confined to newsreel work up until his death in 1954.

Vertov edited footage of the observed world, to make significant connections through non-discursive montage 'shocks' and revealed the socio-economic syntax of everyday life. However, Griersonian documentary assimilated the cinema-eye's techniques, but neutralized their more radical implications, because if Soviet documentary fell victim to
direct state censorship, Grierson's project was limited by the indirect censorship of the capitalist economic system. His own comments on *Drifters* show how he originally intended to expose the economic and social structure behind a prosaic commodity. Dramatically telescoping spatial and social separation between labour and consumption by collision montage, *Drifters* underlined the process of exchange value - "said agonies are sold at ten shillings a thousand, and iced, salted and barrelled for an unwitting world":

... what was being boxed and barrelled was the labour of men. So as the herring were shovelled in, and the ice laid on, and the hammer raised to complete the job, I slid back for a flash or two to the storm and the hauling. The hammer is raised on mere fish: it comes down on dripping oilskins and a tumbling sea. This notion I kept repeating in flashes through the procession of barrels and the final procession of railway trucks. The barrels of the dead pass for a second into the living swirl of a herring shoal, in and out again; the smoke in a tunnel dissolves for a moment into the tautened wrist of a fisherman at the net-rope. (Grierson on Documentary, pp.135 and 138)

*Drifters* traced the hidden biography of a commodity, like Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which defamiliarized the value of coal-mining. Moreover, as already mentioned, *The Road to Wigan Pier* got its impact from similar effects.¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnson show that "Experience with physical objects provides the basis for metonymy", but this empirical grounding does not in itself enable us to verify relations between things outside our direct experience, which we know by representation only.¹⁶ In the "creative interpretation of actuality", film montage could, therefore, be used as a "shorthand method" to relate mundane objects to the interconnecting processes of "corporate life" (Grierson on Documentary, pp.193-94).

However, the radical possibilities of *Drifters* were not developed in subsequent EMB productions although Grierson also rightly pointed out

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the limitations of the Soviet cinematic model after the muzzling of Vertov. Pudovkin's Socialist Realist epics simply reiterated the violent transfer of domination making him, "qua artist, no revolutionary at all". (Grierson on Documentary, p.122) Dovzhenko's agricultural collectivization film *Earth* (1930) missed its footing by focusing on "the personal villainies of an individual kulak", because melodrama was unable to dramatize "themes of honest work" and "problems of reconstruction". (Grierson on Documentary, p.182) Similarly, Turin's *Turksib* (1928) had the inherently panoramic story of the Tran-Siberian railroad's struggle against elemental forces, but offered no method for defamiliarizing prosaic urban life: "Turin has a desert, and we have a doorstep." (See Grierson on Documentary, pp.122-23) Documentary, Grierson hoped, would produce more gradual change by realizing the possibilities of liberal-democracy, though how far and in what ways Griersonian documentary actually changed British social consciousness is debatable.

The American Payne Trust documented Hollywood's inverse representation of social groups in 1935, and Grierson pointed out that were "the population of the world itself, so arranged and distributed, there would be no farming, no manufacturing, almost no industry, no vital statistics (except murders), no economic problems and no economics." (Grierson on Documentary, p.174) Albeit often rather patronisingly, Griersonian documentary represented ordinary working men or women in marked contrast to popular cinema with its star system that compensated them in the very denial of their legitimate claim to being reproduced on screen. However, Grierson continued to recognize the contradictions of his own situation, that making industry's human skills "magical and exciting" (Grierson on Documentary, p.215) often
conflicted with depicting actual workers and conditions, and brought film-makers up against the economic censorship of a system reluctant to finance controversy about itself: "Can we heroicize our men when we know them to be exploited? Can we romanticize our industrial scene when we know that our men work brutally and starve ignobly in it? Can we praise it ... when the blatant fact of our time is the bankruptcy of our national management?" (Grierson on Documentary, p.140) Within such constrictions, Griersonian documentary did try to describe "not only industrial and commercial spectacle but social truth as well" (Grierson on Documentary, p.215) and the sequence of late '30s films on the state of national nutrition, housing, health and education was the measure of his protégés' achievement. Arthur Elton's Workers and Jobs for the Ministry of Labour was particularly important because it first allowed ordinary people, usually documentary's inarticulate subjects, to speak for themselves by recording unemployed men on location at Poplar Labour Exchange. Elton used the same technique with Edgar Anstey in Housing Problems and Enough to Eat. Moreover, the use of "Underprivileged people, speaking freely for the first time in the midst of their dreadful environment" had a different impact from that of the heroic workers of films like Drifters and Night Mail. However, the paternalistic distance often maintained between bourgeois documentary-makers and statistic-gatherers and the working-class objects of their representation, presumed to benefit from public policy thus informed, is characterized by what Greene called "earnest expert faces mouthing abstractions" who are part of the Griersonian tradition. As Paget points out, such figures were also "marshalled into Ministry of Information films to demonstrate the unimpeachable logic of governmental decisions" in building the welfare state. If the consultational role
of ordinary people in documents and plans affecting their lives had been greater (as Orwell and M-O often complained), some of the mistakes of post-war reconstruction would probably have been avoided.

Grierson believed of cinema, as Madge did of newspapers, that it was not a form of mass-communication, but "of publication" (See Grierson on Documentary, p.185). Screen reporting was interpretative and propagandist rather than an objective recording of reality, as Grierson's comments on the right-wing American March of Time show (see Grierson on Documentary, pp.201-02). Similarly, in both documentary and newsreels "a 'commentator-I' normally interpreted someone else's writing to supply the language/through which audiences glossed the images of the movie camera-eye." March of Time was in newsreel format, but with free-standing 'stories'. It 'reconstructed' events, using participants to replay themselves for the camera or 'look-alikes' in actual and/or simulated locations. The makers preferred the term 'pictorial journalism' to 'documentary', but its European office employed many of Grierson's protégés at one time or another. Similarly, in Drifters 'undersea' sequences had actually been shot in a tank, and on board scenes in a trawler-cabin set. Interior shots in Nightmail were also done in a mock-up, because the lighting in the real train was too poor. Rachel Low emphasises the trap "an ever more elaborate re-creation of the apparently real" constituted for the unwary, with "real" people shown in unspontaneous interviews or re-enacting themselves, planned and rehearsed, so that "the borderline with fiction became blurred in films made in places other than the regular commercial film studios". Footage from any number of originally separate events could be seamlessly integrated by linkage montage. According to Low, by 1935, what Grierson called the new "art of public persuasion" was marketing
everything from Fascism to Ovaltine. As Greene often pointed out, the
dominant connotation of documentary was already fixed, conjuring
automatic associations of "incomprehensible machinery revolving before
the camera eye" and carrying "a false air of impartiality, as much as
to say 'this is not what we think or feel'." However, Greene considered
"the best documentaries" were both openly propagandist and poetic, in
effect not documentary in the objectivist sense at all: "as long ago as
Rotha's Shipyard they took political sides, and to call The River - or
Wright's Children at School - documentary is about as meaningless as
calling a sonnet documentary: they document the creator's mind, that is
all." The film's capacity to deceive was almost unparalleled, but there was often a big difference between the way Griersonian
documentarists regarded their work and the truth-telling claims which
were made for it by others. Popular belief that neither lens nor
microphone could invent was encouraged by commercial and state interests
which stood to profit from such a belief. Nothing illustrates better the
inextricability of Griersonian documentary from propaganda than its EMB
origins, whose ideological brief from 1928 to 1933 was to change
public consciousness of the facts of imperialism, from exploitation to
'economic commonwealth', identifying British capitalist interests as if
they were the common ones of many different races and nationalities.
Rotha attacked the economic pressures that shaped EMB documentaries in
his Documentary Film. Similarly, the Gas and Coke industry's
sponsorship of Housing Problems, at first sight generous and
disinterested, was forthcoming only because Elton and Anstey persuaded
their sponsors that demand would expand as a result of public building programmes. Similarly J.D. Klingender and Stuart Legg's 1937 *Money Behind the Screen* exposed all the other commercial interests reproduced in the projection of a particular version of England. Paget notes that "True Stories are engaged in an on-going negotiation ... between a resourcing which is adequate but likely to be determined politically at the point of production, and one which is without strings but likely to be inadequate."* Grierson recognized his own compromised position at the time - "A poet may prosper on pennies. A film director, even a bad director, must deal in thousands." (*Grierson on Documentary*, p.169) - but chose to work within the system rather than take the rocky road of Britain's independent film-makers in the '30s.

Klaus and Enkemann note that economic censorship was far more crucial than direct political intervention in limiting the radical potential of '30s documentary.*" Ostensibly a form of self-protection for the industry from Government interference, the British Board of Film Censors restricted filmic subject matter and treatment most effectively through financial pressure as Miles and Smith argue:

*Film companies tended to submit outline scenarios to the censors before they began shooting in order to avoid costly re-shooting or re-dediting later; in effect, this meant that films likely to cause big problems for the censors were simply not made, because of the financial risk. This covert censorship made the role of the BBFC as a whole look less repressive than it really was.*

Thus, this deterrent against almost anything potentially controversial, resulted in what they call '30s British cinema's "hysterically middle-of-the-road approach".*" Similarly, alternative cinematic forms, like documentary and, even more so, workers film movement productions "were pushed to the periphery by a combination of commercial pressure and the social ambience of
Such arguments are vindicated by full-length studies such as Bert Hogenkamp's *Deadly Parallels: Film and the Left in Britain 1929-1939* (1986) and Stephen G. Jones' *The British Labour Movement and Film 1918-1939* (1986). As Miles and Smith show, commercial cinematic treatment of the Depression tended to concentrate on what the experience of a minority "seemed to prove about Britain as a whole, thus deftly translating working-class disaster into national valour. Rather than being portrayed as victims, the Depressed Areas were transformed into heroic examples of British fortitude." However, the newsreels were also hamstrung by the authorities' belief that "the mere presence of the newsreelmen ... would create events ... as demonstrators made maximum propaganda usage of the mass coverage." Consequently, the militant NUWM rarely achieved media coverage, although "marches organised by constitutionally acceptable organizations managed to secure a hearing." Hence, the fact that "the relatively small and probably atypical Jarrow Crusade has become the most famous of the interwar hunger marches". It was possible to construct it cinematically as "the symbol of working class stoicism, respectability and pride" and "it achieved the mass screening that more violent demonstrations", like the NUWM's action of the same year, "could not."

Unemployment was not only meagrely, but tendentiously handled by the newsreels, and filmed reports of many major '30s political events, like NUWM hunger-marches, police baton-charges, workers' demonstrations, fascist violence in the East End, etc. were virtually unmakeable. Such events were covered almost exclusively by Socialist film clubs, such as the Federation of Workers' Film Societies, the Socialist Film Council and the Film and Photo League, but were largely unshown in conventional cinemas, except those owned collectively by the miners of South Wales.
By 1936, there were eight alternative newsreels and documentaries, financed mainly by the CPGB, the Independent Labour Party and the Co-ops, to set against the volume production of 300 Government- and industry-sponsored films. The Labour Party was slow off the mark with film propaganda, despite efforts by Paul Rotha and other documentarists to the Left of Grierson to galvanize it, and even though the Tories mobilized a fleet of electioneering cinema vans in the mid-'20s. A Labour Film Service was not properly organized until the end of the decade and there was, thus a big distinction between workers being reproduced on screen and reproducing themselves.

The overwhelming bulk of regular domestic and overseas reports reaching the masses through commercial cinemas, as Tony Aldgate's research shows, were carved up between a cartel of five major companies, Gaumont British News, Paramount British News, British Movietone News, Pathé Gazette and Universal News. These also operated as virtual apparatuses of National Government propaganda, compliantly suppressing inconvenient or controversial footage usually without being ordered to. As Miles and Smith argue, such newsreels articulated the interests of subordinate groups with those of the dominant one(s) in the act of representing the only 'reasonable' solution to Britain's common crisis. Baldwin's speech in a Gaumont Newsreel of November 1935, 'The Prime Minister Speaks Out', characterized this strategy:

... when this country was faced with crisis there were men of all parties who put party politics on one side and united together to pull the country through and take the necessary steps to put our finances once more on a sound footing. But it is also due to the fact that we, true to our old traditions, avoided all extremes, have steered clear of fascism, communism, dictatorship, and have shown the world that democratic government, constitutional methods and ordered liberty are not inconsistent with progress and prosperity.

By 1934 there were some 4,300 cinemas showing newsreels to an average
weekly audience of 18,500,000, rising by 1940 to 21,000,000, the
dominant five companies each compiling two a week. Small wonder
Leftist anxieties over "cinematic falsities", in Cunningham's phrase, focused on newsreels in particular. Newsreels tended to concentrate on the photogenically anodyne - sport, royalty and launching of ships. Even March of Time had to be diluted for British audiences, and direct pressures from the Government and the Local Licensing Committees increased as the decade went on. The March of Time's 'Threat to Gibraltar', for example, which reiterated Katz's point about the fascist grip on the Mediterranean through Spain, was not shown and neither was its exposure of terror in Nazi Germany. References in Hemingway and Joris Iven's documentary Spanish Earth (1937) to the German and Italian presence were cut. 'Europe's Fateful Hour', Paramount's reel on the Munich crisis, which represented the Czech point of view, was withdrawn the very day of its release (22 Sept. 1938) so as not to question Chamberlain's "piece of myth-making", as M-O called it. Moreover, the "extraordinary cinematic publicity that surrounded the Munich Agreement, with Chamberlain hailed as the epitome of the sensible values of the man in the street", was the culmination of Conservative manipulation of the newsreels. As Gaumont British trumpeted in October 1938: "History will thank God as we do now, that in our hour of need there appeared such a man - Neville Chamberlain!"

The big five companies took every opportunity to use foreign conflicts such as the Spanish Civil War as backdrops for representing National Government Britain as a rock of sanity in an unstable world, and endorsement of Non-Intervention was mandatory, though that did not prevent the expression of subtle and not so subtle bias against the Republic. The Rothermere-controlled Movietone blatantly referred to
the belligerents as 'Red' and 'Anti-Red', instead of using less loaded terms like 'republicans' and 'insurgents'. British Paramount News employed a subtler visual bias, reporting a Burgos youth parade (18 Oct. 1937) by angling the camera to project Franco in romantic posture, flanked with exotic moorish troops, heroic Falangists and beautiful girls. One of the most notorious fabrications was Gaumont's 'Blonde Amazon' story: the supposed I-witnessing of a British schoolteacher, it was a figment of the imagination of writer and commentator Ted Emmett, and typified the way Red-atrocity stories were often montaged from old and unrelated film-stock, while actual footage of fascist atrocities, like the massacre of civilians at Badajoz, was never shown. Similarly, even after intervention was a widely recognized fact (partly as a result of Ivor Montagu's films exposing it41), Soviet weaponry was played up while Italian and German bombers usually remained unidentified. Reports of the Alcazar siege were generally as triumphalist as R.H. Timmermans might wish42 - and Gaumont always chose stirring music for Fascist victories like General Yagüés' entry into Barcelona in (2 Feb. 1939). On the other hand, desecrating gunfire was dubbed by Paramount onto footage of Republican soldiers at the statue of Christ and his Angels in Madrid (17 Aug. 1936). Gaumont was so eager for the defeat of the Republic, apparently, that it even showed footage of Franco triumphantly ascending some steps in Burgos as if it were in Madrid, two and a half years before the ex-capital fell (9 Nov. 1936). Republican forces were invariably represented as a godless rabble, whereas rebel troops were smartly turned-out and conspicuously pious. Most cynically, the big five made it to Eire to film the homecoming of O'Duffy's fascist volunteers, though none of them managed the distance to Victoria Station for the return of the first contingent of the
British Battalion of the XV International Brigade in December 1938. That was left to members of the Association of Ciné Technicians and the Electrical Trades Union, using borrowed equipment, and was only circulated in working-men's clubs for the Dependents and Wounded Aid Committee.

Leftists like Ivor Montagu often considered Griersonian documentaries were "forged documents", but by 1935 Ralph Bond was summing up their alternative for dramatizing "the lives and struggles of the workers" without "melodrama or false heroics": "We can take our cameras out into the streets, and ... photograph our material as it actually exists ... at the same time exposing the stupidity and false values of the commercial film." Lenin had considered film the most important of the new arts for agitprop purposes and Münzenberg's 1925 pamphlet exhorted workers to *Erobert den Film!* ('Conquer the Film!'). But British Leftist film-making was never a coherent movement with a consistent theoretical base like the Weimar *Volksfilmverband*. However, there was a tradition in native cinematography of a kind of 'vernacular' collision montage, showing shockingly distinct aspects of the socio-economic system, going back to touring magic lantern shows before the Great War.

Soviet films were distributed from 1924 through the IAH's British branch, Workers' International Relief (WIR), and the Friends of the Soviet Union. As Hogenkamp puts it, they "acted as the workers' film society movement's indispensable 'capital'." However, the Cinematograph Act of 1909 empowered local authorities to restrict exhibition of inflammable 35mm nitrate film, which was often used as a pretext for banning Soviet movies, if the British Board of Film Censors hadn't done so already. However, this was circumvented in the '30s by
distributing them on 'sub-standard' non-inflammable acetate. The Federation of Workers' Film Societies (FOWFS) was founded in 1929 and soon began sponsoring films of its own. 'Benn', the ILP New Leader film critic, condemned the commercial newsreels' exclusion of "any matters likely to raise the intellectual and moral standards of the people", and listed alternative subjects: "industrial and political demonstrations; the social causes leading up to strikes; co-operative activities; the effects of the miners' eight-hour day on the miners and their families; the contrast of nine-in-a-room in workers' home with one-in-nine-rooms in the homes of the upper class, etcetera". Consequently, in March 1930 the Atlas Film Company screened the first issue of its silent Workers' Topical News, concentrating on the NUWM demonstration in London for Unemployment Day. The second covered the 1930 Hunger March and May Day. As Hogenkamp comments, Workers Topical News "provided a visual record of important events in the revolutionary workers's movement, but above all, it gave the audience an opportunity to see 'us' instead of 'them' on the screen." It started from the assumption "that there was a reality which was not shown on the commercial newsreels because it would hurt the interests of the ruling classes. The task of the cameraman was therefore simply to record these events and show them to the workers." Soon Atlas was improvising mobile units of cameras mounted on cars.

The next year the FOWFS produced Nineteen Thirty-One, edited by Ralph Bond, on the Workers Charter Campaign for reforming labour conditions and unemployment benefit. One of the first British Leftist documentaries, made on a shoestring with a hand camera, it applied 'deadly parallels' to ram home the contrast between the lives of proletarians and their employers. The FOWFS declined in 1932 and so
distribution of Soviet films on non-inflammable stock was taken over by Kino in 1933 and also, from 1935, by Ivor Montagu's Progressive Film Institute. The former conducted a celebrated and lengthy battle with various local authorities and the Home Office to get Potemkin unbanned. In November 1934, Kino merged with the Workers' Camera Club to form the Workers' Film and Photo League (WFPL). The Socialist Film Council was also active at this time, producing the propaganda feature against the Means Test The Road to Hell (1933) about a working-class family's descent into the Abyss, accompanied by What the Newsreels Do Not Show, with its contrasting footage of Soviet Five Year Plan construction and London slums.

Such early films often displayed crude technical quality, reflecting, like proletarian writing, their conditions of production. Camera crews were frequently harassed by police and sometimes prevented from filming on the ground that licences were only available for established companies. The advent of sound at the end of the '20s was another problem, because microphone equipment was prohibitively expensive, and many Leftist films were still silent late into the decade. However, some used montage successfully, to go beyond merely showing events into revealing conditions, as in the Merseyside Workers' Film Society's Liverpool - Gateway of Empire (1933) which adapted Ruttmann's cross-section model for agitational purposes. Kino's first production, the 1934 Hunger March, broke the police embargo on filming NUWM action against that year's Unemployment Bill and publicizing the plight of the jobless. Later that year it produced a sequel Mass United Action Beat the UAB as Workers' Newsreel Number 3. This successor to Workers' Topical News represented a technical advance, using captions
to construct 'deadly parallels' between items like a Blackshirt Rally at Olympia and the counter-demonstration. It showed how 'The Workers Create' - the construction of a new Co-op - while 'Capitalism Destroys' - a plane crash. The Hendon air display was montaged with the Sheffield Youth Anti-War Congress: 'Workers make these planes' ... 'to Destroy Workers' ... 'But the masses are Organising.' Workers' Newsreels also covered major events like the aftermath of the Gresford colliery disaster and the massive opposition preventing the Fascist march to Hyde Park on 9 September 1934 going ahead without police protection. However, due to a lack of swift, mobile response, the Battle of Cable Street on 4 Oct. 1936 went unfilmed, except for WFPL footage which was never used.

The WFPL's most significant film of 1935 was Jubilee, on the celebrations for George V on 6 May, which the commercial newsreels projected as a confirmation of national unity and glorification of Empire. It reversed the process, using 'deadly parallels' to show the event's construction as a media fiction masking mundane crisis, which may have influenced M-O's subversive perspective on the 1937 Coronation (the League also made a satirical film of that, Coronation May Day). As Hogenkamp puts it:

Jubilee started with some fine shots of the East End Jubilee tour of the King and Queen, singling out the batteries of newsreel cameras covering this event. Then the captions read: '25 Years of Progress' ... 'Progress towards What?' The film switched to the day-to-day East End that the newsreel cameras never showed, with its slums, employment office, dole queues and depressing signs of 'No hands wanted'. A shot of disabled war veterans offered the film makers the opportunity to explain: 'Progress ... towards ... war', showing war preparations (recruitment posters, military parade, battleships at sea, etc.)

Also that year WFPL became plain FPL, in accordance with the policy change from 'Class Against Class' to Popular Front Leftism, but
nonetheless also produced its first film by workers on the job, *Construction*, shot by the builder Alf Garrard by the 'candid' method of a hole cut in an apron. The FPL's 1936 *March Against Starvation* (1936) covered both the NUWM action of that year and the Jarrow Crusade. Specific issue films were also produced by the FPL and Kino, such as *Dockworkers* (1937), against the casual labour system, and *Tenants in Revolt* (1939), on the East End rent strikes.

The newsreels didn't have it all their own way with overseas events either. Ivor Montagu, who worked with Katz for Münzenberg's World Committee, released an adapted version of an American CP film *Free Thaelmann* (1935), a sort of cinematic *Brown Book*. However, the BBFC removed an emotive photomontage of the KPD leader behind the bars of a Nazi prison on the grounds that it would otherwise give publicity to criminals. Montagu himself directed the fund-raising *Defence of Madrid* (1936) for the Progressive Film Institute, showing how Mola's assault on the city was broken by popular resistance. The film also stimulated public scepticism about the big five's reporting of the war and initiated a series of Popular Front films, including *News From Spain* (1937), *Help Spain* and *Spanish ABC* (both of 1938) and *Modern Orphans of the Storm* (1937). The fact that the last was the one Spanish film made by an established documentary group, Basil Wright's Realist Film Unit, clearly indicates the political limitations of their commercial sponsorship. Many of these films were distributed through the influential group network of the LBC, which coordinated them with texts, as in the case of Harry Dunham's *China Strikes Back*, with its footage of Mao's operations against the Japanese, complementing Snow's *Red Star over China*. At one time, the LBC even planned to make a film about the distressed areas itself, based on *The Town That Was Murdered*.  

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Glasgow Kino and the School of Art's joint production anti-arms race film, *Hell Unltd.* (1936), ambitiously montaged fact, fiction and animation, but Montagu's *Peace and Plenty* (1939) stands at the opposite pole of '30s documentary from the Griersonian in both its political perspective and formal techniques. It was an audiovisual adaptation of Harry Pollitt's main speech to CPGB's XVth Congress and, as Hogenkamp notes, "breaks completely with the realist conventions which dominated left film making" at that time, freely mixing socio-economic cross-sections and deadly-parallels with stills, written documents, acting by Unity Theatre and puppetry. It was a devastating account of the National Government's period in office and suggested what the consequences would be if it were returned to power. Hence, *Peace and Plenty* was a kind of cinematic culmination of the anti-Fascist and anti-Chamberlain Popular Front before it broke up after the Non-Aggression Pact.

The limited achievement of the British alternative cinema of the '30s was considerable in view of the odds against which it laboured. As Hogenkamp concludes, "If the mighty German Communist movement did not succeed in the 'agitpropisation' of its cinema, how could one expect the tiny British movement to do so?"

Painting was not a major influence on '30s reportage, although various kinds of visual representation of mundane reality grouped around the Artists' International Association (AIA), whose first exhibition in 1934 was 'The Social Scene'. The AIA had no programme beyond a consensus that art had to be accountable to the real world, and functioned primarily as an artists' Popular Front, sponsoring exhibitions, the 1937 British Artists' Congress, solidarity campaigns for persecuted artists and with the Spanish Republic, etc. Hence,
constructivism and surrealism co-existed in the AIA alongside naive realism and photographic precision, as exemplified by the ecumenicism of its 1935 collection of essays, *5 on Revolutionary Art.*

In particular, the Euston Road School (1937-39), which included the 'Worktown' artists William Coldstream and Graham Bell, represented ordinary East End life, with motifs like street-markets, pubs, factories, and traffic. James Boswell complemented his Groszian *Left Review* caricatures with sketches of Soho equally reminiscent of the Weimar social realist Heinrich Zille. In the North, the worker-painters of the Ashington Group, founded in 1934 from a WEA course, represented typical Durham coalfield scenes and probably influenced M-O's use of visual media. Harrisson visited Ashington in 1938 and with Julian Trevelyan sponsored the 'Unprofessional Painting' exhibition at Peckham Health Centre, which featured their work, alongside a bus driver's and a pavement artist's. But all this never initiated a systematic movement like the American Government-sponsored Federal Art Project.

As David Mellor shows, "contact with the new German photography and film" and its British repercussions was more important for writers. Brian Howard, instrumental in shifting the British avant-garde's attention from Paris to Weimar as the centre of European Modernism took up the aesthetic of the 'camera-eye' as early as 1927. New British photoreportage developed relatively late, and its main impulses came from *Neue Sachlichkeit*, rather than home-grown tradition. These impulses came from the IAH's sponsorship of photograpy by and about the working class, often used to illustrate Kisch's *feuilletons* in the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* and *Arbeiter-Fotograf*. They also came from the liberal/SPD photo-journalism of Ullsteins, Franz Roh's 1929 *Foto-
Auge exhibition and the international magazine *Photographie*. Graphic imported Erich Salomon's "candid camera" to Britain in 1928 (for which it coined the phrase) and *Close Up* reproduced Helmar Lerski's social types from *Köpfe des Alltags* (1931). Soon, under such diverse influences, avant-garde journals like *transition* were featuring photography. In January 1931 *Querschnitt* even produced a special issue 'cross-sectioning' 'England und die Engländere' and British photographers travelled the other way to experience a visual culture shaped by Moholy-Nagy, Rodchenko and El Lissitsky.

The AIZ of March 25, 1926 carried an appeal for contributions to a workers' photojournal, "the paper of the future", and gave guidelines:

1. Photographs that typify the revolutionary movement among the workers;
2. Photographs that typify the social conditions of the workers;
3. So-called 'genre pictures' which give a good impression of the daily life of the workers in all its phases.
4. Photographs of the workplace which clearly reveal the working conditions;
5. Photographs which show modern technology and its modes of labour, industrial buildings and their construction.

It also counselled "You have to keep your eyes open and see what until now counted as old and uninteresting in everyday life, yet is of interest to thousands." From 1928 the CPGB tried to organize a similar worker-correspondents movement, but it never reached a large scale and lagged far behind the Continent. Despite the fact that the WIR monthly *Searchlight* set out its principles in a series of articles, the Workers' Camera Club never seriously got off the ground.

However, other kinds of radical German photoreportage did take off in '30s Britain. Tim N. Gidal's *Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-1933* shows how modern photoreportage began with the invention of the 35mm Leica (a by-product of Leitz's movie cameras). Its
"images of hitherto unknown spontaneity" turned the lens into a virtual "extension and adjunct of the eye". As Tom Hopkinson put it, the Leica "brought photography out of the studio and into the stream of everyday life", reporting "statesmen in angry argument, actors in actual stage productions, operations in hospital or athletes straining for a record" and covering home life, cinema, fashion and sport.

The USSR had rapidly developed "the propaganda possibilities of the documentary photograph with an eye to agitating the people". Thousands of 'worker photographers' were encouraged in the inter-war years and their reporting exported in the international monthly USSR in Pictures. 'A Day in the Life of Filipov' typified its format (still current in Picture Post's 'Unemployed' (1939), a day-in-the-life of a jobless man) mixing grainy realism and idealistic didactics, in close relationship to early Soviet, especially Vertovian, cinema. Such creative treatments of actuality influenced the reaction against Expressionism in German cinema and stimulated the Neue Sachlichkeit spirit of Ruttmann's Berlin: Symphonie einer Großstadt (1927) and the Moritz Seeler and Robert Siodmak Menschen am Sonntag (1929), showing a Sunday in the life of a shop-assistant, a travelling salesman, a movie extra and a chauffeur.

The Hungarian Martin Munkacsi was developing dynamic 'one-shot' photoreportage and André Kertész the 'picture series' (a logical development from film) for German magazines in the early '20s. The Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung was founded in 1921 and in 1923 the innovative Münchner Illustrierte Presse. Soon every city or interest group was producing its own photomagazine like the Catholic Feuerreiter and the Nazi Illustrierter Beobachter. Ullsteins produced the Berliner Illustrierte and photo-monthlies aimed at all sections of the population, such as Die Dame, Uhu, Querschnitt, and Atlantis which
pioneered travel photoreportage. Kurt Korff, the *Berliner Illustrierte*'s editor, initiator of the eye-catching single image cover, published Walter Bosshard's photos of Koestler's Zeppelin expedition, and discovered Erich Salomon. Salomon made himself a global name through the Hein murder trial in Coburg, photographing through a hole in a briefcase. His revealing pictures of public figures were collected in *Berühmte Zeitgenossen in unbewachten Augenblicken* (1931).

In 'The Author as Producer', Benjamin complained about the potentially superficial rhetoric of the new photography which could indiscriminately transfigure "a tenement or a rubbish-heap" into objects for cheap aesthetic thrills, to the slogan of Renger Patzch's *Die Welt ist schön* (1928). And Benjamin quickly summed up the economic function of the merely fashionable among the new photomagazines - vicarious participation for the masses in all the things they were denied: "Spring, famous people, foreign countries." Similarly, in *A Short History of Photography* (1931), he showed how such magazines fetishized commodities, endowing "any soup can with cosmic significance", while failing to reveal their invisible "human connection" - the economic contradictions of the system which produced them. However, he praised the social 'types' of August Sander's *Antlitz der Zeit* (1929) and suggested that captions could be used subversively to activate the viewer's critical faculties.

Gidal calls the editor Stefan Lorant the "motor force" of the kind of critical photojournalism Benjamin wanted to see. By a new cooperation between textual and photographic elements he realised the 'essay' character of everyday subjects in the *Münchener Illustrierte Presse* and later *Picture Post*. By 1930, German photomagazines had 20 million readers and the photoreporters who influenced their British
counterparts or featured in exile in the pages of Picture Post began on them. Hans Baumann produced the cross-section 'Between Midnight and Dawn on the Kurfürstendamm' (anticipating Bill Brandt's A Night in London), and 'A Day with Mussolini' for the Münchner Illustrierte Presse, while Kurt Höbschmann, a very Kischean figure, produced inside photo-stories of prisons, brothels and secret military exercises. Munkacsi shot the destruction of Brazilian coffee surpluses in 1932. Wolfgang Weber's Bavarian 'Village without Work' and Alfred Eisenstaedt's photographs of Whitechapel's 'London Slums' featured in the Münchner Illustrierte Presse in 1931-32, predating Bert Hardy and Humphrey Spender's images of the British poor. Umbo, who worked for the Bauhaus and Picture Post, reported social and economic issues like a Berlin adoption centre (1929) and the Beuthen mining disaster (1932). Characteristic of the AIZ's agitprop were 'Father Goes Out Begging', 'Unemployed' and 'How the Rich Live'. The truth-telling impact of the AIZ's photostories and montages was sometimes drowned out by sloganizing, but it was subtle compared with the Nazi Illustrierte Beobachter's crude images and inflammatory captions. Consequently, when they came to power, the Nazis lost no time suppressing oppositional photoreportage, burning the AIZ's offices and imprisoning Lorant, a Hungarian Jew, (an experience that fuelled Picture Post's anti-fascism**). Korff fled to the US where he and Eisenstaedt helped launch Henry Luce's Life in 1936. The 1933 Central European artistic diaspora ended the new photoreportage's first phase, but also started its second, international one, including Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson in France and Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Walter Crane and Margaret Bourke-White in the US. It also spread the photomagazine principle to a host of new publications, like Life and Look in the US, Vu and Paris-
Match in France. Meanwhile, the Nazis continued to recognize its propaganda value, setting up foreign editions of Signal, photojournal of the New Order, in occupied countries.

Britain was also a haven for refugees such as the Moholy-Nagys from the Bauhaus and Heartfield, praised by Francis Klingender in 5 on Revolutionary Art and featured in Lilliput and Picture Post. By July 1934, British society had become the central focus of the camera-eye, both in individual images and frame-by-frame narratives. Bill Brandt's work was appearing in the Weekly Illustrated and 'Lensman' Humphrey Spender made expeditions into the East End and industrial North for the Mirror. The Listener's 'photo newsreels' began in 1935 and Spender shot the 1936 Jarrow Crusade as The Men Baldwin Would Not See for Left Review."

Brandt had worked in Germany and used his Leica to construct critical Querschnitte or 'cross-sections'. The English at Home (1936), which influenced Orwell's The Road to Wigan Pier, is a perfect example of the kind of 'deadly parallels' radical photoreportage aimed at. Raymond Mortimer's introduction used the by then de rigueur language of social defamiliarization. He considered Brandt's camera-eye an estranging device, enabling the British to break out of their conditioned self-image and look at themselves "through foreign eyes." This made Brandt a roving "anthropologist", analyzing the semiotics of class "with the detached curiosity of a man investigating the customs of some remote and unfamiliar tribe".** Moreover, the visual shock of the photos consisted in the fact that they were "not of actors in realistic stage-sets, but of people as they are, in their real and unescapable surroundings." They challenged the national conscience to defend the squalor they exposed as necessary, and indicated the failure of
political imagination: "If every Member of Parliament had to spend one week in each year living in such slums, there would quickly be no slums left for them to go to." Brandt documented a kingdom disunited by social and economic extremes - the upper classes in Mayfair, Ascot, Harrow and Cambridge, the masses in the East End, Brighton and the industrial North - unsure if its identify lay in the twentieth-century or the Middle Ages: photos 39/40 juxtaposed a Norman Church tower and the chimneys of Battersea power station.

Brandt's images combined as powerfully as Heartfield's montages. Photo 32, 'Ascot Enclosure: within and without', typified 'society's' oblivious exclusiveness towards society, by top-hatted nobs and a prostrate tramp. 57/58, 'East End Playground'/'Kensington Children's Party' compared a dead-end street and sumptuous balloon-filled chamber. 55/56, 'Travel for the Highest'/'Rest for the Lowest' showed an aristocrat's coach and an Orwellian night shelter. 15/16, 'Miners Returning to Daylight'/'Their only Window' exposed ironic similarities between mass working and living conditions, juxtaposing a mining cage against children staring through a grating. Similarly, 55/56, 'The Home'/'The Work', compared a family living in one room with a miner crouching at the coalface. Brandt's next major collection A Night in London (1938)) was one of the finest and grimmest city cross-sections "caught in the fact", in James Bone's phrase. 22/23 contrasted opulent 'upstairs' and spartan 'downstairs' in a Kensington mansion. 40 showed a 'Homeless Girl' under newspapers, and 41, 'Footsteps Coming Nearer', her likely economic fate - a client approaches a prostitute, both heads sinisterly cropped out of the frame. In 48 and 49 West End revellers were shadowed by other, ordinarily less visible, nightlife in 'Night Patrol in the Underground' and 'Bakers Prepare Next Morning's Rolls'.
Humphrey Spender studied in Freiburg from 1927 to 1928 and was inspired by André Kertesz's work in the *Kölnerische Illustrierte* and by Lerski's *Köpfe des Alltags*. Harrisson had used cameras in his Melanesian anthropology and believed that "scientific instruments of precision, photography, film technique ... will provide a check on our observation." However, although M-O may have been influenced by photography, its actual photographs went largely unpublished until unearthed by David Mellor from the M-O archive at the end of the '70s.

Characteristic of Spender's 'candid' camerawork for M-O was the picture of two men conversing on a bus, a kind of visual eavesdropping. He also caught the observer in the act of representing, as in the image of Coldstream painting on the roof of Bolton Art Gallery, and his own camera-eye was sometimes self-reflexively traced in the actions of those it intruded upon, as in the hand raised in a pub, recollected by Spender as a threatening gesture.

Many of M-O's original agenda of subjects were taken by him, like the pub aspidistra, and M-O's scrutiny of mass-movement and -culture was complemented by his pictures of mill gates at knocking-off time, the behaviour of spectators at a football match, children playing on waste-ground, a funeral cortège, electioneering, a working-men's barber, washing billowing on the line, bales of cotton, patent medicines, reflections of shoppers in windows, Blackpool's pier and freak-shows, etc. Many of these were tinged with Madge's surrealism and Jenning's Benjaminesque interest in 'unconscious optics'. Spender's 'Wayside Pulpit', showing a poster on a gloomy street advertising harvest thanksgiving, was exactly the kind of anthropological evidence of the survival of ancient rituals in an alien urban environment M-O sought.

Some of the WFPL's best work on backyard subjects was taken from
the feminist perspective of Austrian-born Edith Tudor-Hart, who also published her *Rhondda Valley* sequence on unemployment and bad housing in *The Geographical Magazine* in March 1936. The Leica, requiring little technical skill, seemed to answer Benjamin's point, making it possible for the people to reproduce themselves, in stills at least. Humphrey Jennings wrote that photography was a democratic "system with which the people can be pictured by the people for the people". But the combination of the émigré influence with Britain's young photoreporters in the second half of the '30s was typified by the controversial *Picture Post*. Launched in 1938 by Lorant, assisted by Tom Hopkinson and photographers like Baumann and Hübschmann (renamed Felix H. Man and Kurt Hutton), it reached a circulation of one million in two months. Derek Smith has commented that PP's émigrés "were able to tune into the native aspects of English life, could spot the right kinds of subject matter, invisible to ourselves." Lorant convinced Hopkinson of photoreportage's potential for moulding opinion. Characteristic of their method was 'Back to the Middle Ages', based on *Lilliput*'s 'doubles', montaging leading Nazi faces with those of persecuted scientists and artists, and reaching a wider British public than Katz's *Brown Books*. In Hopkinson's phrase, the photographs became caricatures, "hammering home their point more effectively than pages of argument". While Chamberlain, René Cutforth recalled, reassured Britons to "go home and sleep quietly in your beds", PP was "intent on creating a healthier insomnia". However, Lorant had limited faith in PP's potential to galvanize British resistance, departing for the USA when invasion appeared imminent, convinced "my own paper ... wouldn't publish one single line if I would be arrested". He alleged later that he was refused British
citizenship precisely because of PP's lashing of Appeasement.*l There was also a latent and, eventually, fatal disagreement about the function of PP. Hopkinson and Lorant believed that its success depended on being left-wing and anti-fascist, although its proprietor Edward Hulton was a Conservative disillusioned with the National Government.

PP did not report conventionally 'newsworthy' events, but created the 'topical' for itself, enlarging its readers' interests and perceptions of what 'culture' in mass-society meant. As Lionel Birch has said, "it was the first picture magazine to reflect all aspects of life in Britain, and some on the continent, in ways that all kinds of people could understand":*m four pages about a Rothschild party, would precede nine on the daily routine of an unemployed man, emphasizing the contradictions of the 'two Englands'. Stuart Hall in 'The Social Eye of Picture Post' has shown how PP served the spirit of the 'people's war' by constructing it in terms of "collective effort and experience, rather than from the vantage point of grand strategy and high policy."** Spanish veteran Tom Wintringham's 'The Home Guard Can Fight', on the LDV School at Osterley Park, was thus "itself an important skirmish in the campaign to end the phoney war", as Hopkinson put it. The magazine acquired importance as an 'eye' and 'voice' of the Home Front, organizing citizens' initiatives against the rigmarole of "blimp and bullshit", and convincing ordinary people "that the country's fate depended on themselves", not the discredited cabal of experts, generals and politicians.*1 J.B. Priestley commented in Out of the People (194?) that "Britain, which in the years immediately before this war was rapidly losing such democratic virtues as it possessed, is now being bombed and burned into democracy"*2 and Orwell believed that PP was the flagship of authentic wartime populism (see CEJL I, p.453 and II, 284
Like M-O, it remains indelibly identified in both memory and historical research with unofficial documentation of civilian experience when aerial warfare put everybody in the front line. Characteristically, Hardy reported the Blitz without using flash to "make the reader feel he was inside with the shelterers in semi-darkness with bombs falling" and PP complemented his images with Henry Moore's 'Shelter Drawings'.

Undoubtedly the defamiliarizing power of PP's photostories was augmented in its wartime heyday by special historical circumstances that made possible what Hall calls "observed commonness of experience". If the crux of effective reportage lies in relating the mundane to the significant, PP was aided by the bizarre quality of the time itself, not just its camera angles. Hall notes the "characteristic movement" of its stories "was to pivot round ... from the conventional 'news value' photograph or subject" to get "into clearer focus and detail the participating actors and onlookers", thus raising 'ordinary' people "to a sort of equality of status" with mythmaking events and political leading players, as in the first issue's crowds outside No. 10. Its 'social eye' democratized by creating imaginative interest without sensation.

PP also took a lead in ensuring that reform of '30s social and economic abuses was included in the war aims for which the ordinary Briton was sacrificing him/herself. Its January 1941 'Plan for Britain', by Hopkinson and Julian Huxley, proposed minimum wages, full employment, child allowances, a national health service, planned land-use and restructuring education, which would later become the basis of the welfare state, and inspired the 1941 Committee, chaired by Priestley, to press for a more coordinated war effort. The Beveridge
Report on Social Security was published on 1st December, 1942, and Hopkinson wrote a signed editorial condemning Government deviousness in "getting all possible propaganda mileage" by broadcasting it overseas as a democratic alternative to the Nazi 'New Order' and encouraging the struggle for a better future, but only committing itself with the vaguest promises. Similarly, PP exposed Government bungling in the North African campaign so effectively that the MOI exercised direct economic censorship by withdrawing its export subsidy for 'undermining morale'.

Hulton's commitment to Conservatism was temporarily undermined by Appeasement and National Government intransigence over the worst socio-economic abuses. In 1943 he even wrote The New Age — a socialistic post-war vision — and backed Labour in a 1945 election editorial, as against unreconstructed Toryism. However, by 1950 he had gravitated rightwards again particularly in foreign policy. PP, ironically, was muzzled by Cold War doublethink. Hulton rejected James Cameron and Hardy's photostory on political terror by the Synghman Rhee régime under cover of the United Nations flag. With sophistry a Stalinist might envy, Hulton insisted criticism of South Korea, no matter how factual, would amount to pro-communist propaganda. Hopkinson was sacked for backing his reporters and although PP continued until 1957, he felt its inevitable demise was due to the fact that it never recovered editorial independence but slithered into the sensationalism and cheesecake Lorant originally set out to avoid.

Umbo depicted Kisch with a literal 'camera-eye' and by the '30s the portable camera was an essential aid for new reporters. An enthusiast's book, My Leica and I (1937) edited by Kurt Peter Karfeld, even appeared, featuring dynamic period activities — mountain climbing, flying, motor-
racing, etc. Auden, Isherwood, Spender, Orwell, when not pretending to be cameras, incorporated their own or other peoples' pictures in their reportage, and photographic materials were widespread on and between '30s covers. The extent to which film and photography became formal models for writing was shown by its permeation with their terminology and the active involvement of many writers in film-scripting and -making. Isherwood typified this enthusiasm and almost certainly knew Vertov's work, whether he got his camera-eye via Dos Passos or not. But equally he was also typical of many writers' suspicions about the privileged objectivity of filmic discourse. His own creative 'fixings' of fact in GTB are not only based on editing, but acknowledge that the subjectivity of the camera-eye/I-witness is always present in the reported reality, in explicit or displaced form.

Vertov constructed apparently deictically coherent film phrases for Kinopravda from disparate footage: "the coffins of national heroes are lowered into the grave (shot in Astrakhan in 1918); the grave is filled (Kronstadt, 1921); cannon salute (Petrograd, 1920); memorial service, hats are removed (Moscow, 1922)". A "montage of crowds and of machines greeting comrade Lenin" was "filmed in different places at different times". Similarly, the most scrupulously honest '30s reporters employed their own creative editing to maximize the truth-telling potential of their factual footage. For example, a key image in The Road to Wigan Pier differs from its original context, dated 15th February 1936 in 'The Road to Wigan Pier Diary', while out with some NUWM guides:

Passing up a horrible squalid side-alley, saw a woman, youngish but very pale and with the usual exhausted draggled look, kneeling by the gutter outside a house and poking a stick up a leaden waste-pipe, which was blocked. I thought how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling in the gutter in a back-alley in Wigan, in the bitter cold, prodding a stick up a
blocked drain. At that moment she looked up and caught my eye, and her expression was as desolate as ever I have seen: it struck me she was thinking just the same as I was. (CEJL I, p.203)

The entry upsets the comforting preconception that the masses are anaesthetized to misery, because 'they don't know any better'. However, its relocation and elaborated detail in *The Road to Wigan Pier* gave it wider symbolic connotations:

The train bore me away, through the monstrous scenery of slag-heaps, chimneys, piled scrap-iron, foul canals, paths of cindery mud criss-crossed by the prints of clogs ... As we moved slowly through the outskirts of the town we passed row after row of little grey slum houses running at right angles to the embankment. At the back of one of the houses a young woman was kneeling on the stones, poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe which ran from the sink inside and which I suppose was blocked. I had time to see everything about her - the sacking apron, the clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold. She looked up as the train passed, and I was almost near enough to catch her eye. She had a round pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and it wore, for the second in which I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen. It struck me that we are mistaken when we say that 'It isn't the same for them as it would be for us', and that people born in the slums can imagine nothing but the slums. For what I saw in her face was not the ignorant suffering of a poor dumb animal. She knew well enough what was happening to her - understood as well as I did how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling there in the bitter cold, on the slimy stones of a slum backyard, poking a stick up a foul drainpipe.*

Crudely, we could say that Orwell reported the authentic truth in the Diary and distorted it in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. However, if the Diary had not survived, this rare insight into his "creative interpretation of actuality" would have been undetectable. 

Relocation of the image at the end of his participant observation of Wigan made it representative of the experience. There is a new emphasis on the woman's anonymous typicality - "the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks forty". Similarly, added details - "her sacking apron, her clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold" - summarized

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Wigan's characteristic sights, sounds and smells. She becomes the *genius loci* of an urban, anti-pastoral landscape. Moreover, perhaps Orwell had another, more personal, motive for the changes: the "lower-upper-middle-class" reporter and recent political convert apparently took this startling snapshot from the train window. He had a return ticket, leaving this proletarian Eurydyce to her destiny like Kisch did the homeless of Whitechapel. It was a tacit acknowledgement that class-differences, though constructed in the political unconscious, have real effects, which aren't solvable by the camera-eye/I-witnessing of facts, unless they initiate collective political action.
Notes to Chapter V

1. See Benjamin *Illuminations*, p.234.

2. See Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, p.181.

3. See above Chapter IV, section ii, p.218.


7. See motto to the second edition of Paul Rotha's *Documentary Film* (London: Faber, 1936; second edition, 1939).

8. See *Grierson on Documentary* ed. and compiled by Forsyth Hardy (London: Collins, 1946; repr. and revised, Faber, 1966), pp.202 and 250. Henceforth, all references to *Grierson on Documentary* will be given in brackets in the text.


14. Cf. Kisch's theory of the "Sichtbarmachung von Arbeit- und Lebensweise" above, Chapter III, section i, p.120.

15. See below Chapter VI, section ii, pp.334-36, for a detailed discussion of these effects.


18. See Note 24, below.

20. Ibid., pp.32-33.


22. See Low *Documentary and Educational Films*, p.3.

23. See ibid., p.87.


25. Low *Documentary and Educational Films*, p.171.

26. See Rotha *Documentary Film*, p.122.


31. Ibid., p.165.


35. See Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, p.22.

36. See Cunningham *British Writers*, p.289.

37. See above Chapter III, section ii, p.160.

38. See above Chapter IV, section iii, p.236.

39. See Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, p.225.

40. For Koestler's exposure of the fallacy of Non-Intervention, see above, Chapter III, section ii, pp.161-62.

41. Some of which found their way onto the commercial circuit (see Hogenkamp *Deadly Parallels*, p.169 and this current Chapter p?, below).
42. See above Chapter III, section ii, p.164.


44. See Hogenkamp Deadly Parallels, p.65.


46. Hogenkamp Deadly Parallels, p.45.

47. Documented in detail in Chapter III of ibid.,

48. Quoted in ibid., p.114.

49. I-witness accounts of the battle are, however, available in Phil Piratin's Our Flag Stays Red (London: Thames Publications, 1948) and Joe Jacobs Out of the Ghetto (London: Jane Simon, 1978). It was also fictionalized in Frank Griffin's ('Private XYZ') novel October Day (London: Secker and Warburg, 1939)

50. See Hogenkamp Deadly Parallels, p.122.


52. Ibid., p.106.

53. See Morris and Radford The Story of the AIA, pp.14–15

54. See Herbert Read et al. 5 on Revolutionary Art (London: Wishart, 1935).


62. See Gidal Modern Photojournalism, p.11.


65. See Gidal Modern Photojournalism, p.18.


70. For a fuller discussion of Brandt's work in the '30s see M. Haworth-Booth and D. Mellor Bill Brandt Behind the Camera (London: Aperture, 1985).

71. See Madge and Harrisson Mass-Observation, p.35.


73. These accompanied Miles Davies's article 'The Rhondda Valley' in the Geographical Magazine Vol. II, No.5 (March 1936), pp.372-86.


75. See 'Interview with Humphrey Spender' (27 July 1977) by Derek Smith in Worktown (Smith's italics).


78. See Hopkinson Of this Our Time, p.172, and Listener (1 Sept. 1977), p.262.


81. Hopkinson Of this Our Time, pp.74 and 176.


83. See Hopkinson Of this Our Time, pp.174-75. Hardy's work has been collected in Bert Hardy, Photojournalist (London: Gordon Fraser, 1975).

84. See Hall Working Papers in Cultural Studies No.2 (Spring 1972), pp.81-83, and below.

85. See Hopkinson Of this Our Time, pp.184, 191-92 and 214.


87. See Kurt Peter Karfeld (ed.) My Leica and I: Amateurs Show their Pictures (Berlin: Verlag Helmut Elsener, 1937).

88. See below Chapter VII, section ii, especially pp.368-69.

89. See Vertov Kino-Eye, pp.16-17.


91. For Orwell's similar reversal of the actual order of events in Down and Out in Paris and London, see below Chapter VI, section i, p.295 and Note 3.

92. Orwell's description of his own class-origins in The Road to Wigan Pier, p.113.
Grierson wrote in 1931 that documentary intended to redress the fact that "We know our England glibly ... as a maker of Empire and as a manipulator of world-wide services". British culture needed to travel "into the jungles of Middlesborough and the Clyde" rather than just satisfy its "hunger for English reality ... briefly and sentimentally over a country hedge."1 Similarly, the voyages of internal discovery made by '30s reporters into unknown, or at least, unrepresented Britain, were both national geographical and ideological explorations. They attempted to transgress the informational gap between Disraeli's 'two nations': the rich, as Cunningham puts it, "in pastoral rurality, as in the more prosperous Midlands and South, or in the smart quarters of cities", and the poor, "shoved away in slum ghettoes ... , or, more crucially distanced still from the political and cultural centre around which the writers and publishers congregated, in the depressed industrial provinces."2

Orwell's picaresque Down and Out in Paris and London (1933), for instance, which, he insisted, was not written from a conscious political standpoint, nevertheless, mapped a region with radical implications - the secret landscape of poverty shadowing a rich, industrialized society. The comment on returning to London that it "was all very queer after Paris" is a clue to the motive behind Orwell's creative editing of the real order of his footage. DAOPL is a rhetorical diptych, French poverty providing a contrast for the (literally) 'estranged' perspective on British. Geographical metaphors were already an established tradition in British social documentation
in the nineteenth-century, as in William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), but defamiliarization was basic to Orwell's reportage technique, which constantly subverted its own mimetic effect of recognisability. Commentators often note his double vision, combining the familiarity of the native and the astringent detachment of the alien. Hence, the I-witness's naive patriotism on the homebound ferry:

> England is a very good country when you are not poor; and, of course, with a tame imbecile to look after, I was not going to be poor. The thought of not being poor made me very patriotic. The more questions the Roumanians asked, the more I praised England; the climate, the scenery, the art, the literature, the laws - everything in England was perfect. (DAOPL, p.127)

DAOPL challenged preconceptions about poverty and the relationship between those who suffer from it and those who don't. As Orwell claimed in 'Why I Write', his reportage was concerned not only with new 'facts', but with attacking myths "able to keep alive because they have the air of being scientific truths" (CEJL III, p.107). The "tramp-monster", "a repulsive, rather dangerous creature, who would die rather than work or wash" was constructed and internalized by cultural conditioning. So though "no truer to life" than pulp fiction's "sinister Chinaman", this stereotype obscured "the real question of vagrancy" in a perfect example of the automatization of thought by language: "The very word 'tramp' evokes his image." Alternatively, DAOPL reported this apparently marginal figure's role as ideological 'other' in a society in which money "has become the grand test of virtue." DAOPL's mendicants are largely victims of circumstances outside their control, although the socio-economic mechanisms keeping them in "constant circulation" were effectively invisible to the uninformed (See DAOPL, pp.203-05, and 175, respectively).

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As we have seen, Jack London was Orwell and Kisch's common model for their participant observation of down-and-outs (there is even a reference to his "books on American tramping" in DAOPL (p.204) and Blair's teenage reading of London inspired "my first adventure as an amateur tramp" (See CEJL I, pp.33-34).) But The People of the Abyss also played a vital role in Orwell's thinking about the fundamental contradictions of ideology and their illusory reconciliation in myths. DAOPL was thus also a personal psychological journey for Eric Blair and the making of his I-witness persona, 'George Orwell'. His sketch of schooldays, 'Such, Such Were the Joys', concerns the way children are interpellated by the dominant ideology and internalize guilt. 'Sin', though involuntary, is also culpable, "not necessarily something that you did", but "something that happened to you" (See CEJL IV, pp.382-83). Blame can be transferred, fetishistically, from cause to victim. Orwell posited a kind of repressive political unconscious in which the Christian doctrine of free will served as an alibi for a kind of 'original alienation' which depended not so much on what you did "but on what you were", socio-economically (See CEJL IV, pp.393-94 and 407). 'Doublethink' didn't originate in political theories imbibed by the adult, but in the construction of the child's subjectivity. In this way, capitalism's myth of redemption through 'success' by the work ethic consoled the unprivileged and kept privilege in place. 'Such, Such Were the Joys' suggests Orwell's deeper debt to London: their common purpose was the creation of a reportage that exposed such ideological contradictions.

As Homberger notes, London was outraged "at the sheer unnecessariness of the conditions in the East End". His essay for The Comrade 'How I became a Socialist' appeared in the same month The People
of the Abyss began serialization. It talked of seeing "the shambles at the bottom of the Social Pit ... as vividly as though it were a concrete thing" and at the bottom "I saw them, myself above them, not far, and hanging on the slippery wall by main strength and sweat." Hence, London's tramping "pretty effectively hammered "rampant individualism" out of me" not by intellectual argument but first-hand experience. London's I-witness mediation of it in turn helped Orwell understand his own ideological conditioning through the experience and writing of DAOPL.

As we have seen, London also exposed 'normal' socio-economic conditions by highlighting the casualties of the industrial front-line. The vast majority were victims not through their own irresponsibility, but the systematic effects of capitalism. London unmasked laissez faire's 'Erewhonian' myths blaming the poor for their poverty (cf. Orwell's use of the term in CEJL IV, p.400). For example, the central Victorian myth of 'thrift' was uneconomic, because "the man with the lower standard of living" would always "underbid the man with the higher" for available work, in a vicious spiral of depressed conditions. Similarly, it was "a matter of sober calculation" that walking the streets was harder than sweated labour, because "it is softer to work for twenty shillings ($5) a week, and have regular food, and a bed at night". Nor was the casual ward a refuge for the work-shy "because picking oakum, breaking stones, or performing the most revolting tasks, in return for miserable food and shelter" was "an unqualified extravagance on the part of the men who are guilty of it." For London, such myths were designed to make some people seem less deserving, or even less human, than others and to make contingent material inequalities appear legitimate and permanent. Alternatively,
his mixture of Marxism and "the simple sociology of Christ" enabled him to recover basic human similarities:

... East London is an unfit place in which to live. Where you would not have your own babe live, and develop, and gather to itself knowledge of life and the things of life, is not a fit place for the babes of other men ... It is a simple thing this Golden Rule, and all that is required. Political economy and the survival of the fittest can go hang if they say otherwise. What is not good enough for you is not good enough for other men, and there's no more to be said."

London also revealed intimate connections between "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex"* which anticipated '30s reportage's literary montage: it was impossible to understand "the starved and runty toiler" of the East End slums, "till we look at the strapping Life Guardsmen of the West End, and come to know that one must feed and clothe and groom the other."* Orwell's early reading of London was thus instrumental both in developing his view of ideology and his reportage's defamiliarizing strategy. The child's socialization might be the root of doublethink, but London helped Orwell recover the 'naive' vision which resists conventional illusions and organized forgetting.

DAOPL's form is a more fragmentary, modernistic mixture of I-witnessing and documentary montage than the People of the Abyss. As we have seen, Kisch creatively recycled the "fall-out" from industrial society's margins.10 Similarly, Orwell shared and developed the Modernist interest in relations between objectivity and mediation. In 'Why I Write', he expressed "pleasure in solid objects and scraps of useless information" (See CEJL I, p.28). He also had a constant eye out for potential objets trouvés, as in the diary note to use "an empty Craven A packet bobbing up and down among the ice" in a future text (CEJL I, p.196). Moreover, as Cunningham argues, his taste was typical:
"Orwell might well be describing the early Auden." Orwell's own poem 'Upon a Ruined Farm near the His Master's Voice Gramophone Factory' critically juxtaposes a junk-strewn landscape with a symbol of consumer society's values (See CEJL I, pp.158-59). Similarly, a striking simile in 'The Spike' (1931) identified social and material refuse as closely as Kisch's 'Unter den Obdachlosen von Whitechapel': "Littered on the grass ... We defiled the scene, like sardine-tins and paper bags on the sea shore." (CEJL I, p.58)

The equation of virtue with material possessions is basic to capitalism: in Lakoff and Johnson's terms, it is 'lived metonymy'. Similarly, Marx defined money value as 'fetishism', as White explains, because it leads to the absurd pursuit of the most "worthless of commodities". Alienation (i.e. Marx's term Entfremdung), therefore, equals the process by which people "are psychologically distanced from those things that were ontologically closest to them and turn into idols those that were most removed from their own natures". What began in common-sense substitution of one material thing for another ended up confusing the value of human beings with things they own. Hence, Modernist influences are basic to DAOPL's revelations about moral and economic fetishism. Its first prominent metaphor recalls Dubliners' 'affective style' - "the magnetization of style and vocabulary by context of person, place and time": It was a very narrow street - a ravine of tall, leprous houses, lurching towards one another in queer attitudes, as though they had all been frozen in the act of collapse. (DAOPL, p.1)

As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the river-banks, their old coats covered with dust and soot ... Orwell's method consciously reversed 'lived metonymy' by figuratively...
attributing to houses the characteristics of their impoverished inhabitants. Moreover, this foregrounded rhetorical interchangeability of the characteristics of human beings and material objects in their social context is vital to DAOPL's revealing of poverty as manufactured and contingent.

DAOPL is packed with recycled mundane objects, produced, consumed and often, tragically, in conflict with the needs of society's 'human fall-out'. The Parisian plongeur's consciousness itself contracts to semi-objecthood, in which nothing matters except routine struggling with recalcitrant things and bodily demands. Both the labour and sex of the poor are systematically objectified into commodities. The fetishism of clothing is another way of disguising basic human similarities by literal investment in material signifiers. That social stigma is in the political unconscious of both beholder and wearer was particularly apparent to the camouflaged reporter: "Everyone's demeanour seemed to have changed abruptly ... Clothes are powerful things. Dressed in a tramp's clothes it is very difficult, at any rate for the first day, not to feel you are genuinely degraded." (DAOPL, p.130) Similarly, like the 'Stehkragenprolet' in DrR, an unemployed carpenter superstitiously believes a collar and tie make him no tramp "in the sight of God", although "The mass of the rich and the poor are differentiated by their incomes and nothing else, and the average millionaire is only the average dishwasher dressed in a new suit." (DAOPL, pp.200 and 121, respectively.)

If attitudes to poverty were dependent on unconscious substitution of people and things, victims and circumstances, causes and effects, and, consequently, on making the sufferer culpable for the disease, then stigmatizing tramps was, indeed, "no fairer than it would be to
cripples and invalids." (DAOPL, pp.204-05) DAOPL's internal travelogue blended London's insights into ideology with subtly adapted Modernist techniques to explore the secret landscape of poverty and explode the myths and stereotypes obscuring its real topography, like fabulous creatures on a medieval map. Orwell's reportage extricated victims from circumstances and cultural preconceptions to represent this topography more accurately. Furthermore, his subversive interest in the politics of dominant language and history partly stems from DAOPL's recycling of items from the sub-culture of the dispossessed:

This set the tramps talking about history, and a very old man declared that the 'one bite law' was a survival from the days when the nobles hunted men instead of deer. Some of the others laughed at him, but he had the idea firm in his head. He had heard, too, of the Corn Laws, and the *jus primae noctis* (he believed it had really existed); also of the Great Rebellion, which he thought was a rebellion of the poor against the rich—perhaps he had got it mixed up with the peasant rebellions. I doubt whether the old man could read, and certainly he was not repeating newspaper articles. His scraps of history had been passed from generation to generation of tramps, perhaps for centuries in some cases. It was oral tradition lingering on, like a faint echo from the Middle Ages. (See DAOPL, pp.191-92.)

Scraps of dialect, slang, songs, graffiti and urban legends serve as *objets trouvés* in DAOPL's documentary montage. By such means the middle-class I-witness gradually develops a stance "that moves away from his initial unspoken control by means of a particular class idiom, to the point of consciously situating himself within a class structure", as Lynette Hunter puts it.¹ DAOPL was the beginning of Orwell's attempt to create a narrative persona *against* the ideological pressures of the class dialect in which Eric Blair's subjectivity had been constructed, because he realized that the tramps had the same stigmatized relationship to 'standard' English as they did to classical economics and dominant history.
Another '30s internal travelogue, which came out a year after DAOPL, was J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* (1934). Priestley (1894-1984) mapped a number of disparate Englands beyond the secret territory of the down-and-outs and tried to trace some of the ordinarily invisible political, social and economic relations between them. His "hunger for English reality" emphatically refused to be satisfied "briefly and sentimentally over a country hedge". Pastoral myths of essential 'Englishness' obscured the difference between mere appearance and historical contextualization. Hence, everywhere Priestley visited he scrutinized with his own brand of *logische Phantasie*. As he wrote of the Cotswolds, "The whole of this region, though it seems now so Arcadian, is actually a depressed industrial area", in decline since the medieval wool trade, and now playing "Ye Olde Game" instead. This tourist 'Arcadia' was invisibly preserved by "the muck and sweat of Birmingham and Manchester", via the dividends of the absentee industrialists now inhabiting it.¹⁸

Cheekily echoing Kipling - "What do they know of England who only England know?"¹⁹ - Priestley exposed the irresponsibility of stereotypes of nationhood - "The answer must be Rusty Lane, West Bromwich":

And if there is another economic conference, let it meet there, in one of the warehouses, and be fed with margarine and slabs of brawn. The delegates have seen one England, Mayfair in the season. Let them see another England next time, West Bromwich out of the season. Out of all seasons except the winter of our discontent. (EJ, p.112)

For him as for Orwell, Britain's claim to 'civilization' was belied by its apparent marginalia, like the dreary conurbation of Gateshead. Moreover, what was the use of the dominant 'England' - a synecdoche composed of "the City, Fleet Street, and the West End clubs" -
congratulating itself on pulling through yet again, "when there is no plan for Lancashire. Since when did Lancashire cease to be a part of England? Under what flag are little Joyce and Muriel and their parents in that Blackburn back-street?" (EJ, p.269) Disraeli's "two nations", Priestley discovered, inhabited at least three overlapping and interlocking Englands, medieval, nineteenth-century and post-Great War, but he particularly blamed the excesses of Victorian individualism - "the people who were choked by the reek of the sties did not get the bacon" - for this disunited kingdom (See EJ, pp.374-75).

Modern communications technology was in danger of merely producing what Priestley called "movement", not "travel", the genuine experience of cultural and political plurality (See EJ, pp.146-47). His opening trip by coach from London to Southampton shows acute awareness of both technology's ambiguous potentials in a highly regionalized economy, where prosperous new Southern industries accelerated the decline of the traditional manufacturing base:

... if we could all get a living out of them, what a pleasanter country this would be, like permanent exhibition ground, all glass and chromium plate and nice painted signs and coloured lights. I feel there's a catch in it somewhere. Perhaps I am on my way, at a good fifty miles an hour, to find that catch. (EJ, pp.10-11)

Similarly, he contrasted Southampton's modern liners with the now defunct shipyards which had produced them. As he put it, the masses "lent a hand" building capitalist Britain, but "have not been passengers in the ship":

As a real town, a piece of urban civilization, Jarrow can never have been alive. There is easily more comfort and luxury on one deck of the Mauretania than there can ever have been at anytime in Jarrow, which even at its best, when everybody was working in it, must obviously have been a mean little conglomeration of narrow monotonous streets of stunted and ugly houses, a barracks cynically put together so that shipbuilding workers could get some food and sleep between shifts. Anything - strange as it may seem - appears to have
been good enough for the men who could build ships like the
*Mauretania*. (See EJ, pp.185 and 295)

Unemployment was doubly tragic in towns like Jarrow "for these are
*working towns and nothing else". He found a tangible allegory of future
deskilling in the name of a fishing boat rigged out by ex-ship-
workers: "This Venture may be their pride but it is our shame." (See EJ,
pp.297-99)

Priestley despised the South's modern 'villa civilization'—
... it is the standard new suburban road of our time, and
there are hundreds of them everywhere, all alike. Moreover,
they only differ in a few minor details from a few thousand
such roads in the United States, where the same tooth-pastes
and soaps and gramophone records are being sold, the very same
films are being shown. (EJ, p.26)

- but not out of traditional literary contempt for the ordinary. On the
contrary, he considered himself a product "of industrial towns and free
education at council schools and cheap books and so on" (EJ, p.66).
Whence EJ's perceptive, unpatrioticizing reporting of '30s popular
culture, which anticipates the best work of M-O and PP. Priestley
recognized that cinemas and pubs were necessary "bolt-holes and safety
valves" (EJ, p.86) and visited whist drives, football and boxing
matches, amateur theatricals etc. However, he lamented the standardizing
of the popular imagination by Hollywood films and mechanical amusements
making the ordinary person less of a producer of his/her own
entertainment and more of a passive consumer. The Nottingham Goose Fair,
for example, "was now simply an assembly of devices ... contrived to
attract the largest number of pennies in the shortest possible time" and
he "could not honestly feel that I had been attending a genuine popular
festival" (EJ, pp.133 and 143) Priestley also explored Blackpool before
M-O and found it "a complete and essential product of industrial
democracy. If you do not like industrial democracy, you will not like
Blackpool." But even Blackpool was being Americanized, bringing the most unsnobbish observer up against the question of whether modern 'mass-culture' automatically meant 'vulgar and narcotic' (See EJ, pp.249-53).

Moreover, Priestley saw this 'brave new' consumer civilization suffering potentially from deadly automatization by advertising. As he commented symptomatically of a toy machine gun in a Swindon shop window: "The people who sell that toy might be encouraged to give away with it a few photographs showing what its parent toy can do to a man's guts." (EJ, p.43) Conversely, his own traumatic experiences in the Great War gave rise to the Londonesque metaphors of 'industrial warfare' which permeate his reportage. In Coventry, Priestley used the 'biography of things' to represent the shoddy society that produced them: "What is the history of this bad shaving cream, this useless razor?" Similarly, Birmingham, the representative manufacturing city, did not have "the sense to design itself as well as its own screws" (EJ, pp.77 and 85).

He defamiliarized ubiquitous commodities like chocolate, through social cross-sections of the labour required to produce them:

Men with learned degrees, men with charts, engineers from all quarters of the world, have to be called in to decide the fate of that bit of chocolaty stuff. When you buy a box of these things, you have also bought the services of a whole army of people. You have to shut your imagination off or you might go mad. Even I will never feel quite the same now about a box of chocolates. (EJ, p.93)

and unravelled the interconnections woven latently into the goods at Bradford's textile market: "Take down some of those greasy or dusty samples and you bring the ends of the earth together." (EJ, p.152) But he saw the activities of the pottery towns as the epitome of capitalism's erasure of the human history of its products: "Cups, saucers, dishes, plates, jugs, mugs, teapots, basins. For nearly forty years I have been making use of them ... I had never spent five minutes
wondering how these things were made. They might have been grown on
trees or been fished out of the sea, for all I knew or cared." (EJ,
pp.207-08) Like Kisch's 'Mißgeburten des Porzellans', Priestley saw the
industry and its blighted locality in strictly anti-pastoral
perspective: "Civilized man, except in his capacity as a working potter,
has not arrived here yet ... That anything even vaguely decorative
should come from these places seems a miracle." (EJ, pp.200-01) His
description of the Lancashire textile slump - "The whole district had
been tied to prosperity, to its very existence, with threads of cotton;
and you could hear them snapping all the time" (EJ, p.256) -
characterized the way he wove England's industries into a global
context, to undermine its insular self-image. Even East Anglian
agriculture was affected by "the strange antics of men in offices,
thousands of miles away, and the weather on the other side of the world"
(EJ, pp.359-60).

Priestley felt the basic economic irony of the '30s was that "there
never were more men doing nothing and there never was before so much to
be done" (EJ, p.86), but, like Orwell, he refused to blame victims for
their circumstances or accept market forces as Nature. In a highly
topical metaphor, he described the industrial rape of Midland
communities: "drunken storm troops have passed this way; there are signs
of atrocities everywhere" (EJ, p.110). Similarly, he denounced the Great
War's "greed and muddle and monstrous cross-purposes" and capitalism's
failure to deliver the promised post-war goods. Heroism and cooperation
might be glamorized in wartime, but this mundane crisis needed them more
urgently: "it is not war that is right ... it is the peace that is
wrong" (See EJ, pp.159-63). And he deftly pointed out how contemporary
'marketspeak's' dominant metaphors belied the system's underlying violence:

There is only one sphere of action in the more civilized countries today in which men find it necessary, when describing the ordinary operations there, to use metaphors and similes drawn from medieval brigandage or the early life of the Wild West; and that is the world of high finance ... I cannot help feeling, in my innocence, that there must be something strangely anachronistic, crude, violent, barbaric, about that world (EJ, pp.194-95).

Priestley found that the hostilities reported in *The People of the Abyss* had only been intensified after the Armistice: "Older readers of this book who do not happen to be acquainted with our distressed industrial areas will do well here if they recall the war years. In these unhappy districts there is a war on, and the allied enemies are poverty, idleness, ignorance, hopelessness and misery. East Durham, like the Tyne, is one of the liveliest fronts." (EJ, p.305) On the other hand, he satirized the 'intensive care' offered by the National Government to the casualties of the distressed areas, like a Social Centre for Lancashire's unemployed: "by the time the North of England is an industrial ruin, we shall be able to beat the world at table tennis." Enforced leisure without money made the unemployed the ironic "new playboys of the western world" (EJ, pp.266 and 289).

Priestley deduced the need for a new kind of reportage with *logische Phantasie* from the sheer ineffectiveness of conventional documentation: **"Those reports and Blue Books, which look so dull that you and I can hardly compel ourselves to read a page of them, have in them the blood and tears, the sweat and agony, of ten thousand tragic novels and dramas." (EJ, p.321) But like many British '30s writers who were not members of any internationalist organization or closely linked with avant-garde circles, he did not consider himself part of a
conscious movement with a theoretical programme. In fact Priestley seems to have been ignorant even of more mainstream documentary developments. For example, he wrote of the drama of Grimsby fishermen in apparent ignorance of Drifters (1929): "I could not help thinking it a shame that somebody does not give us a film about these men, slaving and roaring away just round the corner, as a change from anachronistic Wild West heroes or gangster gutter rats." Similarly, he was oblivious of DAOPL, wondering why "some competent authority" hadn't investigated the reasons determining the "migrations" of tramps (See EJ, pp.340 and 351).

In some respects Priestley was an old-fashioned writer and in others surprisingly modern. He was no slavish imitator and could be highly self-conscious about superseded social realism. As he wrote about a slum: "If you put it, brick by brick, into a novel, people would not accept it, would condemn you as a caricaturist and talk about Dickens." (EJ, p.111) But at the same time he still considered the Dickensian mode of satire appropriate when attacking hard-faced Poor Law attitudes left over from Oliver Twist. Blackburn's unemployed, for example, were "All living in luxury according to the Ministry of Health, but do not seem to realise this, not having scientific and official minds." (EJ, p.265) However, he was also aware of reportage's Modernist possibilities. As he wrote of the landscape between Wallsend and North Shields: "If T.S. Eliot ever wants to write a poem about a real wasteland instead of a metaphysical one, he should come up here." (EJ, p.292) And this was not common-sense literalism so much as firm belief that imagination was needed for depicting actualities. Similarly, he represented facts about the Lancashire unemployed "in the best modern staccato manner" and used the war motif to subvert uncritical faith in the media: leaving Blackburn's slums felt like being "a comfortable newspaper proprietor
who has just inspected front-line trench (in a safe sector) and is now leaving the brave boys to it, thank God!" (See EJ, pp.264-66) Above all Priestley deftly turned the metaphors of official discourses against official accounts. For example, Tyneside's dereliction had been euphemized as "the result of severe surgical operations in our post-war economy", but according to Priestley, "Neither the patient nor the operating theatre seems to have been cleaned up; and the resulting mess is not a pretty sight." (EJ, pp.293-94) Similarly, he underlined the reifying effect of 'classical' economic arguments:

... we talk across the oceans and fly over the continents; we can be warmed in winter and cooled in summer; and we should be lords of the earth - if it were not for the figures. They are our prisons and our cages, and against their angular columns and bars we press and bruise our tender flesh. This is perhaps the last and worst enchantment the world has known.

Human ends got lost in jargonized means: 'rationalization' for the people of Stockton-on-Tees actually meant, "Their labour, wages, full nutrition, self-respect, have been declared redundant." (See EJ, pp.222-25)

Priestley shared in the broad Leftist consensus that undemocratic mediation made:

Our civilization ... rather like the stock comic figure of the professor who knows all about electrons but does not know how to boil an egg or tie his bootlaces. Our knowledge begins anywhere but at home. We would understand anything so long as it did not immediately concern us. Aldebaran or Betelgeuse ... stood a better chance with us than the North of England. (EJ, p.380)

Only a more freely and accurately informed culture could reveal the true interdependency of all the Englands and liberate the distressed areas from 'occupation' by levels of misery which would not be tolerated if imposed by a foreign power. The dole was no solution but "a mere declaration of intellectual bankruptcy" (EJ, pp.384-85) and Priestley
had no faith in National Government 'patriotism' providing the solution, precisely because it too didn't begin at home. For it, the other Englands, let alone Celtic Britain, were off the map (See EJ, p.389). But he hadn't much confidence either in the transferred nationalisms of extreme Right and Left. He wanted instead a new patriotism of the dispossessed. There had to be a democratic socialist alternative between "business mysticism" and the "mystical state" (See EJ, pp.94-98). By the time Priestley was heading the 1941 Committee and making his wartime broadcasts that alternative was taking long-overdue shape. There is no doubt that texts like EJ helped it into being and made it part of Britain's war aims.

The Left-centrist populism of EJ has sometimes been criticised as ultimately restrictive in its belief that the rediscovery of some kind of authentic Englishness would provide the will to solve the crises of the '30s. As Miles and Smith argue, what so many literary and cinematic "refractions of the experience of the Depression held in common ... was the overdetermining charge of meaning that the word 'England' held for them":

Above all was the complicity between audience and author ... that 'England' stood for certain moral precepts which could not and should not be jarred by the experience of the Depression. Indeed, the Depression was contextualized and given significance in such a way as to reinforce these precepts. With different emphases, depending on the angle of approach, 'England' mobilized and articulated discourses on tradition, resilience, self-restraint and, above all, community. Though socialist, conservative and liberal might struggle for control of these precepts, and differ radically on how they should be applied to contemporary problems, nevertheless the fact that this idea of 'England' was shared and pleasurable amounted to a major hegemonic influence.

There is little doubt that the notion of some kind of essential national identity was a concept that traversed the '30s political spectrum, and belief in it may have blocked or compromised more radical possibilities
for change and tended to work as an adaptive mechanism for the hegemony (although any change can appear to do this in historical retrospect). However, it is important to recognise the vital differences as well as similarities between a text like EJ and an internal travelogue making the case for the radical Right, but claiming to give the ordinary person a voice, such as Philip Gibbs's *England Speaks* (1935). Thus, it can be seen that the notion of national identity and interests was the site of a fierce ideological battle in the '30s, the consequences of which would have a crucial influence over the character of post-war British history.

In a section called 'Mass Emotion' Gibbs gave a description of Armistice night which revealed that the political project of his text was fundamentally different from Priestley's. It was an attempt to provide documentary justification for the same myth of consensus in time of crisis, temporarily subsuming without resolving class-conflict, that M-O would attack:

There were no class-distinctions that night, no shyness nor self-repression amongst those English crowds who came into the streets cheering and shouting. It was the surging up of a mass emotion, mass joy, mass relief after long tension when a nation which had been through the greatest ordeal of its history was conscious of its own spirit and of something mystical beyond this noise-making. The soul of England speaks now and then, but not often. 88

And Gibbs linked this mass event with contemporary Britain through George V's Jubilee (See ES, p.23). 84 He believed a transcendent, common identity for all Priestley's Englands could be recovered through a very different kind of populism, centred on movements like the Right Book Club, and rooted in Disraeli's romantic Toryism. Moreover, though in many respects, Gibbs's I-witnessing of social and economic conditions used a similar diagnostic tone and method to Priestley and Orwell, we cannot ignore the distinctions between their proposed solutions. Though Gibbs wrote in the section 'Down East':

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But England ought to do something about the human nature of these young derelicts, who ... are not without quality, before they get down too far.
Or is it, as the policewoman said in St. Martin's crypt, that "England doesn't care", so long as tennis is going well at Wimbledon. (ES, p.63)

It was ultimately in advocating a radically Conservative solution, though not National Socialist as such, that he differed sharply from Priestley and Orwell. Similarly, Part III of ES, 'THE MONSTROUS CITY', criticized the alienating metropolitan ant-heap in the imagery of social disconnection common to the new reportage: "Their lives don't touch much, though they pass now and then in a crowd. What does Belgravia know of Bermondsey, or Walthamstow of Walham Green? What does Mayfair know of Shoreditch, or the East India Docks of Berkeley Square?" There were people "to whom some quarters of the town are as wildly unknown as Darkest Africa." (ES, pp.64-65) Part VI also lifted the Priestleyesque title 'THE FRONT LINE OF INDUSTRY' and there was no doubt Gibbs shared Priestley's sense of a Britain unjustly divided by economic mismanagement:

In the industrial battle the south of England is behind the line, the front line trenches are mostly up there in the north. The heaviest casualties are there, all the broken lives flung on the scrap-heap by the invisible enemies of bad trade - machine power displacing labour, and "Rationalisation", which means profit at the cost of human life. (ES, p.386)

And Gibbs wrote the 'biography of things' to achieve ironic effects similar to the Leftists': "At the Ritz and the Carlton in London pretty ladies pick at their food with forks made in Rotherham and Tinsley and Brightside." (ES, pp.388) He even visited Jarrow and recognised that its desperate condition was not just the result of tragic, but culpable negligence. However, his sympathy for working-class heroes let down after the Great War (quoting the St. Crispin's day speech from Henry V for the occasion), though sincere and charged with honest confrontation.
of certain facts rare on the '30s right, basically cast them as loyal victims let down by the inefficient and complacent leadership of the National Government, not by any logic inherent in capitalism or in the British class-structure (ES, pp.392-402).

However, perhaps the '30s most well-known internal travelogue is The Road to Wigan Pier, LBC choice for March 1937. It represented a final kind of 'going over' in both a socialist and geographical sense for Orwell, from the England of affluence to that of poverty. Even more than DAOPL, it was a hybrid of I-witnessing and documentary montage, foregrounding differences and tensions between various factual modes of representation (including photos) and questioning the objectivity of official reports which supply data for political decisions arbitrarily affecting the anonymous lives of millions: "Alf Smith is merely one of the quarter million, a statistical unit. But no human being finds it easy to regard himself as a statistical unit." Hence TRTWP mediates facts through overlapping layers of discourses: like his Wigan boarding house table social 'reality' is never "completely uncovered", but always seen through "various wrappings at different times."

Orwell deftly unpicked the deceptive consistency of official statistics. For example, the apparent comfortableness of the miner's gross average earnings unravelled into hidden variables which hardly covered a bare subsistence (See TRTWP, pp.35-36). Similarly, official unemployment figures were no accurate guide to the numbers actually living below the poverty line, because they were calculated solely on those drawing dole, excluding dependents. Consequently, Orwell suggested "an underfed population of well over ten millions", possibly twenty. (TRTWP, pp.69-70) In Wigan in 1936, "one person in three out of the whole population - not merely the registered workers - is either
drawing or living on the dole." Unemployment Benefit tables (Quoted in TRTWP, pp.70-71), therefore, barely hinted at the likely scale of nationwide misery.

Orwell used notebook extracts as indicators of a total situation: "And so on and so on and so on. I could multiply examples by the score - they could be multiplied by the hundred thousand if anyone chose to make a house to house inspection throughout the industrial districts." But the representativeness of his quantitative data was complemented by his use of defamiliarizing strategies. As Orwell put it: "What is the use of a brief phrase like "roof leaks" or "four beds for eight people"? It is the kind of thing your eye slides over, registering nothing. And yet what a wealth of misery it can cover!" The diary's "essential points" were troped "to present the fact from a striking (poignant, ironic, penetrating, significant) angle", in Jameson's phrase. Thus, overcrowding was shockingly reported through the shuffling of age and sex necessary to prevent incest in a large family with only two beds; lack of hygiene facilities, by "literally hundreds of miles" of bathroomless streets "inhabited by miners, every one of whom, when he is in work, gets black from head to foot every day". Physical environment deprived the mind too, "And it is worth considering what it is like for a child to grow up in one of the back alleys where its gaze is bounded by a row of lavatories and a wall." (See TRTWP, pp.46-54)

Consequently, the montage of "scenes that stand out vividly in my memory" (See TRTWP, pp.54-55) was Orwell's literary equivalent to Anstey and Elton's housing documentary and Brandt's photos of mass living-conditions, but subordinated to the cruel irony that in the chronic housing shortage of the '30s (as now) there weren't enough slums "to go round" (TRTWP, p.47). However, Orwell's reporting of corporation
rehousing schemes also suggests that the problem could not be solved by simply turning towns 'inside out', with bureaucratically callous disregard for the close-knit culture of working-class communities (See TRTWP, pp.63-64). Above all, what TRTWP indicated, in common with so much of British new reportage, was the impossibility of making really democratic policies from undemocratically constituted data. Similarly, M-O lamented the lack of genuine consultation in 'Castles in the Air':

... to-day the leaders, politicians, are taking an increasing part in determining how people shall live. Most obviously, they are breaking up the pattern of living in streets, each home on its own plot of earth, and rearranging people, not side by side but one on top of each other. Basic in this and the elaborate legislation that enforces it, is the assumption that the ordinary people want better homes than the ones they live in. There is no objective data or analytical material either to prove or disprove this, which is therefore simply a hypothesis on the part of the leaders, a characteristic attitude towards the working class, and a mix up of what ordinary people are supposed to want to have and what the leaders of public opinion think they ought to have.*

Social engineers easily confused human beings with the statistics representing them, flattering delusions of historical expediency. It wasn't just under totalitarianism that crimes and blunders were committed for the greater economic good, as typified by what Orwell called the "disgusting public wrangle" in the PAC about the minimum weekly sum on which a human being could keep alive" (See TRTWP, pp.96-87).

Traumas repressed in the mundane culture and environment are recalled as historical watersheds in TRTWP. What is 'natural' to those with no alternative information is generally what they are used to: "Some people hardly seem to realise that such things as decent houses exist and look on bugs and leaking roofs as acts of God ..." (TRTWP, p.47) Thus, processed food is presented as a symptom of the way culture counterfeits nature as well as the corruption of posterity that
historical suppression entails: "A man dies and is buried, and all his words and actions are forgotten, but the food he eats lives after him in the sound or rotten bones of his children. I think it could be plausibly argued that changes of diet are more important than changes of dynasty or even of religion." (TRTWP, p.84) Moreover, at the PAC subsistence level food quality was particularly vital, but the marketing of cheap palliatives together with organized ignorance of nutrition was a war of attrition against the bodies of the poor - "We may find in the long run that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine gun." (TRTWP, p.91) - another aspect of London's economic killing machine.

Orwell's perspective on the working-class was largely limited to reporting the effects which the Depression was having on their living and working conditions, in order to publicize them to the sympathetic middle-class intelligentsia - the major target audience for the LBC's Popular Frontism. It was for this reason that TRTWP provoked a response from the proletarian writer Jack Hilton published as *English Ways* (1940). It is not difficult to see that if TRTWP has faults, they mainly derive from the well-intentioned but sometimes inadvertently patronizing 'us' looking at 'them' syndrome, which is widespread in '30s reportage. As Miles and Smith note,

It is, for example, the selection and positioning of his audience in relation to the England of the Depressed Areas that makes Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* such an important book in demonstrating both the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary literary radicalism. In many ways it is a highly embarrassing book, and it is surely meant to be so. Orwell exposed his own prejudices and assumed that his reader would see in them a reflection of his or her own secret views. Orwell constructs his reader as a southern middle-class liberal.**

Hence Orwell's description of the miner's journey to the coal face "is couched in terms that only the London commuter will fully understand".
as they put it: "you hardly feel yourself deeper down than you would at
the bottom of the bottom of Piccadilly Tube ... I had not realised that
before he even gets to his work he may have to creep through passages as
long as from London Bridge to Oxford Circus." (TRTWP, p.22)

Hilton, whose *Caliban Shrieks*, as we have seen, was praised by
Orwell as authentic and effective working-class I-witnessing, intended
*English Ways* to be a more genuinely representative cross-section of
working-class experience from North to South as seen from the inside
perspective of a Rochdale plasterer. As an internal travelogue it was
intended in some ways as a counter to those by middle-class outsiders
like Priestley and Orwell in particular. Hilton had been a Rochdale NUWM
organizer, until his part in the occupation of the town hall led to
imprisonment in Strangeways in 1932. He began writing when bound over
not to speak in public for three years as a result, subsequently
spending two years at Ruskin College and lecturing at the Adelphi Summer
Schools. In May 1939, Hilton and his wife Mary set off on their English
journey with what they could carry in a large pram. They walked from
Rochdale to Epsom, intending to reverse both the geographical direction
and effect of TRTWP, documenting the social, economic and cultural
differences they found *en route*. Their six month tour took them to
Sheffield, Leicester, the Potteries and Birmingham; to Epsom and
Buckingham in the home counties; to Stroud, Bristol and Devon in the
West. If they did not see England as literal mendicants, they did see
it only on what the modest advance from Jonathan Cape would stretch to.
As Hilton recalled in his unpublished autobiography, written in the
fifties, "I was no J.B. Priestley cum J.B. Morton with middle class
wealth to make it all so splendidly RAC."

As Croft argues, "It was the varieties of working-class life, its
regional, sectional, political, religious, sexual and cultural divisions, contradictions and conflicts that engaged Hilton's interest."

For Hilton, the "poverty, unemployment and political struggle" on which TRTWP had, of necessity, concentrated "were only a part of working-class experience."

Consequently, he considered that "Authenticity, in the sense of Wiganers and Wigan, was travestied" by Orwell. "Giving a picture grotesque: false to the general whole ... The Wigan of forty nights sleep above a tripe shop. Shades of Germinal." But it was a travesty Hilton felt partly responsible for, claiming later in his unpublished autobiography that he had suggested Orwell's subject in the first place. Instead of reporting the Rochdale cotton industry as Orwell planned, Hilton advised participant observation of Wigan colliers.

It was the confessional second half of TRTWP where Orwell came clean about the tenacity of his own worst class-prejudices that Hilton found particularly offensive. In *English Ways*, he dropped broad hints about "a best-seller by a middle-class socialist" who "was at pains to stress the acuteness of his sense of smell", and hit back:

"Working men stank. Sure they do. To see these moulders, labourers and furnace men battling with mind, muscle, and natural aptitude to win good castings and draw wages, is to understand why they smell. They smell because they sweat. They sweat because they labour ... A dose of the grim task of capturing life's loaf by working at any one of the laborious trades would make sensitive nostrils less fastidious."

The England of EW was not an England of 'eternal', pastoral values (in either open or displaced forms), but the England of a specific historical moment, seen through a particular pair of eyes. As Middleton Murray's hyping introduction put it:

But what a fine and sensitive observer he is! I know of no book which gives a truer picture of what this England of ours really is, to-day. Quite a few, alas! will be more popular - because people like to be told what they want to believe is
true. The England of *The Good Companions* will not be discovered in Jack Hilton's pages. Neither will the England on the brink of revolution in which the Communist tries to believe ... *English Ways* is likely to become a very precious document of the England that was between the Munich 'settlement' and Hitler's War. (EW, Intro, pp.15-16)

What distinguishes Hilton's fiction from many contemporary proletarian writers is also present in EW - serious consideration and long, detailed accounts "of working-class leisure, working-class cultural life." Hilton never joined the Communist Party precisely because he saw political activity as a fraction of his existence. And he attacked the construction of the working-class by sympathetic middle-class reporters with some justice:

The progressive intelligentsia sentimentalise over the proletarian ox, admire its rough masculinity, look with awe on the industrial teamster. I wonder if we low-brows can ever rid ourselves of either deprecating intellectuals or genuflecting before them ... The kindergarten intellectual brand of communism is only a temporary English fashion. The intellectuals are 'with' the workers but not 'of' the workers. I can talk about work, women, cards, horse-racing and beer to a working man and know that such interesting things are all 'phony dope'; but nevertheless I feel that the lumpen man is my brother, that we do at least belong to the healthy species ... Whenever I'm with the intellectuals I always feel they do not belong to my world; that with all their theories and mentalised life they have had very little experience of living, and that they've been too sheltered, and too looked up to. (EW, pp.328-29)

Hilton did not deny that private life and modes of leisure had ideological implications, but was right to attack the highmindedness with which 'mass culture' was so often condemned as dope, without full appreciation of the needs it palliated: "When persons are made puppets, they can only have puppet tastes." (EW, p.85) However, if Orwell's confessionalism was snobbish, Hilton's militant proletarianism came close to snobbery of the inverted kind. In this sense, the quarrel with TRTWP was symptomatic of the corrosive persistence of class-differences even amongst writers and texts with the stated common aim of
transgressing and/or abolishing them.

However, there is much that is valuable in the particular inside perspective of EW. For example, far from pastoralizing rural England Hilton recognized as many signs of poverty on the land as in the '30s worktowns:

The lot of the farm-hand has never been good, and now it seems their labour is tendered with a broken-spiritedness ... The farm-hand has been underfed, overworked, badlv housed and made stupid from being ordered about during the whole modern period in which England has been only slightly interested in agriculture ... The romantic idea that the visitor carries away with him of farmhands living in quaint, flint and thatched cottages which surround a grey church, and rustica ting to the tune of fiddles on the village green is sentimental ... Life for the Buckinghamshire landworker is land drudgery of the kind that keeps him poor, and tired. I might delight in the village green, and notice the sunbeams chasing the shadows, but he has got his back bent to his labours." (EW, pp.111-12)

Similarly Hilton was acute about the social effects of the growth of light industries in new towns like Slough, where the traditional cloth-cap image of the proletariat no longer fitted the prosperous upper-working-class consumers of the modern housing estates. Ironically, class traits could be eroded in ways that retarded rather than advanced the Socialist cause:

The population will probably receive wages that are twice as high as those of the rural workers for manufacturing most of the things that are so non-essential yet so well advertised nationally. It's the razor blade, gramophone, patent medicine, lipstick and perfumery town of England. It has trebled its population in twenty-five years. It reflects the new trend of national sophistication, business economy and fundamental dissolution. (EW, p.112)

Above all, Hilton recognized that the standardization of popular culture was as much of a political issue as the Taylorization of work. Commercialized entertainment impoverished working-class leisure as much as modern machinery took away the Ruskinian satisfaction of the artisan.
Orwell reviewed Hilton's EW enthusiastically and there was evidently no bitterness between them since they were eventually able to meet and strike up a friendship after the War. Moreover, Hilton in no way disagreed with the fundamental conclusion of Orwell's internal travelogue that the myth of capitalist progress was an alibi for changes in production "to meet the demands of underpaid, underfed people", who, paradoxically, lived in a world where information was coordinated globally, minute-by-minute by media technology (See TRTWP, p.82). For Orwell, ersatz history and ersatz food were both commodities produced by the system for mass consumption: "I think in the dirtiest interiors I see, more than any of the various kinds of squalor ... the things that oppress me most are the scraps of newspaper that are scattered all over the floor." (CEJL I, p.243) As Lord Northcliffe is reputed to have said "Real news is what someone somewhere wants to see suppressed. Everything else is just advertising." Nineteen Eighty-Four's term "prolefeed" would later expand TRTWP's critical understanding of mass informational malnourishment. Consequently, it was not such a big step from Orwell's '30s reporting of capitalist advertising to his post-war satire of totalitarian integration propaganda, because he represented both as serving similarly repressive ends.

In TRTWP, Orwell concluded that undemocratic media yoked the British people to the inverted priorities of a military-industrial complex, disguising economic alienation through alienated images of nationhood. Moreover, in TRTWP, he was not indulging in the kind of crystal ball-gazing Rupert Murdoch's Sun has advised us all to forget about now 1984 is over. Recent internal travelogues by writers like Beatrix Campbell, Beryl Bainbridge, John Pilger, Robert Chesshyre, and Jonathan
Raban, as well as I-witnessing by actual down-and-outs like John Hely," report that in the age of satellite t.v. and video, Britain is still disunited by old and new divisions of class, race, health, education and diet and the power to constitute hyperreality is concentrated in fewer hands than ever.

ii: The Marriage of Wigan and Kensington

The enormous range of '30s coal-mining literature, to which TRTWP belongs, might be said to begin with F.C. Boden's heavily autobiographical Miner (1932), which although a novel seems intended at least in part to I-witness conditions in the industry and its communities and to challenge prejudices about them. As the hero Danny thinks about the misinformed middle-class, who nonetheless have the power to change things:

... see if they wouldn’t choose the dole in preference to working on their bellies in a two-foot hole as hot as an oven, or else splashing about all day ankle-deep in water, with the damned stuff dripping from the roof on their heads and backs and down their sides. Possibly they would change their minds after a shift or two like that. But let any such person tell one of the hard-eyed, sturdy coal-hewers whose pit had closed down that he, the coal-hewer preferred the dole to his work ...

Similarly, despite feminist texts like Life As We Have Known It, '30s reportage concentrated on representing mining as the archetypal exploited proletariat occupation. Hence its vital role in the 'hearts and mines' campaign for improving conditions in the industry and the
communities dependent on it. There may have been other historical and cultural reasons for the prominence of mining literature, as Beatrix Campbell suggests in *Wigan Pier Revisited* (1984), particularly the glamour of "masculinity, muscle and machinery" mining held for some male Leftists. In addition, the legendary Stakhanov was a Soviet miner and there was already a long tradition of socialist mining literature stretching back beyond Zola's *Germinal* (1885). The British General Strike of 1926 was initiated to support the reorganization of coal-mining and was succeeded by the miners' long and bitter struggle alone. Mining was not the largest user of manual labour, but among the heavy industries it was probably the one in which conditions were still most Victorian, and mining communities in designated 'Special Areas' like South Wales suffered some of the worst privations of the Depression.

An important mining text was Montagu Slater's reportage-novelette *Stay Down Miner* and play of the same, *A New Way to Win* (both of 1936), which publicized communal resistance in South Wales. *Stay Down Miner* was first in a reportage series issued by Martin Lawrence and a 'qualitative' companion volume to *The Miner's Two Bob* edited by W.H. Williams for the Labour Research Department (1936), which documented conditions and demands quantitatively in the industry as a whole. Slater reported the underground occupation by ninety men at the Nine Mile Point Colliery in Cwmfelinfach, which was inspired by actions at Pecs in Hungary. *Stay Down Miner* wasn't straightforward I-witnessing, firstly, because Slater arrived on the scene after the seven-and-a-half day occupation had just ended and, secondly, because, although based on the testimony of participants and montaging documentary sources such as newspaper accounts, it was partly fictionalized. Slater also altered certain details for practical reasons, for example, individuals had to
be given aliases for fear of reprisals.

The Taff-Merthyr employers' action, in conjunction with William Gregory's 'non-political' Industrial Union (founded by the mine-owners during the General Strike), to undermine Miners' Federation rates by strong-arm tactics and blacklegging, was believed by the miners to have national implications and international parallels. "Abyssinia ... has come to South Wales", Slater quoted one saying, and the coal-owners' paper The Western Mail called Nine Mile Point "the cockpit of South Wales". The occupation quickly spread to six other collieries and the wave of national publicity and sympathy it produced secured a temporary victory for the Federation. However, Alec Brown criticized Slater's form in Left Review. Brown denounced reportage as a continental import amounting to cheap dramatic reconstruction, just a way of doing "what a measles of headlines tries to do in English journalism - 'brighten up' the news." He called it "a nasty hybrid between fiction and reporting", and felt that its collision montage, a "nervy, darting-about" method, obscured the "essentials", set out in the conventional documentary structure of The Miner's Two Bob. The TLS echoed this last point - "The one thing which cannot be obtained from the book is a connected account with dates" - but nonetheless praised it for revealing the human history latent in the commodity: "In dealing with this industry there is a tendency not to see the miners for the coal. Those who are afflicted with it should read Stay Down Miner."

The LBC choice for June 1939, B.L. Coombes's These Poor Hands: The Autobiography of a Miner Working in South Wales (1939) was I-witnessing from the miner behind the coal which tackled all kinds of myths about the industry. Despite the mining community's closeness in the face of daily privation and danger, Coombes did not portray it as either...
parochial or pastoral, but as a cosmopolitan mixture of cultures and races from North and South Wales, Yorkshire, Durham, the Forest of Dean, Australia, France and the West Indies, with an awareness of the wider world and the political nature of the "mixture of languages" called standard English, used as the lingua franca at union meetings. Coombes grew up on a Herefordshire smallholding, but moved to Treclewyd before the Great War, becoming a machine coal-cutter and ambulance man. He described mining's routine dangers (the first accident he saw severed a foot; the second, a man's body) and the valuing of pit ponies at twice the cost of a human life. Victims were treated by the insurance company "as if they crippled themselves deliberately". Victorian conditions, uncomfortably close in memory, were even closer in space: a rediscovered working unearthed skeletons of six- or seven-year-olds. After a three month strike over the statutory right to independent check-weighing, Coombes's father-in-law was blacklisted for five years.

Coombes described conditions that even seasoned colliers never adapt to: "You push out your hand to feel it, and your hand goes through solid blackness. There is no gleam of light or even relief of shadow. The darkness weighs on a man; it is as much of a torture to the eyes as a blinding light." The introduction of electric cutting machinery did not so much relieve manual drudgery, as speed it up and open a whole new field of potential injuries. Of the most difficult seam Coombes worked he wrote, recalling the self-inflicted wounds of the Great War: "There were days when I hoped that an accident would happen to me so that I would be crippled enough not to have to work here again." Even unemployment was preferable.

He recalled the bitter disappointment at Governmental failure to
implement national standards in the industry as recommended by Justice Sankey's Royal Commission of 1919 which led to the General Strike. This, coupled with continuous press misrepresentation of miners as sub-humans earning astronomical wages, made him realise factual surveys could never replace empirical experience:

The place to learn the truth about the mining industry is where the sick and crippled miners struggle along the rough roadways in the hope of finding a little coal to warm their bodies, and where the haggard mothers watch their children go to school and hope they will grow up quick, but not get hungry; or that they will not play too much, because they cannot say from where the next pair of 'daps' is coming.

Distinctly restrained in tone, These Poor Hands is not a piece of Socialist Realist agitprop like Lewis Jones's Cwmardy novels. Party politics rarely feature directly, but Coombes' conclusions about the system are all the more convincing for being worked out from long, painful experience:

If a man is sensitive and thinks about these things, he must surely get to hate the injustice of it all. I feel I hate the continual slavery of dust; the poor clothes and the bare living; the need for decent men to beg their bread; the huge van that comes round every Friday and disgorges four beefy ex-policemen, who rush into a house and come out with the furniture of some miner, whilst he stands white-faced on the side, with his children crying and asking what is the matter; the eviction from his home of some miner who has opened his mouth too wide or refused to be robbed of his wages when they were due.

Nothing indicates how symmetrical the strategies of the Left and Right could be in the argument over the future of the coal-industry better than a comparison between These Poor Hands and G.A.W. Tomlinson's autobiography Coal Miner (1937), published for the Right Book Club with a polemical Foreword by Arthur Bryant. Tomlinson, from Ollerton in Nottinghamshire, attacked the Federation and supported the Spencerite 'non-political' trade union. But the particular impact of Coombes's account exemplifies the eventual success of the '30s Left in this area,
even though that outcome was delayed until 1948. As John Lehmann has pointed out, Coombes's writings "may have had much to do with the great stirring of national conscience which eventually made the nationalization of mines a priority no party could resist." It is no coincidence that Coombes's article 'This is the Problem' was the lead photo-story in the same (4 Jan. 1941) number of PP which carried its 'Plan for Britain'.

Another proletarian I-witnessing of South Wales, this time by participant observation, was the novelist James Hanley's Grey Children (1937) which deployed the metaphors of scientific investigation which were by then endemic to '30s reportage:

Some enterprising anthropologist, perhaps a little tired of those continuous travels to survey the African native and his village, might well travel down to a mining district, any mining district will do. Providing he has the impartial eye, and the steady one, there is no reason why he should not surprise us all by something quite original ... I believe something like this is already being done by certain American writers.

But worklessness also had a negatively defamiliarizing effect for the unemployed man himself:

If he is working he has not so much time to notice things, but now, with time on his hands, he can look round him with a more discerning eye. He can, in fact, look at his own house, and in his miserable state contemplate, with that added sensibility which comes to him through being an idle, and therefore a useless, man, the small kitchen and the leaking roof, the lavatory for eight families and the lack of privacy of any kind.

Hanley's first chapter was a montage of 'Many Voices' gradually contextualized and amplified in the reportage itself. His host, John Jones, complained about the plethora of reporters and researchers coming "down here from London and Oxford and Cambridge", and Jones's neighbour complained of feeling dehumanized by some documentary discourses: "That's all the people are: figures, human ciphers filling up space on
paper. Nobody thinks about their individual lives, the hopes gone west, the promises not fulfilled, the misery, the complete bewilderment of these people." (Grey Children, pp.22 and 39-40) And Hanley agreed that the 'object' of reportage could be all too easily patronized:

Proletarianitis began at Bloomsbury, it is all the fashion. Though the Government have been content to look on his living entity as something embodying only a number or cipher on their sheets of paper in the wordy forest of parliament and office, the forces out for his adherence look at him as a subject for the dissecting table, a kind of human globule floating about under their eyes. And what is worse, he has no individuality, and therefore, in their eyes, no character. (Grey Children, p.80)

Conversely, Hanley reported the interchangeable status of Britain's human and material fall-out as effectively as Kisch or Orwell, as in his description of coal-picking:

Some of them were looking up at the wagons skirting the slag-heap now, others went along with their heads bent, as though the going were hard. I don't think I have seen anything so miserable and pathetic as this procession to the slag-heap. Surrounded by debris, they were themselves the mirror of a greater one, this tattered human ribbon, threading its way through all the industrial litter flanking it. The men carried sacks on their shoulders, boys dragged dilapidated bassinets and prams, the women trailed baskets and bags and old sacks. (Grey Children, p.25)

Mr Jones also pointed out the economic absurdity of miners stealing dust when "underneath our feet there's coal enough for the next thousand years." Capitalism had made South Wales a "veritable map" of misery, but ironically also made misery itself a "marketable commodity, and let it raise its face anywhere and immediately there is something approaching a gold-rush in order to exploit it." (Grey Children, pp.48 and 77) For Hanley like Priestley, the Social Centres were the embodiment of National Government humbug about the distressed areas:

It was the atmosphere of this centre more than anything else that affected me. It had the sort of air about it that one associates with the workhouse waiting-rooms and draughty corridors, and the place simply stank its pathetic charity from top to bottom. If there had been a single picture to give
the place a little colour and brightness it would have been a little better, but apparently the technique of charity demands this sort of atmosphere; it seems to be a cast iron rule that all such places should carry with them a cold, bleak and quite unfeeling air. In other words, the destitute man is continually reminded of his destitution. (Grey Children, p.92)

Hanley echoed London's Golden Rule ironically: "one finds oneself pondering upon the curious psychology that assumes that because workers are idle and in want and live in squalid surroundings, the very machinery created to help them should be squalid and mean and have that vile air of, 'Well, you're a worker, and you're down, and this is good enough for you.'" (Grey Children, pp.92-93) However, Hanley also mistrusted Communist romanticism and the displacement of local problems by overseas crises:

Democracy is fighting for its life on Spanish soil, but it is to be wondered if he [the Communist] ... is so squint-eyed that he cannot see that the struggle about which he raves and rants is a living issue on his own doorstep and whilst he fights for it in Spain, what will be happening in England? At any moment he might find that an arbitrary power has at long last realized its purpose and made all their labour and unemployed men's camps compulsory.

He had no patience with Fascist dogma either and feared the proletarian would be squeezed between "the swelling arrogance of the Fascist" and Stalinism's "humourless sanctity" (Grey Children, pp.167-68). But he agreed with the Brechtian conclusion of a young teacher that "Erst kommt das fressen, dann kommt die Moral" ('Eating comes first, morals come after'), in point of time, if not in the scale of values. The teacher tried to help her pupils "live first as human beings ... hoping for the best from them later as citizens." (Grey Children, p.181)

Hanley felt the key to understanding the effect of unemployment was the "psychology of the little thing", which meant that everyday struggles left the working class little room for connecting them with
collective issues: "The problem of the lost markets for coal is a big problem, but not as big as Mrs. Johns' problem of not having sixpence to give her son to go to the pictures. Sheer necessity flings them on the rack of daily torment, all the little urgencies of every day assume monstrous proportions." But on the other hand, he endorsed a young unemployed LBC member's argument about the necessity for information about the collective forces determining mundane conditions (*Grey Children*, pp.70 and 64, respectively).

Similarly, Mr Jones was well aware of the media's role in preventing a truer picture of the distressed areas getting through to the public: "You know, folks who read the newspapers think that all that's wrong with us is that we've got no work", but it was the overall physical and psychological package of debts, poor housing and sanitation, undernourishment, lack of facilities, bullying rules and regulations that mattered. Hanley's reporting style, like much '30s proletarian writing, was old-fashioned in some ways, but shared the Modernist concern with the politics of representation in others. He had no illusions about the undemocratic denial of the right to media reproduction: "The mere fact that an ordinary man like Tom Jones or Sam Richards raises his hand to a six-foot, well-fed policeman is enough to make him history in a newspaper for at least one day, but his reasons for doing so are not touched upon at all. This places the ordinary man at a tremendous disadvantage ..." (*Grey Children*, pp.60 and 78) And when the media weren't misreporting unemployed miners, they were consoling them, as Hanley's description of Saturday night at the movies confirms: "it was exciting, full of colour; it transported one from a kind of grey monotony to a fantastic world of make-believe, brazen and alluring, false and glittering, the whole pattern of life poles apart from that
lived by the now silent onlookers of the film." But discontents couldn't always be so easily sublimated as the mining audience's response to a 'short' on royalty showed: "I assumed that the manager was a person of courage, for the film brought forth a series of cat-calls and boos, the like of which I have never heard." (Grey Children, pp.73-74) However, Hanley's most pathetic example of media-dependence was a paraplegic ex-collier. After, eleven, bed-ridden years of radio-listening, he was altogether lost in hyperreality: "He said he always enjoyed the talks on it, and he was generous in his praise of those who spoke through its medium. 'You know, you get the feeling that they are really talking to you, and for you, and, after all, it's fine to feel that, isn't it?'' (See Grey Children, p.226)

Priestley also joined the battle for 'hearts and mines', using coal and its communities to typify underrepresented England. On the Durham leg of EJ, he wrote that "Most English people know as little about coal-mining as they do about diamond-mining. Probably less, because they may have been sufficiently interested to learn a little about so romantic a trade as diamond-mining." Miners were news only in disasters: routinely, they ceased to exist. "The railway and motor-coach companies do not run popular excursions to mining districts. Pitmen are not familiar figures in the streets of our large cities. The mining communities are remote, hidden away, mysterious." (EJ, p.302) He even suggested that "If there had been several working collieries in London itself, modern English history would have been quite different" because the General Strike would never have occurred (EJ, p.303). He gave short shrift to the canard about the luxury and laziness of the miner's life, and called the bluff of arguments about the 'economic necessity' of keeping the
industry unreformed by fantasizing a labour conscription scheme to bring disparate Englands into contact: 64

'... All men in the Mayfair, Belgravia, Bayswater and Kensington areas who have received Form 5b»3D will report themselves at King's Cross and St Pancras Stations on Thursday next, for colliery duty.' What a glorious shindy there would be then! And if you could buy yourself a professional, how the wages in East Durham would rise! (EJ, pp.310-1.)

Similarly, reporting Shotton tip he brought together "things (men, assets) widely separated in space or in the social complex" by translating the status-objects of absentee industrialists and dividend-drawers back into the exploited labour which paid for them, reversing the ideological magic of the capitalist cornucopia which appears to conjure commodities out of thin air:

I stared at the monster, my head tilted back, and thought of all the fine things that had been conjured out of it in its time, the country houses and town houses, the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms, the carriages and pairs, the trips to Paris, the silks and the jewels, the peaches and iced puddings, the cigars and old brandies; I thought I saw them all tumbling and streaming out, hurrying away from Shotton ... (EJ, p.317)

Orwell, who was no fan of Priestley's Northern man-of-the-people approach, nevertheless took some cues from EJ's view of mining and attempts to marry Wigan and Kensington. As we have seen, the first half of TRTWP provided Jameson with a model for her theory of a literary equivalent to montage. Orwell had probably been influenced himself by the small avalanche of film documentaries on coal appearing around the time TRTWP was written. Most of them fitted the Griersonian pattern of official/commercial sponsorship which tended to play down or beg questions about safety and conditions in the industry. For instance, the GPO's Coalface, (1935) subjected mining to the same 'magical' treatment as Night Mail did postal work, with material shot by Jennings and Basil Wright and including a score by Brittain, and verses by Auden and
Montagu Slater. Other films were showcases for bodies like the Coal Utilisation Council and the Safety in Mines Research Board. Exceptional in its radicalism was *Today We Live* (1937) (Lewis Jones possibly saluted it in the title of his second *Cwmardy* novel) on the work of the National Council of Social Services, which confronted the devastating impact of unemployment in the South Wales coalfields and even contained an interview with an unemployed miner demanding work rather than the palliatives the Council was empowered to offer. Ralph Bond directed and scripted the section set in the Rhondda Valley in co-operation with the miners themselves and Donald Alexander's footage of unemployed men gleaning slag-heaps resembles TRTWP's reporting and photographs of 'coal-scrambling'.

DAOPL exposed capitalism's fetishistic confusion of people with the value of things, which callously writes off society's 'human fall-out'. It also showed how the economic structure was intimately linked to the sub-world of the *Lumpenproletariat*. Similarly, TRTWP uses montage to bridge physical and conceptual distances between the use value of coal-mining and other activities. Moreover, the 'biography of things' is also central to Orwell's cross-sectioning of the socio-economic structure. The 'thing' is coal and, as Klaus and Enkemann put it, unlike many documentary film-makers Orwell refused "to consider the labour process in isolation as 'intrinsically interesting'". Instead, like Kisch did with many other industrial products, he pursued it "right up to its end product, coal fuel ... to reveal the character and form of a commodity."

Jameson proposed literary montage as an imaginative method for showing causal connections between facts which, in our limited, everyday experience of social reality we would not relate. As we have
seen, 'lived metonymies', like 'lived metaphors', play a part in structuring our consciousness of reality, and function by 'highlighting and hiding'. The Leitmotif of TRTWP makes a radical point about how the economic basis of a complex society becomes culturally mystified (hidden) because of the distance between production and consumption:

Our civilisation, pace Chesterton, is founded on coal, more completely than one realises until one stops to think about it. The machines that keep us alive, and the machines that make the machines, are all directly or indirectly dependent upon coal. In the metabolism of the Western world the coal-miner is second in importance only to the man who ploughs the soil. He is a sort of grimy caryatid upon whose shoulders nearly everything that is not grimy is supported. (TRTWP, p.18)

Orwell's "grimy caryatid" plays on the connotations of "founded" and the miners' appearance (later they are monumental "hammered iron statues - under the smooth coat of coal dust" (TRTWP, p.20)). It is a symbol whose imaginative rationality is well justified by its context. Significantly, a synecdoche later suggests miners support the social cross-section of the world above, just as pit-props hold up geological strata: "hundreds of yards of solid rock, bones of extinct beasts, subsoil, flints, roots of growing things, green grass and cows grazing on it - all this is suspended over your head and held back only by wooden props as thick as the calf of your leg." [italics mine] (TRTWP, p.21) Moreover, as Marina Warner shows, architectural allegory has always had ideological implications. The Greeks named pillars carved in female form after the enslaved women of Caryae, but, in so doing, also monumentalized their civilization's dependence on the labour of 'inferiors'. I discuss Orwell's masculinization of this allegory later, but his basic reason for adapting it was to challenge the hierarchy by focusing on the vital importance of society's economic supports.

TRTWP bridges alienating dissociations between different sections of
society on the basis of real economic relationships (use value) and not their mystified image (exchange value):

Watching coal-miners at work, you realise momentarily what different universes people inhabit. Down there where coal is dug it is a sort of world apart which one can quite easily go through life without ever hearing about. Probably a majority of people would even prefer not to hear about it. Yet it is the absolutely necessary counterpart to the world above. (TRTWP, p.29)

Orwell revealed definite (if ordinarily invisible) links to social strata out of direct contact with physical modes of production, by montaging remote images:

Practically everything we do, from eating an ice to crossing the Atlantic, and from baking a loaf to writing a novel, involves the use of coal, directly or indirectly. For all the arts of peace coal is needed: if war breaks out it is needed all the more. In time of revolution the miner must go on working or the revolution must stop, for revolution as much as reaction needs coal. Whatever may be happening on the surface, the hacking and the shovelling have got to continue ... In order that Hitler may march the goose-step, that the Pope may denounce Bolshevism, that the cricket crowds may assemble at Lords, that the Nancy poets may scratch one another's backs, coal has got to be forthcoming. (TRTWP, p.29)

The miner's basic use-value is shown by Orwell's cross-sectioning of immensely divergent, even contradictory, superstructural activities supported by his work. Moreover, it is easy to envisage such images grouped around the enlarged figure of a "grimy caryatid" in the form of film- or photomontage. Orwell's reportage technique illustrates perfectly what Eisenstein meant about editing and reception as complementary processes of construction:

... each montage piece exists no longer as something unrelated, but as a given particular representation of the general theme that in equal measure penetrates all the shot pieces. The juxtaposition of these partial details in a given montage construction calls to life and forces into the light that general quality in which each detail has participated and which binds together all the details into a whole, namely, into that generalized image, wherein the creator, followed by the spectator, experiences the theme.**
TRTWP's 'generalized image' is a dialectical marriage between industrial underworld and privileged sphere above, between Wigan and Kensington, as it were. Coal, like so many other commodities, seems an inert, historyless fossil: "black stuff that arrives mysteriously from nowhere in particular, like manna except you have to pay for it." (TRTWP, p.30) Capitalism depends on erasing all traces of alienated labour from the products we consume:

It is so with all types of manual work; it keeps us alive and we are oblivious of its existence. More than anyone else, perhaps, the miner can stand as the type of the manual worker, not only because his work is so exaggeratedly awful, but also because it is so vitally necessary and yet so remote from our experience, as it were that we are capable of forgetting it as we forget the blood in our veins. (TRTWP, p.30)

Orwell's reportage defamiliarizes part of the economic system by showing it to be as automatized as our bodily functions and but also just as vital. This was implicit in the use of "metabolism" in the quotation above (TRTWP, p.18) which anthropomorphized the collective to suggest an intimate connection between privileged consciousness and 'low' physical labour. However, Frank Kermode has compared Orwell's encounter with the miners with Lewis Jones's depiction of an underground encounter with the coalowner's son in his novel We Live, to show that even at its most positive, the reportage of bourgeois observers like Orwell still entails an ambiguous rhetorical inversion, rather than a complete abolition, of class conditioning. For Jones's fictional miners the Oxbridge undergraduate's "'magnificent body' stands for what they cannot have; he is taller, healthier than men who are enfeebled by their abnormal labour and the coaldust they continually breathe ... It is Orwell who sees the miners as images of power and beauty ... His way of knowing the world of the miners derives from the other world; and this despite his extraordinary efforts to familiarize himself with theirs."**
However, most of Britain's '30s proletariat were under-represented not because they were underground, but because they were in a far-away Empire. TRTW aimed to further the LBC's objective of a Popular Front between all classes against Fascism. However, Orwell, having seen colonial repression at close quarters (and not working for the EMB) stressed that his political route to Wigan Pier began in Mandalay and that Imperial products had concealed histories of racial oppression too. Similarly, he later attacked the doublethink of lumping British and French colonies "in essence nothing but mechanisms for exploiting cheap coloured labour - under the heading of democracies". Fascism could not be fought by bolstering "a far greater injustice": "It is not in Hitler's power, for instance, to make a penny an hour a normal industrial wage; it is perfectly normal in India ..." (CEJL I, pp.436-37) The imperial dividend-drawer's contact with the exploited was even more indirect contact than with home industries and, all the more conveniently, allowed him/her to feel morally uncontaminated. Consequently, in 'The Lion and the Unicorn' (1941), Orwell extended TRTW's technique to telescope geographic and economic extremities: "Once check that stream of dividends that flows from the bodies of Indian coolies to the banking accounts of old ladies in Cheltenham, and the whole sahib-native nexus ... can come to an end." (CEJL II, p.123)

Orwell's motives for transforming the ancient caryatid allegory into a modern masculine one, however, raise questions about his reporting of basic socio-economic reality. The cult of the miner as the archetypal proletarian may help explain the marginalization of 'women's work' in TRTW and to a certain extent in '30s reportage as a whole. The textile industry, as Campbell points out, employed as many Wiganites as mining in the '30s, so if we accept Hilton's account of Orwell's orginal
plans, women might indeed have featured more prominently in TRTWP. However, they had in fact also worked in mining as 'pit brow lassies' well into this century (the economic and cultural factors that finally excluded them altogether are examined in Angela Johnson's *By the Sweat of their Brow* (1979)). Similarly, Priestley discussed women's 'hidden' presence in industries like textiles. But he too was swayed by the glamour of "men, muscle and machinery" when reporting Tyneside shipyards: "Labour of this kind, bending iron and riveting steel to steel, is the real thing, man's work." (See EJ, pp. 185-87 and p. 293) It is unfair to hold Orwell responsible for any uncritical future conceptions of the social and political reality of the '30s which readings of his reportage may have contributed to. However, that does not prohibit examining the parameters of his vision at the time; what is conspicuously marginalized by one generation is perhaps all the more likely to attract the attention of the next.

Interestingly, Miles and Smith's discussion of the GPO film *Coalface* parallels Campbell's argument about TRTWP:

The film, in the juxtaposition of visual image with commentary and sung chorus, thus celebrates the working-class miner both as hero and as victim. The potential tension here is resolved by inflecting the issue in gender terms with a mobilization of male narcissism, in the shots of half-naked miners underground, and in its implicit distinction between male work-time and female family-time. The class issue is registered for the typical non-mining viewer constructed as the audience of the film, but the class issue is overdetermined by gender. Taken together with the over-arching celebration of male team-work and the team-work of man and machine, and the importance of coal mining to society as a whole, the film stands as an aggressive tribute to the interdependence rather than the contradictions of a male-dominated industrial society. The film constructs a myth of male steadfastness and solidarity in a tough world."

Similarly, (although, I would argue, largely unconsciously) TRTWP underplays the ambiguous way class categories can be traversed by gender
solidarities: i.e. in Engel's dictum, within the working class, men are
the bourgeoisie and women, the proletariat. In contrast to Orwell,
Campbell concentrated on reporting women's experience of poverty in the
'80s, in relation to both class and gender. Orwell certainly sometimes
sentimentalized his construction of the 'common man' through pastoral
myths of inherent common sense and decency, making the uneducated
superior to the privileged. However, he was far from blind to the
condition of working-class women (as in the famous image of the blocked
drainpipe discussed above at the end of Chapter V), although tending to
see them as victims of oppressions imposed from outside their class.
In Orwell, unemployment because it threatened the link between work and masculinity, which
justified maintaining inequalities. The "anomalous position" created by
unemployment did not alter "the relative status of the sexes", nor did
Orwell think it should: "In the working-class home it is the man who is
the master and not, as in the middle-class home, the woman or the baby."
(TRTWP, pp.75, and cf. CEJL I, p.222) To this extent, he acquiesced in
the 'naturalization' of sex roles within the working-classes and the
development of the British labour movement was both boosted and,
ultimately, retarded by the Promethean icon of the miner.

The 1931 census recorded twice as many domestic servants as miners
(approximately two million to one million). Wigan miners dug
Kensington's coal, but its grates were lit by servant girls. Orwell's
challenging account of labour and class was effective ("it is even
humiliating to watch coal miners working. It raises in you a momentary
doubt about your own status" (TRTWP, p.31)), but did not extend to
labour and gender, perhaps because he found 'women's work' more difficult to represent imaginatively. Conversely, Campbell defines the work of women in the mining communities "as labour that reproduces life and the capacity to labour" and in his History of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain Robert Page Arnot acknowledged that:

"Nearly every convenience which the nature of the miners' occupation demanded had to be furnished and maintained by the drudgery of the womenfolk. For of the mining community as a whole there was one half unorganized, unsafeguarded, unrepresented in Parliament - the wives and mothers of the working miners ... No government reports measured from year to year the changes in their conditions of life: nor do they figure in statistical columns beyond their place in the tables of births, deaths and marriages. Their song, or their dirge, remained unsung, or at any rate unheard." 61

The contradiction between the economic importance of 'women's work' and its lack of cultural valorization is partly a consequence of separating class- from sexual-politics, and marks the unconscious ideological limits of Orwell's reporting of economic reality. TRTWP achieved a plausible social cross-section, as we have seen, but missed something closer to home. In History and Class Consciousness, Lukacs similarly tried to define the real socio-economic basis with an allegory. A philosopher criticized the ancient myth that the world rests on an elephant, asking "upon what does the elephant rest?" Lukacs pointed out that without Marxism he would only be able to conceive an endless succession of chimaeras but not "to discover the solution". 62 Similarly, civilization rests on labour, but the highlighted labour of the 'archetypal proletarian' rested on other things, like third-world poverty or the subjection of women. Antique allegories, which Angus Fletcher has called power struggles within the symbolic order, 63 may say more than either Lukacs or Orwell suspected about discourses representing the real basis of things.

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A documentary text, which helped conclude the '30s battle for hearts and mines successfully in the '40s, was Margot Heinemann's *Britain's Coal*, LBC choice for May 1944. Its foreword by the Miners' Federation President Will Lawther argued that nationalization was the only humane future for an industry dogged by "hardship, poverty, endurance, terrorism, disaster, unemployment and the constant menace of death." According to him it was not "dry-as-dust statistics" but the War which finally transformed public perception of the value of mining, resulting in the first statutory national minimum wage. Heinemann took up his point to argue that private ownership had not only failed to organize the industry along civilized lines, but that its inefficiency and under-production had also created dangerous shortages at a critical time. Coal was not only a national resource, but a primary weapon in the war effort:

From every town liberated from Hitler in Africa or Europe comes the cry for coal to set industries working and to restore civilized standards among the people. From our advancing armies come urgent calls for coal to fuel the supply-trains and power-stations; from war industry the demand for more power, for coal to make more steel and shells and explosives.

Mining had measurable use-value: "Failure on this front may cost months of suffering and the lives of many thousands" (*Britain's Coal*, p.19). 700,000 miners, or 1/25 of the population, provided 94% of the nation's energy and 1/12 of its exports, but the country was now paying for the failure to reorganize the industry in 1926. Moreover, though miners were indispensable, owners were not, and the unpopularity of conscription for the industry was a harsh testimony to its conditions as Priestley had imagined it would be. Heinemann had little difficulty in torpedoing the owners' case. Their leader Lord Londonderry, for instance, argued nationalization would be a fascist erosion of
individual liberty, yet had himself been a prominent industrial fellow-
traveller of the Right. He had written the pro-Nazi *Ourselves and
Germany* (1938) and had personal contacts with Hitler (See Britain's
*Coal*, pp.30-34). The Federation of British Industry itself concluded an
export agreement at Düsseldorf on the day Czechoslovakia was invaded.

Heinemann called miners "Commandos on the Home Front" and showed how
war had made literal the metaphors of conflict permeating mining
literature in 'normal' times:

The rescue parties that go down a mine after an explosion,
when all the dangers have broken loose from their bonds ... are doing as much as modern war can demand of the bravest
soldier. And day by day as much gallantry is shown in the
minor skirmishes - in rescuing a man under a fall when the
roof is liable to come down again, or dragging an unconscious
man out of a pocket of gas.

Such a spirit cannot be bought or rewarded. It has become
traditional in the mines in every country.

That the accident rate had barely declined since the Great War miners
could live with. What they resented was "unnecessary danger and hardship
... disasters due to false economy and managerial short-sightedness"
(Britain's *Coal*, p.67, and above). National Government complacency was
demonstrated by the fact that penalties for breaches of the Coal Mines
Acts were "about a serious a deterrent as a pin-prick to a rhinoceros".
An infamous example, as we have seen, was the Gresford Colliery
explosion of 1934, in which inadequate ventilation killed 265 men, but
"no one - either immediately or indirectly responsible" was imprisoned
or even heavily fined. Given the fact that mining had to go on, it was
only just that the nation should "lighten their burden as far as
possible" and provide miners with the same safety and health services as
the armed forces (Britain's *Coal*, pp.78-79 and 67, respectively).

In effect, Heinemann continued the '30s pattern of representing the
miner as the type of the undervalued manual worker. This made
nationalization in mining a model for the reorganization of industry as a whole and their conditions a testimony to the economic necessity for the welfare state. Their position had already been strengthened by the Essential Work Order Act and Pit Production Committees, a safeguard against victimization. Heinemann quoted a revealing response from the coal-owners' Western Mail (11 Oct. 1943): "As far as I can see the policy generally is to humour the men in every way. How far this is wise remains to be seen. We know by now where appeasement comes to." That approaches to civilized relations could be seen as shameful concession showed that "as far as the owners are concerned, there has always been a war on against the miners, whether or not the nation happens to be fighting Fascism at the same time." A war against Fascism ought equally to be a war against fascistic social and economic conditions. Real patriotism, therefore, Heinemann implied, consisted in preventing such narrow vested interests obscuring those of the nation as a whole and in securing the "harvest of victory for the people" (Britain's Coal, pp.150 and 62). Consequently, her next text for the Labour Research Unit Wages Front (1947) considered how Britain might be reconstructed into a high-wage, high-productivity economy, without returning to pre-war exploitation, and her pamphlet, Coal Must Come First (1948), finally ushered in the reorganization of coal recommended as far back as 1919.*

The nationalization of mines campaign was concluded successfully partly as a result of the plethora of reporting about the industry in the '30s. Nevertheless, the way that what happened to mining and its communities in the '80s was represented in the media exemplifies how far the organized forgetting which the new reportage opposed has made a comeback through today's technology and New Right politics. In the next Chapter, however, I want to examine how the documentary novel functioned
as a complementary form to the new reportage for portraying the social, economic and political crises of the '30s.
Notes to Chapter VI

1. Grierson on Documentary, p.142.


4. See Jack Lindsay's Introduction to London's The People of the Abyss, pp.6-7.

5. See Homberger American Writers, pp.7 and 11.

6. London The People of the Abyss, pp.123 and 81, respectively.

7. See ibid., pp.123 and 88, respectively.

8. See above Chapter IV, section ii, p.218.


10. See Chapter III, section i, pp.139-40.

11. Cunningham British Writers, p.228.


13. See White Tropics, p.185.


18. See J.B. Priestley English Journey, pp.53-59. (Henceforth, all page references to EJ will be given in brackets in the text.)


21. See above Chapter V, p.284.


24. Cf the WFPL's very different perspective on the same event, above, Chapter V, p.272.


26. See *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p.79 and 5, respectively. (Henceforth, all page references to TRWP will be given in brackets in the text.)

27. See Chapter IV, section ii, p.218.


29. Miles and Smith *Cinema, Literature and Society*, pp.35-36.


33. Jack Hilton *English Ways: A Walk from the Pennines to the Epsom Downs in 1939* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940), p.295. (Henceforth, all page references to EW will be given in brackets in the text.)

35. See George Orwell 'England with the Knobs Off' Adelphi July 1940, p.430. For some reason not reprinted in CEJL.


39. See Beatrix Campbell Wigan Pier Revisited, p.97. For Stakhanov, see above Chapter II, section ii, Note 75.

40. See Montagu Slater Stay Down Miner (London: Martin Lawrence, 1936) and A New Way to Win (Williams and Norgate, 1936). The Miner's Two Bob was edited by W.H. Williams for the Labour Research Department (London: Martin Lawrence, 1936). The stay-down strikes were also fictionalized by Lewis Jones in We Live (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1939; repr. with an Introduction by David Smith, 1978), pp.253-302.

41. Slater Stay Down Miner, pp.9-11.


43. See TLS (1 Feb. 1936), p.86.


45. ibid., pp.80 and 193.

46. ibid., p.135.

47. ibid., pp.224-25.


49. James Hanley Grey Children: A Study in Humbug and Misery (London: Methuen, 1937), pp.147-48. (Henceforth, all page references to (Grey Children will be given in brackets in the text.)

50. Cf. Orwell on statistics in the present section, below, p.314.
51. For London’s ‘Golden Rule’, see above, p.299.


53. Priestley obviously didn’t anticipate today’s situation described in Robert Hewison’s The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline (London: Methuen, 1987). Cf. Robert Chesshyre’s visit to ‘The Orwell’ pub at Wigan Pier which has become a post-industrial theme park, in Return of the Native Reporter, pp.217-18.

54. Later a wartime reality. See below, p.342.

55. Alexander had also worked on the WFPL’s 1935 film Rhondda.

56. See Klaus Literature of Labour, pp.154-55.


60. Miles and Smith Cinema, Literature and Society, pp.190-91.


64. Margot Heinemann Britain’s Coal: A Study of the Mining Crisis (Prepared by MH for the Labour Research Department With Foreword by Will Lawther, J.P. President of the Mineworkers’ Federation of Great Britain (London: Gollancz, 1944), pp.5-14, especially p.5. (Henceforth, all references to Britain’s Coal will be given in brackets in the text.)


66. For other reporting of Gresford, see pp.219-20, 272 and 394. Harold Heslop’s 1934 novel about a mining disaster Goaf was also read in the light of Gresford by contemporary reviewers (see Croft Red Letter Days, p72).

67. See Margot Heinemann Wages Front (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1947) and Coal Must Come First (London: Frederick Muller, 1948).
The avant-garde documentary novel was a particularly subversive way of questioning the objectivity of the form and content of 'Fiction's Opposite', because of the fragmentary, montage structure it often employed. Orwell, for example, taking *Ulysses* as his model (which he read as a "pastiche or parody" of every mode of representation "from the Irish legends of the bronze age down to contemporary newspaper reports" (CEJL II, p.237)) produced a *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935). The method of this novel implicitly denied there was any privileged discourse for representing reality in an unmediated way.\(^1\) Interestingly, montaging Joycean techniques with the style and material of his own reportage was probably suggested by a description of a night on the streets in *The People of the Abyss* ("...until you died you would tell the story of your adventure to groups of admiring friends. It would grow into a mighty story. Your eight-hour night would become an Odyssey and you a Homer."\(^2\)) Moreover, *A Clergyman's Daughter* is, pre-eminently, about finding some kind of provisional, alternative structure for rescuing the facts of the personal and collective past from the wreckage of literal belief and meaning. It represents, therefore, a crisis in Eric Blair's consciousness of linguistic representation and foreshadows the way his thinking about written history as documentary fabrication would develop in both the reportage *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) and the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

However, as with the new reportage, perhaps the most pervasive and ambiguous influence on many experimental documentary novels was film. Radek had traduced the connection between film and avant-garde writing negatively by abusing *Ulysses* as a "heap of dung...photographed by a
cinema apparatus". More positively, Vertov wrote, à propos The Forty-Second Parallel, that "Dos Passos' work involves a translation from film-vision into literary language. The terminology and construction are those of the kino-eye." In September 1937, the Daily Worker carried Dos Passos's short story 'The Camera Eye' complete with advice on how to read it: "remember that this is the verbal equivalent to the inclusive technique of photography, registering apparently irrelevant and even distracting details for the sake of achieving a complete atmospheric approximation of reality." Moreover, a significant number of British Left novelists were influenced by collision montage in the '30s (despite its condemnation by Socialist Realist hardliners) as in the notable case of Communist John Sommerfield. His May Day (1936) used both filmic and literary avant-gardism as models for alternative narrative forms, which were innovatory, encyclopaedic and profoundly social. A Left Review advertisement highlighted May Day's panoramic scope and cinematic method as "A cross-section of the social pyramid, from the factory to the managing director's luxury flat. It's three days of life today, and it moves - it's got technique." Similarly, Sommerfield's first novel They Die Young (1930) reflected the modernist cityscapes of Dos Passos's Manhattan Transfer (1925), which Lukacs denounced for fragmentary 'description' rather than seamless 'narration', and Sommerfield's 'cinema-eye' technique owes much to the fascination the dynamics of film held for writers like Dos Passos, Joyce, Jules Romains and Virginia Woolf, as well as to actual film-makers like Vertov and Ruttmann.

Hence, MD derived its documentary principles from the same experimental nexus and critique of hyperreality that I have been tracing. It was a by no means uncharacteristic example of the way many
British Leftists eschewed the crude relationship between modes of representation and historical truth implied by Socialist Realism. Marxist critics like Ralph Fox in *The Novel and the People* (1937) and Christopher Caudwell in *Illusion and Reality* (1937) more or less followed Radek's line, but Arthur Calder-Marshall argued for an experimental literature of fact, pointing out that Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* (1929) applied "the Joycean method for unJoycean purposes". Dos Passos too had fallen out of favour for his Joycean connections, but Calder-Marshall asserted that his 'news reels' gave "the raw history of the time" and the self-reflexive 'Camera Eye' sections, with their fragments of autobiography, a "sense of the author himself as part of the same scheme he is describing". Most interestingly, Alick West's *Crisis and Criticism* (1937) gave an unusually astute and detailed reading of *Ulysses*, arguing that it was indeed a 'reflection' of a real social and historical context, though in a complex, mediating sense. Joyce's montage coordinated "the individual action within the totality of relations existing at that moment". It broke the "traditional unity" of narrative, but constructed a panorama of the city of Dublin "growing out of its social basis":

...there is not only a continual jumping from one line of action to another, between which on the old basis there is no connection whatever; there is also a change in the conception of individuals performing these actions. They are also conceived in terms of relation, not of distinct demarcated consciousness.  

Consequently, Joyce advanced socialism "to the extent to which he hastens this change of outlook" and overcame the alienated perspective of bourgeois individualism. However, West believed the absence of production workers marooned *Ulysses* 'in the mode of consumption' and he
compared it with miner-novelist Harold Heslop's *The Gate of a Strange Field* (1929) to highlight the need for synthesis between innovative form and 'proletarian content' in Leftist art. Hence, MD was a radical cinematic adaptation of the formal templates of novels like *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* - both fictionalized cross-sections of one June day - which revealed the collective complexity of mundane social and economic relationships. Similarly, in the days before he recanted his 'Formalism', Eisenstein saw no incompatibility between his projects for filming *Ulysses* and *Das Kapital.* MD unfolds from morning, April 29th, to early afternoon, May 1st, "a few years hence", and its characters and events are meant to be 'typical' of an average year between 1930 and 1940, an extrapolated, documentary hypothesis not a specific "historical forecast".

Jack Lindsay called MD "the best collective novel that we have yet produced in England; the real protagonist is the London working-class...the true London...smelt, seen and understood." MD was published in 1936, the same year as the British edition of *Ulysses.* Moreover, as Andy Croft points out, MD was simply "one of the best of several" such experimental *romans fleves* written at this time. Others included (with varying degrees of leftism and artistic success) James Barke's *Major Operation* (1936), Walter Allen's *Innocence is Drowned* (1938), Anthony Bertram's *Men Adrift* (1935) and *The King Sees Red* (1936), Arthur Calder-Marshall's *Pie in the Sky* (1937) and Graham Greene's *It's a Battlefield* (1934). Many attempted 'panoramic' and 'collective' perspectives like MD's and often used montage and camera-eye techniques. Dot Allan's *Hunger March* (1934) has topical affinities with both MD and fellow Scot James Barke's *Major Operation*, whose techniques of simultaneity and co-ordination recall 'The Wandering
Rocks'. *Ulysses'* most 'panoramic' chapter. The blurb to Allen's novel, for instance, reads "all manner of folk jostle each other in these pages, labour leaders, journalists, potential criminals, ex-soldiers idealists" and the "incidents which take place within twenty-four hours are so varied as to suggest a modern frieze." As Croft puts it.

Panoramic pictures like these, both detailed and generalised, static and moving, strained to convey an adequate sense of the scale and complexity of contemporary urban life. Their bird's eye perspectives reveal the collective working routines, the necessary working patterns of the modern city, its collective functions, moral geography, mass pleasures and visible sociology. And they stress both the vulnerable small lives of individuals held in such a mechanical, abrasive life...and the necessary participation of small lives in the life of the city...Elaborate narratives of technology - electricity, railways, print, buses, river traffic parallel the novel's political narratives."

Moreover, "borrowed cinematic technique" gave such novels "the feel and force of documentary non-fiction", while emphasizing that their effect of objectivity was not just a simple matter of 'content' but the 'content of the form' they sought to both emulate and investigate.  

After joining the Communist Party, Sommerfield (1908-) felt duty bound to write about class struggle, but without renouncing avant-gardism, and MD was the result. Its main characters, James Seton, a sailor, and his carpenter brother John, follow two of Sommerfield's autobiographical trades; they are alter-egos, arriving at political agreement from different situations, like the sympathetic alignment between outsider and artist, Bloom/Ulysses and Stephen/Telemachus. As Croft points out,

The challenge of modernist technique for political novelists in the 1930s was two-fold. First, to find new ways of representing the individual in contemporary society, among its ideological pressures and ideological weaknesses. Second, to find new ways of expressing the place of society in the life of individuals. Modernism's break with naturalistic representation had the potential both for a more detailed, comprehensive and knowing picture of the contemporary scene, and a more critical, philosophical representation of the
contemporary mind. Consequently, Sommerfield did not dissolve his characters into subjective consciousness, but foregrounded the tension between the objective world of appearances, in which society and history are known through hyperreal constructions, and its internalization in individual minds:

Thousands of fingers, long, short, manicured, nail-bitten, fat, slender, ringed, fresh, withered, stubby, tender, or cruel, flicker and dance alphabet ballets over thousands of keyboards...the rained down letters and figures, the fluttering, mounting sheaves of paper, thick, thin, flimsy, blue, yellow, white, make the raw material of tragedies, comedies, novels, biographies and autobiographies, histories, economic treatises, manuals of sociology, even poems and music and pictures and carvings in wood, ivory, stone and metal...

From this record one half of contemporary life can be deduced, and a material history and philosophy of the organization of society.

And behind the nerves and the dancing fingers...the lonely and incommunicable private lives and thoughts that make up the other half of the record of society. Inwardly, under the taut sheetlightning membrane of nervous discharge, each dreams desires, each hates and wants. (MD, pp.126-27)

As Stuart Laing shows, MD is an important cross-fertilization between avant-garde writing and film documentary. Besides the influence of Vertov, who came to London in November 1931, with Ivor Montagu, to promote his Five Year Plan film Symphony of the Donbas, and whose The Man with the Movie Camera was frequently shown at workers film societies, MD resembles Ruttmann's Berlin: Symphonie einer Großstadt (1927). The Russians too, recognized Symphonie's close connections with experimental factual writing, as the Stenberg brothers' 1928 Sovkino poster indicated with its superimposition of 'Umbo's' photomontage of Kisch against a tower-block (Umbehr was also one of Ruttmann's candid cameramen). Hence, Vertov, Ruttmann and Sommerfield all used "totalizing images of the city as a network of communication systems".
and MD opens with a panorama of London's complex and mystified organization, where lives are consumed in the production of commodities:

...Let us take factory chimneys, cannons trained at dingy skies, pointing at the sun and stars, and blinding their aim with their own exhalations: towering more than church spires, their long shadows leaning across lives more heavily than did the medieval darkness of the hand of God.... (MD, p.3 [Sommerfield's italics])

But the "normally invisible connections" of the social and economic system are analogized with London's material communications: "shining tarred roads", "geometries of telephone wires and tramlines", skies oozing "soot and aeroplanes" and railways writhing "like worms under the clay, tangled with spiderwebs and mazes of electric cables, drains and gaspipes" (MD, pp.3-4). Griersonian documentary was also influenced by Vertov's model, as we have seen, but its vision of social interdependence and co-operation largely played down the frictions between different interest groups. Conversely, the following description from MD of a factory under the new speed-up policy seems to imitate the Griersonian 'romance of industry' only to go beyond it:

So there are also machines which work themselves, each of them capable of carrying out half a dozen different operations, far more quickly and accurately than could half a dozen girls tending half a dozen lathes. They form a whole sidechapel in the cathedral. Sweating oil and weeping streams of soapy water they clash insatiable metallic jaws with a machinegun rattle that drowns their motors' electric whining and slavering. The bright metal peels away in delicate helices, a golden rain of dust drowns in greenish oil. The chucks come round and round in turn with eager exactness, with the same monotonous inevitability of movement as the girls' hands, only faster, ever so much faster. There is no weariness to spoil their work, no fallible mind to guide them. And they never bleed. One man could look after the lot of them. All he has to do is to see that they get a regular diet of metal rod and strip. And he could be eliminated it it was cheaper. (MD, p.29)

Further, Sommerfield's attempt to montage an overall, co-ordinated view of the modern metropolis raises questions about the technological mediation of information, which can be both empowering and dis-
empowering. Sinisterly, the police gyroplane monitoring the workers' march has a literal perspective over the "living map of London" (MD, p.209) rivalled only by the imaginative co-operation between the narrator's Vertovian kino-eye and the reader.

More extensively than TRTW, MD used "phrases at once compressed and highly suggestive" for displaying the paradoxically intimate relations "between things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex". Greene's *It's a Battlefield* also used montage to, in Geyer-Ryan's terms, reconstruct human subjectivity and "meet the demands of cultural modernism", but dissolved pessimistically into isolated, individual viewpoints. In contrast, MD confirmed "the capacity for political action", by clear connection between scenes while avoiding conventional narrative links. Unlike Greene's, Sommerfield's novel does not make the reader share the characters' sense of alienation, but puts him/her in the position to construct an overall social perspective across the intervals between images co-ordinated in space and time. For example, while out riding, Peter Langfier, son of the manager of the carbon works on which the action centres, passes "George Everdene, gasfitter, 47" unemployed: an ironic juxtaposition of two kinds of 'leisure' based on class difference. Later, Martine Seton, worried that her husband John risks dismissal if he joins the forthcoming demonstration, sees some graffiti publicizing it at the same time as the Earl of Dunbourne, on his way to the directors' meeting to decide the factory's fate. As the Earl then drives past the Park Lane Office of Amalgamated Industrial Enterprises, Sir Edwin Langfier is just leaving it, depressed by the fascistic tactics of Sir William Gilray, who in turn watches him as he walks across the Park. Gilray is planning how to win the confrontation provoked by the Consortium's speed-up policy.
while a taxi passes with a loud-speaker, calling "all out on May Day" (See MD, pp.45-50). The novel cuts back and forth, montaging social levels and occupations, as in the 'deadly parallel' between Lady Langfier's social life and the shop-floor which funds it:

From the outside world came no sound, no breath. Only the anonymous servants ventured into this cloistered calm, treading with ghostfeet upon the silent mistgrey carpet, pushing their little rubber-tyred truckloads of cakes and sandwiches. (I forgot to mention - the whistle had blown for tea, the girls were taking a breather.) (MD, pp.69-70)

Such demystifying 'editorial' effects abound, emphasizing modern society's essentially co-operative, mass nature, as in the sequence juxtaposing various preparations for, and thoughts about, the coming protest (MD, pp.188-192). Significantly, the motif of 'weaving' which played a self-reflexive part in Vertov's The Man with the Movie camera, both as an important industry and as a metaphor for the imaginative labour transacted between the kino-eye and viewer, is also prominent in MD as a symbol for the collective historical project it reveals. Individuals' lives "strive to run all ways, confusedly, each trying to follow its own separate course", but, nonetheless, leading "through a million routes" to the factories. (MD, p.79) the means of production and cradle of change. Hence, MD eschewed the simplistic historical causality of Stalinism. Instead the novel's Marxist epigraph - "Men make history, but not as they please" - corresponds to the greater indeterminacy which its experimental form makes concrete. For example, an horrific injury to one of the factory girls, due to speed-up, causes a minute shift in the novel's intricate social and psychological intermeshings which has cumulative results: "The rhythm is unchanged, the face of things is unaltered: the ferment works within. Only in those invisible spiderweb lines in time and space that mesh lives with
material objects is there a change. It is the shape of these patterns that fashions and records history." (MD, pp.154-55) Sommerfield's montage, therefore, refutes Lukács by gradually constructing an alternative narration through experimental description.

MD, together with Harold Heslop and Robert Ellis's documentary montage on the *The Abdication of Edward the VIII*, which used contemporary press and I-witness reports, probably influenced M-O's *May the Twelth*. MD pivots round industrial action initiated by the London Busmen's Rank and File movement; in *May the Twelth* they actually were on strike. Similarly, Sommerfield montaged fictitious excerpts from the capitalist and left-wing press exactly as M-O did with reports about the Coronation and the actual dispute. Sommerfield also featured fictional crashing of BBC broadcasts as a form of protest the media could not ignore ("the loudest instruments in the orchestra of suppression were forced to echo the undertone of a working class motif" (See MD, pp.50-51), while Madge analysed real incidents of the same. MD also probably contributed to the importance of the social cross-section in M-O's reports, with their montage of perspectives. Another foregrounding of media hyperreality in both Greene's and Sommerfield's novels derives from 'Aeolus' and the news items, handbills, etc. circulating through *Ulysses*. Sommerfield used headlines, in Laing's phrase, "as a way of linking disparate groups of characters into a common experience": "A million looks glanced upon these words understandingly, with varying thoughts, no two quite the same yet no two altogether different." (MD, p.36) M-O's social cross-sectioning depended on "a similar mode of social analysis", through which the public became, ideally at least, collective reporters, not just passive consumers of mass-media information. Sommerfield's interest in avant-
garde documentarism extended logically into his own later work on M-O's *The Pub and the People* (1943) and in film, radio and television.

His next text, the reportage *Volunteer in Spain* (1937) (discussed below in Chapter VIII) also incorporated cinematic cutting and was followed by a documentary novelette dramatizing the same communist-organized East End rent strikes of the Summer of 1938 which Kino filmed as *Tenants in Revolt*. *Trouble in Porter Street* (1939) also brought together "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex" by demystifying economic mediations: "The Housing Finance Trust was, in actual fact, a sallow, middle-aged, nervous gentleman called Smallbone, who lived in a steam-heated baronial mansion in a part of Sussex populated almost entirely by people with incomes more than five thousand a year. The Porter Street tenants' ignorance of Mr. Smallbone was matched by his ignorance of them." Consequently, as Croft points out, Sommerfield "never subscribed to vulgar Marxist attitudes to writing, replacing literary criticism with political denunciation or confusing novel writing with pamphleteering", though he remained in the Party until the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.

James Barke (1905-53) also adapted avant-garde techniques for criticising media power. Like MD, his novel *Major Operation* used co-ordinating images to suggest a panorama of mass society, as in the opening section 'SUNSET OVER THE SECOND CITY', representing the reactions of a cross-section of Glaswegians to apparently auspicious changes in the literal and economic climate at the beginning of the Slump, and later the democratizing ritual of the Saturday night fish-supper which brings together all classes all over the city in 'RHAPSODY OF FISH AND CHIPS'. *Major Operation's* rather contrived plot is also an attempt to bridge social dissociation, embodied in NUWM organizer Big
Jock MacKelvie and bankrupted coal merchant George Anderson. The Communist Party's 'Class Against Class: Forward to a Soviet Britain' policy, shown as still current in MD, was being superseded by the cross-class alliance of the Popular Front in the mid-'30s, as we have seen. The two novels, therefore, seem to fall either side of this tactical change. Hence, Anderson's bourgeois-liberalism is shown being successfully "inoculated against the virus of Fascism" by MacKelvie's arguments. 29

MD featured fictional excerpts from the Daily Worker, pamphlets and graffiti to counter and expose official misinformation and narcotic press stories about heroic airmen, film stars and peers. Major Operation too describes alternative communications, but 'Aeolus's' mischievous editorial interpolations also inspired its basic form - a host of headlined sections displacing and subverting conventional news reports. Thus, both Barke's and Sommerfield's experimental documentary novels characterize '30s attempts to oppose what Cunningham calls "the people's alternative headlines" to those of the undemocratic media. 30

ii: Isherwood's Weimardämmerung

Klaus and Enkemann's refusal to accept Christopher Isherwood's Goodbye to Berlin as a documentary novel seems to result from an
uncritical adherence to Stott's content-based theory that documentary
deals only with "the poor, the damaged, the inconspicuous, and the
ordinary". Apart from the fact that GTB is an example of montage
literature of fact which radically interrogates privileged modes of
realistic representation, it deals not with the conventionally
sensational so much as with a whole society in extremis, in which
what is constructed as 'mundane' has been made 'bizarre' by rapidly
deteriorating circumstances. The distinction of defamiliarizing the
mundane doesn't hold any longer, when as Isherwood put it in Christopher
and his Kind (1977), the effect of GTB is "not only to make the bizarre
humdrum but the humdrum seem bizarre". In a civilization on the edge
of terror not only are the 'mundane' and the 'sensational' revealed to
be related, but the very distinction is blurred or abolished as reality
takes on the quality of nightmare.

Sommerfield tried to represent the interdependence of the structure
of British civilization, to demystify real economic relations in the
hope of transforming them. GTB, on the other hand, is a cautionary
representation of a recently past society which did not recognize its
own interdependence and which, consequently, was precipitated by the
'30s economic crisis beyond 'normal' conditions of alienation into
Naziism's disastrous wish-fulfilments. Hence, its bad faith became
unredeemable in dictatorship. However, the society to which GTB's
warning was addressed still had a chance, so that the reader is in the
position to construct montage connections too, though with neither the
clarity, nor the optimism of MD. Berlin's fatal disease, Isherwood
suggested, is possible for any society representing itself as
democratic, but practicing exploitation and neglect. Hence, Berlin's cathedral is dubbed "the Church of the Immaculate Consumption", punning together the text's key themes and emphasizing the contradiction between sanctified values and material ends. Moreover, the Little Tiergarten's "small damp black wood" is "the real heart of Berlin".³³ As in Hans Fallada's bestselling novel Kleiner Mann - was nun? (1932), it is a human zoo of the homeless and the unemployed, "die ungefährlichen, ausgehungerten, hoffnungslos gemachten Bestien des Proletariats" ("the beasts of the proletariat, made docile, starved, hopeless").³⁴ For all its civic façades, Isherwood saw Berlin as "a mirage of the winter desert" (GTB, p.188), because Weimar civilization was index-linked to the rate of the Mark.

GTB fits the general pattern of anti-Nazi novels by contemporary British writers, which as Croft points out were mostly "constructed around the experience of an innocent Englishman abroad" in Germany or Austria (RLD, p.322). Such novels include Sally Carson's trilogy Crooked Cross (1934), The Prisoner (1936) and A Traveller Came By (1938), Phyllis Bottome's The Mortal Storm (1937), Louis Golding's Mr Emmanuel (1939), John Lehmann's Evil was Abroad (1938), as well as parts of Stevie Smith's Novel on Yellow Paper (1936) and Stephen Spender's The Temple (written in 1929, but not published until 1988). In A Traveller Came By one of the English characters meditates on the problem of the Koestlerian 'dream barriers' of ideology and mediation which such topical novels strove to transgress:

Things about Germany felt unreal. You read the papers, went to meetings ... English and distant and comfortable, you could not comprehend hatred of the Jew anymore than you could visualise his terror; you could not associate the hectic moments of gangster films - the shot in the night, the blood in
the dark, the waiting terror behind closed doors - with this serene life in England, with its slow, expensive traffic, its courteous, good-looking policemen, well-lit, well-ordered streets. You could hardly imagine it, let alone feel it."

As Croft argues, "the moral priority of each novel is the effect of Nazi violence on the English outsiders, enabling in each case an ingenuous assessment of Nazi brutality through shocked and unfamiliar eyes." Similarly, the notoriously 'neutral' quality of the narrators in Isherwood's Berlin books is a strategy to increase the reader's sense of shock by the English outsider's apparent absence of reaction.

Both *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939) and the earlier *Mr Norris Changes Trains* (1935) were partly edited from Isherwood's unfinished epic *Die Verlorenen*, 'The Lost', and there are many continuities between them. Isherwood explained the triple significance of the original German title as "that mass of Germans who were now being herded blindly into the future by their Nazi shepherds". The "'doomed' - those who, like Bernhard Landauer, were already marked down as Hitler's victims" - and also the outcasts from conventional society - "Sally Bowles the 'lost' girl, Otto Nowak the 'lost' boy and Mr Norris who has committed the unpardonable crime of being found out." *Die Verlorenen* was projected as thinly-fictionalized I-witnessing, "entirely in the form of a diary without any break in the narrative", and was to have been "full of 'news' about Berlin. Frank journalism in fact." Moreover, a particularly relevant example of *Neue Sachlichkeit* experimental fiction was available to Isherwood in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929). Heavily influenced by *Ulysses* and Ruttmann's *Symphonie einer Großstadt*, it montaged the fictional misadventures of ex-jailbird, gangster and pimp, Franz Biberkopf, a classic instance of the lost or alienated
'little man' of Berlin's *Halbwelt*, into a documentary background of real events. Döblin's novel was filmed by Piel Jutzi in 1931, the same year as the publication of Eugene Jolas's English translation. Consequently, both GTB and, to a lesser extent, MN montage reportage and realistic fiction.

Through his first-person narrative personae (first his middle names 'William Bradshaw', in MN, then 'Christopher Isherwood', in GTB) Isherwood questioned both conventional categories of realistic representation and the subjectivity of closely connected political and sexual ideologies. His work demonstrates the fallacy of presenting the self as an innocent I-witness and, hence, the impossibility of reporting experience in an ideologically uninflected way. Above all Isherwood questioned the apparently 'truth-telling' instrument of film. As we have seen, in the '30s the camera still appeared 'the last refinement' in Naturalism's project for unmediated realism. However Vertov and other avant-gardists argued and practised to the contrary, the camera-eye/I-witness was often promoted and accepted, in Paget's phrase, as "an objective observer, recording events from a position of privileged omiscience", going one stage further than the narrator of the nineteenth-century novel, so that its images not only constructed reality, "they were that reality." Only when camerawork is "interrogated closely does the univocal cultural 'I' behind the camera", the subject with whom the spectator identifies as a norm of perception, "stand revealed." The 'innocence' of Isherwood's camera-eye/I-witness was, therefore, deliberately problematized through an implied hierarchy of consciousnesses, narrated, narrating and authorial. The influence over
perception of sub-conscious preconceptions is foregrounded as the narratives unfold, because the reader is initially encouraged to identify with an apparently objective and undivided perspective on reality.

Spender recalls how he and Isherwood were inspired by early Soviet films distributed in Germany by Münzenberg's Prometheus company. They appeared to have "all those qualities we found most exciting in other forms of modern art, but ... also conveyed a message of hope like an answer to The Waste Land." Among "the grimy tenements" of Berlin, they watched "images of the New Life of the workers building with machine tools and tractors their socially just world under the shadows of baroque statues reflected in ruffled waters of Leningrad, or against waving, shadow-pencilled plains of corn." Similarly, Paul Piazza has traced Isherwood's borrowings from early German cinema; his suggestively abrupt cuttings between scenes, allusion and paralepsis. Sinisterly symbolic perspectives (for instance in the Sylvesterabend sequence in MN or the sanatorium visit in GTB) may have been inspired by films like Wiene's The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1920), F.W. Murnau's Nosferatu (1922) or Fritz Lang's Doktor Mabuse (1922). Isherwood admitted that the proletcultism of G.W. Pabst's Kameradschaft (1931) stimulated both his politics and his sexuality, and no doubt his portrayal of Berlin's Halbwelt and slums partly derived from G.W. Pabst's film of Die Dreigroschenoper (1931), Josef von Sternberg's Der Blaue Engel (1930) and Brecht's Kuhle Wampe (1932). Furthermore, from 1933 to 1934, Isherwood scripted for Berthold Viertel (a veteran of Weimar cinema, who had worked on Abenteuer eines Zehnmarkscheins), later turning the
experiences into the montage novel *Prater Violet* (1945).

Though we cannot confirm that Isherwood ever saw *Kinoglaz* or *The Man with the Movie Camera* (neither he nor Spender mentioned them among the films they saw in Berlin),\(^6\) it seems extremely likely that he was also influenced by Vertov's theory and practice. However, he was less straightforward in his adaptation of radical film documentary than was Sommerfield. Isherwood seized on Vertov's placing of the kino-eye at the centre of its own focus, but coupled analysis of its visual dynamics with his own preoccupations. Like Benjamin, he saw film's potential for psychoanalytic as well as socio-economic revelations. Benjamin believed that film defamiliarized "our field of visual perception" in the same way that Freud revealed the subtext of everyday language in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901): "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."\(^8\) Hence, Isherwood used the cinema as a model for making complex associations:

I was, and still am, endlessly interested in the outward appearance of people - their facial expressions, their gestures, their walk, their nervous tricks, their infinitely various ways of eating a sausage, opening a paper parcel, lighting a cigarette. The cinema puts people under a microscope: you can stare at them, you can examine them as though they were insects.

From this standpoint, "the stupidest film may be full of astonishing revelations about the tempo and dynamics of everyday life" and the cinematic novelist could "project" his scenes "on to an imaginary screen".\(^7\) David Lodge argues that literary use of synecdoche/metonymy - "detail of appearance, behaviour, dress, possessions etc." - to suggest unconscious significance, naturally predates film, but was "used
by writers of the 1930s with an economy and visual flair developed by
their acquaintance with the cinema". Thus Isherwood was primarily
interested in filmic borrowings as a highly efficient method of packing
literary realism's apparent oratio recta with subversive displaced and
condensed meanings, and of activating the reader's psychological
complicity.

Isherwood's most intriguing camera-eye reference opens 'A Berlin
Diary (Autumn 1930)'

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording
not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite
and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day all
this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed.
(GTB, p.11)

Superficially this asserts the 'artless', unmediated objectivity of the
camera-eye/I-witness's footage, but it also suggests the processes
which are invisible in the final, edited product. It questions cinematic
simulations of reality and their concealed linkage. As has been pointed
out, the pretence - "to be, not the photographer, whose consciousness
selects and focuses, but the camera, the photographic mechanism itself"
- is a fallacy because the I-witness is a "sentient observer". Hence
it is the most self-deceiving of the ideological games 'the lost' play
to avoid responsibility for their own roles in constructing and acting
out Berlin's decaying social reality.

As we have seen, Vertov's films also made the camera-wielding
subject into the object of his reporting by superimposing his image over
those he constructed. Isherwood achieved a similar, but more oblique
self-reflexivity, by subtle sidelights catching the 'impersonal'
perceiver in a kind of peripheral vision. For example, what an early
reviewer called his "questionable heterosexuality" is momentarily silhouetted against the description of boys whistling outside: "But soon a call is sure to sound, so piercing, so insistent, so despairingly human, that at last I have to get up and peep through the slats of the venetian blind to make sure that it is not — as I know very well it could not possibly be — for me." (GTB, p.11) To adapt Storm Jameson's words, the camera-eye/I-witness fails to "keep himself out of the picture" and telling anxieties about sexuality, exploitation and violence materialize gradually, as if by parapraxis, despite his strenuously detached descriptions. 

In 'Sally Bowles', distinctive close-ups imply judgements without pausing for comment, as with Sally's famous fingernails "painted emerald green, a colour unfortunately chosen, for it called attention to her hands, which were much stained by cigarette-smoking and as dirty as a little girl's." (GTB, p.31) It is critically appropriate that Sally, aspiring to join the celluloid pantheon of UFA, should be repeatedly focused on this way, her nails' grotesque artificiality suggesting the alienation behind her cosmetic façade. Later in 'The Nowaks', the hands of a working-class tuberculosis victim are implicitly contrasted with Sally's ("When she talked and became excited her hands flitted tirelessly about in sequences of aimless gestures, like two shrivelled moths." (GTB, p.137)) and Otto's visions of a disembodied hand, a macabre living synecdoche, symbolise his alienated creativity, as one of Berlin's wasted youth.

Sally has been seduced by capitalist cinema's cult of the movie star, which as Miles and Smith put it "involves a complex psychological
paradox, the voyeuristic pleasure of looking combining with the narcissistic pleasure of looking at oneself. Identification involves using another person as an object of sexual stimulation while simultaneously seeing that other person as a reflection of how you would like others to see you."53 Similarly, Benjamin considered the movie-star cult was a method of compensating for the undemocratic denial of "modern man's legitimate right to reproduction". It "preserves not the unique aura of the person but the "spell of the personality, the phoney spell of a commodity."54 Consequently, Isherwood used a 'cinematic' perspective on ominous historical events to undercut his characters' escapist fantasies. As Sally seems about to find a rich American patron and launch into stardom, the funeral of ex-Chancellor, Hermann Müller, passes under the hotel balcony. Müller resigned in March 1930, after the Wall Street Crash, dying a year later. Hindenburg's subsequent appointment of Heinrich Brüning, secretly supported in military circles, began the fatal slide towards dictatorship:

Ranks of pale steadfast clerks, government officials, trade union secretaries - the whole drab weary pageant of Prussian Social Democracy - trudged past under their banners towards the silhouetted arches of the Brandenburger Tor, from which the long black streamers stirred slowly in an evening breeze. 'Say, who is this guy, anyway?' asked Clive, looking down. 'I guess he must have been a big swell?'

'God knows,' Sally answered, yawning. 'Look Clive, darling isn't it a marvellous sunset?' She was quite right. We had nothing to do with those Germans down there, marching, or with the dead man in the coffin, or with the words on the banners. In a few days, I thought, we shall have forfeited all kinship with ninety-nine per cent of the population of the world, with the men and women who earn their living, who insure their lives, who are anxious about the future of their children. (GTB, p.56)

The procession signifies the passing of Weimar itself, and the symbolism is particularly effective because of the aerial vantage point, the
camera-eye zooming in on faces and coffin, then giving a deep shot of the distant Brandenburger Tor, which, despite deferential trappings, signals the imminent victory of authoritarianism. Meanwhile, the observers are detached from events as if they were watching a newsreel of a foreign country before the feature-film. To Sally, these events under her nose mean less than the photogenic sunset, while the narrator is uneasily ambivalent. Aptly, GTB's original cover was Humphrey Spender's photograph, 'Berlin Lützowplatz 1933', showing Isherwood observing the street below. Thus, Isherwood brought together the complementary myths sponsored by commercial cinema and mainstream documentary. Sally's seduction by Hollywood fantasy is just as insidious as the camera-eye/I-witness's belief in his own objective detachment. As we saw with Koestler, in '30s art 'aerial' perspective could suppress common humanity in the name of hyperreal fictions of "historical knowledge and certainty" in Cunningham's phrase. Similarly, the often "elevated camera" of the new photographers could characterize people as "puppets, tokens, manipulable objects, dolls, midgets". GTB's 'cinematic' method subtly rejects such power "exercised from a position of privileged vantage" and the "attitudes cognate" with the viewpoint of the dominant tradition of documentary. Moreover, such 'aerial views' probably also carried some tinge of the public school elite's traditional perspective on the mass.

The objectivity of media images is questioned again through a photomagazine Sally considers "terribly highbrow and artistic, with lots of marvellous modern photographs, ink-pots and girls' heads upside down" (GTB, p.67). The magazine apes Querschnitt by cross-sectioning a
different country in each number, but turns out to be using Neues
Sachlichkeit techniques for marketing, exactly as Benjamin complained.66
Furthermore, a different kind of latent seductiveness comes out in the
narrator's interest in a Young Communist newsletter. This contains
angled photographs of semi-naked boys as "epic giants, in profile
against enormous clouds" (GTB, p.198), that sound very like Spender's
photoportrait of Isherwood's German lover Heinz.57

Isherwood's documentary novels emphasize the hyperreal power not
just of the camera but of the media as a whole. Personal experience had
given him inside knowledge of the methods of Münzenberg's IAH propaganda
machine, for which he did translation work in 1931, like his narrative
persona in MN.58 The construction Bradshaw places on his private
experiences parallels his naivety about the Berlin political scene.
Thus, the susceptibility of Bradshaw and the proletarian crowd to the
effect of a speech by 'Bayer' represents Münzenberg's charisma and the
IAH's power of mass-suggestion: "He spoke for them, he made their
thoughts articulate. They were listening to their own collective voice.
At intervals they applauded it with sudden, spontaneous violence. Their
passion, their strength of purpose elated me. I stood outside it. One
day, perhaps, I should be with it, but never of it." Thus the "sudden
spontaneous violence" echoes ironically through future events:

Hate exploded suddenly, without warning, out of nowhere; at
street corners, in restaurants, cinemas, dance halls, swimming-baths; at midnight, after breakfast, in the middle of
the afternoon. Knives were whipped out, blows were dealt with
spiked rings, beer-mugs, chair-legs or leaded clubs; bullets
slashed the advertisements on the poster columns, rebounded
from the iron roofs of latrines.59

Media rhetoric - totalitarian agitprop and capitalist escapism -
contributes to Weimar's general dissolution by manipulating the desires of desperate people:

The vocabulary of newspaper invective (traitor, Versailles-lackey, murder-swine, Marx-crook, Hitler-swamp, Red-pest) had come to resemble, through excessive use, the formal phraseology of politeness employed by the Chinese. The word Liebe, soaring from the Goethe standard, was no longer worth a whore's kiss. Spring, moonlight, youth, roses, girl, darling, heart, May: such was the miserably devaluated currency dealt in by the authors of all those tangoes, waltzes and fox-trots which advocated the private escape. Find a dear little sweetheart, they advised, forget the slump, ignore the unemployed. (MN, p.90)

The journalist's role is also foregrounded through Helen Pratt, who typifies the ghoulishly ambitious newshound, unwilling to read the human stories behind her own scoops. She sees through Norris immediately, but misses the lesson Bradshaw learns when he finally recognizes his own psychological complicity. Hence to the victims of Nazi atrocities, she is "as relentless as their torturers": "What would happen to them afterwards frankly didn't interest her. She was out to get facts." (MN, p.180) Ascertaining reality is fatally unproblematic to her, as if she were a privileged fly on every wall. Moreover, MN's critique of mediation includes a shadowy parody of its own montage method, through the French writer Marcel Janin whose texts are "half romance, half reportage". (MN, p.149) Janin travesties the demystifying 'rasende Reporter', speeding from one exotic location to another, but churning out sensational narcotics. He is a kind of 'snapshot-eye', arrogantly objective - "'For me, one glance is sufficient. I do not believe in the second impression.'" - and he is staking out the same territory as MN itself: "Looking for fresh worlds to conquer, he had fixed on the Nazi movement." (MN, p.149)
GTB is broken into a more open 'construction' of diary excerpts, autobiography and deliberate fiction. The 1939 'Author's Note' emphasized that its six fragments were pieces of Isherwood's unfinished epic. Similarly, John Lehmann insists that this final form was not merely determined by the episodic way it was originally published in New Writing. In order to avoid the Balzacian complications, contrivances and pretexts of bringing many characters together, Isherwood edited a cross-section that would give "the same effect by little broken bits of something ... that you've met a whole world". It's as if GTB is the 'readerly text' on the page, and *Die Verlorenen* or *The Lost* is the 'writerly text', constructed from poetic implications by the reader's imaginative co-operation in the intervals. The congested plots of nineteenth-century Naturalism could be avoided by subtle thematic intermeshing, binding all the protagonists together in some degree of consciousness "of the mental, economic and ideological bankruptcy of the world in which they live." Thus, manifest lack of connection between, as Hynes has put it, "rich/poor, Jew/gentile, fascist/communist, German/alien, homosexual/heterosexual", all the ideological categories "that separate and isolate human beings from one another" in the social complex, is belied by latent motifs, contrasts and ironies.

For example, the impoverished Gothic of Fräulein Schroeder's *kleinbürgerlich* apartment contrasts with the futuristic architecture enjoyed by the Jewish Bernsteins. For both house and inhabitants there will be no future after the Nazi coup, as the book's 1939 readership would have known: "Frl. Hippi Bernstein, my first pupil, lives in the
Grunewald, in a house built almost entirely of glass. Most of the richest Berlin families inhabit the Grunewald. It is difficult to understand why."

The description of the Grunewald also illustrates Isherwood's strategy of displacing terms from one section of GTB to another, so that what is literal in one context becomes metaphorical in another. Crowded together "in this dank dreary pinewood ... Terror of burglary and revolution has reduced these miserable people to a state of siege. They have neither privacy nor sunshine. The district is really a millionaire's slum." (GTB, p.23) The phrase "dank dreary pinewood" forecasts the description of the unemployed in the Little Tiergarten, and "millionaire's slum", the proletarian Nowak Wohnzimm in Hallesches Tor. Walter Gropius's ambition to transform Wilhelmenian tenements into cheap but well-designed modern estates was frustrated by political opposition and the economic collapse of 1929. Hence, the Grunewald's luxury ghetto parodies the Bauhaus's hopes of egalitarian reconstruction that might have prevented disaster and the fatal irresponsibility of the Weimar nouveau riche over the origins of their wealth is typified by Hippi's instant boredom whenever the narrator mentions Germany's political and economic predicament.

In GTB, apparently private and unlikely subjects are shown to be part of the ideological struggle for the sense of objective reality. In 'On Ruegen', the narrator's Leftism and, by implication, his friend Peter's sexual orientation are defined by a Nazi doctor not as conscious choices, but as involuntary delusions:

'But you can't be a communist! You can't!'
'Why can't I?' I asked coldly, moving away. I hate him to touch me.
'Because there isn't such a thing as communism. It's just an hallucination. A mental disease. People only imagine that they

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are communists...
'Five years ago I used to think as you do. But my work at the clinic has convinced me that communism is a mere hallucination. What people need is discipline, self-control. I can tell you this as a doctor. I know it from my own experience.' (GTB, p.92)

Nazi science is exposed as an alibi for naturalizing its political definition of normality. Hence, Isherwood implicitly underlined its symmetry with Stalinism's claims that its historical perspective was scientifically objective. Isherwood later recalled how early Soviet tolerance had made it possible for his own 'minority' to identify with a collective cause. But by 1934, ironically, Stalin was agreeing with the Nazis "in denouncing homosexuality as a form of treason to the State. The only difference was that the Nazis called it 'sexual bolshevism' and the Communists 'fascist perversion'." Moreover, as we have seen, the same symmetry existed about Modernist art that subverted official definitions of what was real. The doctor's theories are reified as if they are biological facts. He diagnoses that Otto, for instance, has a "criminal head". Otto's delinquency is, therefore, not the product of culture and can only be checked with the "discipline" of the labour camp, thereby justifying such methods. Hence, underlying the doctor's 'scientific' diagnosis is the same assumption as in Nazi racial theory, which equated moral essences with biology, with its in-built genocidal logic of Endlösung.

Troping minorities and oppositionists as the terminal affliction of the Volk, Nazi propaganda made 'health' an Erewhonian concept which 'justified' exterminating the 'diseased'. By foregrounding medical motifs, Isherwood questioned the infectiously simplistic appeal of such associations which whip prejudice up into mass-hysteria. Later in 'The
Landauers', Fr. Mayr's paranoid outburst echoes the doctor's terms: "This town is sick with Jews...They're poisoning the very water we drink! They're strangling us, they're robbing us, they're sucking our life-blood. Look at all the big department stores: Wertheim, K.D.W, Landauers'. Who owns them? Filthy thieving Jews!" (GTB, p. 142) She has unconsciously internalized Nazi rhetorical strategies which represent complex social and economic relationships as if they were immediately tangible and transform them into myths.

Deadly bacilli bred from poverty also feature in 'The Nowaks', both literally in Frau Nowak's consumption and as a social metaphor:

The entrance to the Wassertorstrasse was a big stone archway, a bit of old Berlin, daubed with hammers and sickles and Nazi crosses and plastered with tattered bills which advertised auctions or crimes. It was a deep shabby cobbled street, littered with sprawling children in tears. Youths in woolen sweaters circled waveringly across it on racing bikes and whooped at girls passing with milk-jugs. The pavement was chalk-marked for the hopping game called Heaven and Earth. At the end of it, like a tall, dangerously sharp, red instrument, stood a church.

Frau Nowak herself opened the door to me. She looked far iller than when I had seen her last, with big blue rings under her eyes. (GTB, p. 106)

The rash of tattered handbills and grafitti suggests an infection of violent political extremism - more a symptom of, than a cure for, economic and moral bankruptcy. Hence, Frau Nowak's tuberculosis makes her another documentary genius loci*7 signifying Weimar's terminal condition, endemic to its slums but, like cholera in Dickens's Bleak House (1853), migrating beyond them with ironic democracy, to infect other parts of the social complex.

'The Nowaks' appears to be straightforward participant observation about a typical working-class family, but Isherwood edited and
fictionalized his factual footage. He was no more forced to live in Hallesches Tor than Orwell was to go down and out. The only genuine pressure was on his boyfriend's family: like many other Berliners, they had learnt that sexual morality was economically relative. Nevertheless, Isherwood created a convincing parable of the breakdown of social connections amongst the Weimar masses and may well have drawn on Kleiner Mann - was nun?, which depicted the descent of two 'little people' through unemployment, poverty and finally destitution in one of Berlin's notorious colonies of summerhouses, which became economic refugee camps (as filmed in Kuhle Wampe). Frau Nowak resembles Lammchen Pinneberg, struggling to keep the household together, and the Nowak Wohnung's political frictions recall arguments in Lammchen's parents' flat, as does GTB's scepticism about salvationary politics in general. Fallada's imperative title is finally embodied in the moral dilemma of adapting to the coming dictatorship. Similarly, in GTB's closing pages Fräulein Schroeder and thousands of others are shown already acclimatizing themselves "like an animal which changes its coat for the winter." (GTB, pp.205-06)

Hallesches Tor is Isherwood's version of Kisch's Abgrund or Orwell's 'sub-world', where capitalism's human and material 'fall-out' is arbitrarily dumped: "Broken buckets, wheels off prams and bits of bicycle tyre lay scattered about like things that have fallen down a well." (GTB, p.109) Moreover, discarded consumer artefacts symbolize the Nowaks' predicament. For instance, their gramophone, which Otto amuses himself with "by balancing ornaments on the turntable ... to see how long it would be before they flew off and smashed" (GTB, p.126),
represents the imminent breakdown of the social apparatus around them. Ironically, only his Nazi brother, Lothar, "lean, bony, peasant's face, soured by racial memory of barren fields" (GTB, p.114), is capable of seeing their situation in the crude and dangerous kind of historical perspective necessary to act.

The illness motif culminates in the visit to Frau Nowak in the tuberculosis sanatorium, internalized through the perspective of the camera-eye/I-witness. People and things are displaced in a way which all but abandons plausibility for open surrealism. The patients, "muffled in shawls and blankets", become spectral dummies:

They all thronged round us for a moment in the little circle of light from the panting bus, their lit faces ghastly like ghosts against the black stems of the pines. This was the climax of my dream: the instant of nightmare in which it would end. I had an absurd pang of fear that they were going to attack us - a gang of terrifyingly soft muffled shapes - clawing us from our seats, dragging us hungrily down, in dead silence. (GTB, p.141)

The narrator's subjective anxiety underlines the exploitation of suggestibility by propaganda, making the concentration camps repositories for projected fear of 'the other'. The horror of infection becomes something which momentarily obliterates the narrator's sense of common humanity with the 'diseased' minority. As Orwell wrote,

What vitiates nearly all that is written about anti-semitism is the assumption in the writer's mind that he himself is immune to it. 'Since I know that anti-semitism is irrational,' he argues, 'it follows that I do not share it.' He thus fails to start his investigation in the one place in which he could get hold of some reliable evidence - that is, in his own mind. (CEJL III, p.387)

GTB's displacing narrative technique suggests the danger of identifying Nazism's triumph merely with Weimar's 'pathological' historical conditions. Such assumptions only make us vulnerable to the propaganda
of new forms of reactionary populism.

In ST, Koestler attacked Lord Lothian's notorious statement about Berlin after the Nazi coup - "The city is quiet, the trams are running, and there are no corpses lying about on the streets" - which implicitly condoned dictatorship for restoring order in Germany. Similarly, in Lions and Shadows (1938), Isherwood described the atmosphere of the British General Strike of 1926 as "That special kind of hysteria known as 'Business as usual'". Appropriately, the end of the second 'Berlin Diary' lingers on the way hyperreal images reinforce the appearance of 'normal' life by concealing the repression on which it rests:

The trams are going up and down the Kleiststrasse, just as usual. They, and the people on the pavement, and the tea-cosy dome of the Nollendorfplatz station have an air of curious familiarity, of striking resemblance to something one remembers as normal and pleasant in the past - like a very good photograph.
No. Even now I can't altogether believe any of this has really happened.... (GTB, p.206)

Similarly, some '30s war-reporters, as we shall see in the next Chapter, challenged the censored, insular hyperreality of the British, and attempted to contextualize their national crises among the international influences and events on which their fate depended.
Notes to Chapter VII


2. London *The People of the Abyss*, p.36.


5. See *Daily Worker* (9 May 1936), p.5.


7. See below Chapter I, section iii, p.60.


10. Alick West *Crisis and Criticism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1937), pp.163-64.


12. John Sommerfield *May Day* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936; repr. in pbk. with an introduction by Andy Croft, 1984), p.54. Henceforth, all page references to MD will be given in brackets in the text.


15. See publisher's blurb to Dot Allan *Hunger March* (London: Hutchinson, 1934).


17. Ibid., p.271.

18. See Stuart Laing 'Presenting 'Things as They Are': John Sommerfield's *May Day* and Mass-Observation' in Frank Gloversmith (ed.)


20. Laing in Gloversmith (ed.) Class, Culture and Social Change, p.149.

21. Ibid., p.149.

22. See above Chapter V, pp.253-54.

23. See above Chapter IV, section ii, p.218.


25. See above Chapter IV, section iii, p.235.


30. Cross-ref. Chapter IV, Section i, p.212.

31. See Stott Documentary Expression and Thirties America, p.x, and Klaus Literature of Labour, pp.130 and 161-162.


37. See Isherwood Christopher and his Kind, p.87.


40. See Chapter I, section iii, p.54.


44. See Isherwood Christopher and his Kind, p.90.

45. ibid., pp.12 and 90. Also Note 42, above.


49. Hynes Auden Generation, p.356, and Piazza Myth and Anti-Myth, p.117. For Isherwood's own view of commentators who failed to understand his camera-eye/I-witness was a narrative persona, see Christopher and his Kind, p.49.


51. See Chapter IV, section ii, p.218.

52. Jean Ross, Sally's 'original' eventually went exactly the opposite way, politically and culturally. She married Claud Cockburn and became the Daily Worker film critic 'Peter Porcupine' and Secretary to the WFPL.

53. Miles and Smith Cinema, Literature and Society, p.171.


55. Cunningham British Writers, pp.197-98.
56. See above, Chapter V, p.278.

57. See the reproduction in Mellor (ed.) New Photography, p.119. Spender's photograph had been published in the 'new' Photography Yearbook ed. T. Korda (London: Cosmopolitan Press, 1935), p.191. As Cunningham notes, it "has been rightly called a veritable ikon of the period" (See British Writers, p.160).

58. See Finney Christopher Isherwood, pp.85 and 90.

59. See Christopher Isherwood Mr Norris Changes Trains (London: Hogarth, 1935; repr. London: Granada pbk., 1977), pp.53-54 and 90. (Henceforth, all page references to MN will be given in brackets im the text.)

60. John Lehmann had already published 'The Notebooks' in New Writing (Spring 1936), pp.8-37, the first 'Berlin Diary' (Spring 1937), pp.11-26, and 'The Landauers' (Spring 1938), pp.5-41. 'Sally Bowles' was issued as a novella by Hogarth in 1937.


62. Isherwood certainly saw the reader as a cooperative 'producer/consumer' at this time as his 1940 review of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath shows (See Exhumations, pp.25-27, especially p.26).

63. Isherwood Christopher and his Kind, pp.135-36.

64. See Hynes Auden Generation, pp.354-55.

65. Isherwood Christopher and his Kind, pp.248-49.

66. Cf. Kisch's 'Elf Totenköpfe auf dem Katheder' ('Eleven Skulls on the Lecturing-Desk') in DrR, pp.103-07, which demystifies phrenological quackery. Similarly, the LBC's Spirit and Structure of German Fascism, (1937), p.44, by Robert A. Brady, showed how the Nazis conscripted scientific 'objectivity' as the "Handmaiden of inspired Truth" by "...using esoteric scientific terms, and generally playing upon the halo and awe-inspiring mysticism with which the popular mind has surrounded the white-frocked knowers and keepers of the secrets of the universe. And by controlling all media for the expression of scientific thought, they have been able to deflect or neutralise scientific investigation from examination of the theses, the assumptions, the interests, and the very foundations of the Nazi programme itself."

67. See above, Chapter V, pp.287-89.

68. See Isherwood Christopher and his Kind, pp.44-45. For details of Orwell's fictionalization of his circumstances in DAOPL, see Stansky and Abrahams The Unknown Orwell, especially pp.204-10 and 220-22. and Crick

69. For Koestler on Lord Lothian, see Chapter III, section ii, p.161. See also Isherwood Lions and Shadows, p.178.
In the second half of the '30s, war reportage came to play an increasingly important role in an ever more belligerent and propagandist world. As Grierson wrote: "European politics seemed to turn on the effect of propaganda and every nation was fighting for command of the international ether." Goebbels, after his initial losses to Münzenberg, quickly realised the potentials of propaganda in the construction of global hyperreality. The Nazis came to regard it "as the first and most vital weapon in political management and military achievement". The "strategy of position" which made the Great War "the war of the trenches" had been rendered obsolete by transport technology like the aeroplane. Equally, modern media provided psychological means "of getting behind the lines and confusing and dividing the enemy." 1 This meant that combat in the theatre of representation became increasingly important. Such was particularly the case with the Spanish Civil War of July 1936–March 1939. As Cunningham writes, Spain was a conflict "in which writing, text, image, and writers, artists, photographers, filmmakers, poster-designers, print-workers played central and essential parts. In no war before this one had the means of propaganda been used on so massive a scale." 2 Photogenic as well as highly writable, it produced Robert Capa's photos and Hemingway and Iven's film Spanish Earth (1937), extensive newsreel footage and radio broadcasts, as well as the AIA's exhibitions. In Spain, military force was almost interchangeable with the technology and artefacts of representation. Mola's secret Fifth Column was probably a bluff, but the war's
propagandists on both sides were "an open Fifth Column ... an essential troupe of military extras." Many of the forms and techniques of documentary representation were conscripted into propaganda's multi-media armoury, which, as the POUM discovered, could also be used to repress internal dissent.

Leah Manning's *What I Saw in Spain* (1935), on the Asturias Miners' Revolt, was the forerunner of British Civil War I-witnessing. Spain was an international 'people's war', in Angus Calder's phrase, like the Second World War which it heralded. As Judith Cook has pointed out in *Apprentices of Freedom*, the popular nature of the war is confirmed by the fact that, "It was almost the last time, at least in Europe, that men thought they could go out on the streets and fight tanks with their bare hands and win." The vast majority of the 2,000-plus Britons who fought for the Spanish Republic were working-class, "from the shipyards, mines and the hunger marches". They fought in battles like Madrid, Lopera, Jarama, Brunete, Teruel and the Crossing of the Ebro mostly in the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade, and worked as stretcher-bearers, ambulance-drivers and nurses. Their I-witnessing was documented at the time in Frank Ryan's *The Book of the XVth Brigade* (1938), William Rust's *Britons in Spain* (1938), and more recently in Bill Alexander's *British Volunteers for Liberty* (1986). The war has also been 'orally historicized' by Cook's seminal research, Ronald Fraser's *Blood of Spain* (1979), Hywel Francis's *Miners Against Fascism* (1984) and Ian MacDougall's *Voices from the Spanish Civil War* (1986).

These men and women came mainly from the South Wales valleys, Clydeside, Manchester and the East End (areas of high unemployment "which tended to encourage a two-class structure and where the
capitalist class was easily recognizable") and they saw the war "from a trench-eye viewpoint" (Apprentices, pp.3-4). Though they have been largely forgotten in the popular mythology of heroic opposition to fascism, they were in fact the few before The Few, facing the might of the Luftwaffe long before the Battle of Britain, not with the latest technology but with nineteenth-century rifles and inadequate munitions. As ex-IRA man Bob Doyle described one such air attack, "The ground was so hard and rocky you could only dig a sixteen-inch trench ... You could hear the scream of the Stukas as they dived. It was nerve-racking, not having any proper cover, but it was impossible to dig in." (Apprentices, p.111) Some not only took a stand years before the global conflict that might have been prevented in Spain, but suffered as POWs in concentration camps like San Pedro. However, even more galling than Gestapo interrogation, as Bob Norman recalled, was being cheerfully told "You'll all be shot" by a Daily Express reporter (See Apprentices, p.119). After repatriation, they were treated with suspicion as 'premature anti-fascists' even during World War II. From their first days in Spain, a tragic pattern took shape "which was to be repeated throughout the war: that of the untrained, ill-prepared volunteer being flung into battle at the deep end and of the British being used again and again as the shock troops for an assault." (See Apprentices, p.38)

Charlie Morgan's most vivid memory of Jarama was the improvised method of cooling the machine-gun after the water ran out: "The only thing you could do was to get down and pee on it. All hell would be breaking over your head and you'd be afraid to pull it out in case it got shot off." Sid Quinn recalled the worst incident of his war at a besieged village during the Brunete campaign: "A group of civilians were pushed out towards the end of the fighting, mostly women and
children. We wondered what was happening until we saw they were being used as a living shield, they were screaming ... and they were shot down by us because we couldn't stop. Every last one of them." George Aitken summed up volunteers' feelings about the pretence by Non-Interventionists to be enforcing the Marquis of Queensbury's Rules: "It made me feel as if the Spanish people had their arms pinioned while the fascists beat them and hit them in the face - and it was we who were standing and holding their arms." (See Apprentices, pp.75, 87 and 147, respectively) A hospital diary kept by George Green shows how appalling the experience was for non-combatant volunteers as well:

That's about all I've done in the last 150 hours - cleaning wounds ready for operation, holding the heads of men who were suffering with incredible patience, shaving hairy Spanish legs and testicles, falling down on a mattress for two hours of oblivion, going down for coffee and meeting Mrs Murphy who's the nurse in charge of the ward to which our cases go. She is all in. She has a son at Bedales and during the last few hours she has seen too many mothers' sons carried with sheets over staring eyes down to the wash house at the bottom of the garden. We speak bitterly of gangrene as a personal enemy. (See Apprentices, p.130.)

More positively, his wife Nan, who went on to be secretary of the International Brigade Association, recalled the exhilaration of contributing blood at the front: "Those who have only given blood in a hospital and don't see where it goes don't know how lovely it is to lie down beside the man who needs it, whose face has gone a ghastly white and there's no colour in his lips; and you lie and your blood goes into him and you see the colour go back into his face." (Apprentices, p.134.)

Charlie Morgan was made brutally aware of the ironic gap between cinematic representations of war and the thing itself: "I was with a machine-gun unit when we were told to go over the top. I remember this lovely lad ... turning to me and grinning, and he said, 'Eeh, Charlie,
it's like being in the pictures isn't it.' That was it. He was killed."

And although Walter Greenhalgh felt "Spain ... was not like the Grunwick picket line - you couldn't join the battle in the morning and then go home and watch yourself on the telly before settling down for supper and bed" (See Apprentices, pp.89 and 147), it was, arguably, the first modern media war. What makes Spain particularly important in the history of reportage is that the writer's role in reporting events was nonetheless crucial and had consequences, even if his/her actual involvement in them was relatively minor. The Spanish situation was especially complex, because it threw the prior debate about reportage's form and authenticity into sudden, savage relief. What looked like a clear-cut issue became a focus for the critical struggle between I-witnessing and official mediation. As Franz Borkenau put it in the preface to his early book on the war The Spanish Cockpit: "I began my studies under the common delusion that the Spanish revolution was simply an incident in the fight between Left and Right, Socialism and Fascism in the European sense of the words. I have been convinced by observation on the spot that this is not so." 6

Early in the Great War, a team lead by Colonel Ernest Swinton was designated official 'Eye Witness' by the British High Command to feed highly-selective accounts to the press, after civilian correspondents had been banned from the battle zones of France by Kitchener. 7 Though 'Eye Witness's' monopoly was broken in May 1915, continuing censorship and the jingoistic climate meant that it was not until the spate of war memoirs at the end of the '20s that unofficial testimony by the combatants themselves provided a widespread alternative perspective on events. 7 Spain revived the idea of the Just War (which had faded into the moral twilight of no-man's land) for the class-struggle and against
the menacing advance of international Fascism. Although Leftists endorsed the rejection of the straightforward patriotic war implied in the Oxford Union motion of February 1933 - "This House will not fight for King and Country" - this would by no means entail a commitment to pacifism when the circumstances of the mid-'30s seemed to make killing necessary once more. However, the gap between a new set of "big words" and actuality would also widen again and become the central subject of reportage, because at the level of ignominious death, destruction and disease, the conflict in Spain inevitably did not look like a Just War - just war. Heroic deeds might be possible once more, but had to be qualified by recognition of total warfare's horrific methods and dubious expediencies. Fine phrases like "The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder" of Auden's poem 'Spain' could not pass un inspected. 'Murder' could not be allowed to become a mere word; it had to be seen and felt.  

Though Spain was represented by the Popular Front as a Just War for democracy and/or socialism as distinct from the Georgian icons of King and Country, it nevertheless tested the implications of what Orwell called 'transferred' (i.e. displaced) nationalism on the Left (CEJL III, 423-425). The anti-heroic irony inherent in any war's squalor and carnage eventually combined with disgust at the tactics of modern propaganda to discredit Socialist Realism's 'revolutionary romanticism' in Britain. The war also killed some of its key advocates, such as Charles Donnelly, John Cornford, Ralph Fox and Christopher Caudwell. Though dissidents like Orwell emerged with their socialism reinforced, few Leftists retained unshaken faith in literary or historical orthodoxy. In effect, Spain implicitly rewrote Wilfred Owen's conclusion that "All a poet can do today is warn", into "All modern reporters
can do is warn against authorized truth". The presence of British writers in Spain was significant, because they made up a higher proportion of the British volunteers than their proportion of the civilian population as a whole. Moreover, there was an overwhelming consensus among them (as the symposium Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War demonstrates) that the Republic represented culture and that Franco's rebels, the murderers of Garcia Lorca, were modern philistines — a consensus that Stalinist stage-management of the Valencia Writers' Congress with its attack on Gide failed to undermine.

Hemingway, an influential modern reporter who had hitherto steered clear of explicit political statements, headed the American Friends of Spanish Democracy and made his first Popular Front speech to the American Writers' Congress in 1937 about fascism's crucial threat to them: "There is only one form of government that cannot produce good writers, and that system is Fascism. For Fascism is a lie told by bullies. A writer who will not lie cannot live and work under Fascism." For British leftists, Spain became the test both of art and of political will: the border, symbolic fulcrum of tensions in their writing, became geopolitically concrete, and the logic of their development demanded they cross it. Western Leftists were not conscripted to 'report' Spain, like the Soviet writers' brigades who worked on The White Sea Canal and Those Who Built Stalingrad, but their will to objectivity was nonetheless subject to the subtler pressures of self-censorship in the interests of Popular Front unity. The two leading Soviet correspondents in Spain, Ilya Ehrenburg of Izvestia and Mikhail Koltsov of Pravda (both ex-avant-gardists who had adapted to Socialist Realism), helped foster a climate in which any criticism of Republican actions was construed as 'objective' treachery. Hence Spain tested
British writers' faith in Stalinist history "as the ultimate judge of human affairs" (in Hannah Arendt's phrase). It also tested the degree to which they were prepared to collude with Realpolitik and become entangled in the teleological irony Aldous Huxley described in *Ends and Means* (1937). Though Stalinists accepted "ideal postulates": "Aiming to reach goals diametrically opposed to those of Fascism, they yet persist in taking the same roads as are taken by the Duces and Fuehrers." The scholastic logic defending means like forced collectivization and Show Trials could not prevent them conditioning the ends and "producing results utterly unlike those which the original makers of the revolution intended". Moreover, as in the Great War, mere battle-heroism did not automatically prove the justice of the cause, as Timmermans's fascist paean, *Heroes of the Alcazar* showed (see Orwell's review CEJL I, pp.321-22).

Spain strained the relationship between British new reportage and the Stalinist historical perspective to breaking point. Moreover, the philosophical paradox of subject/object relations was all the more complicated in what Cunningham calls the "opportunities for placing and displacing" which the war offered I-witnesses as the ultimate '30s *paysage moralisé*. The reality of this fifty year old war is mostly a documentary one for us now, but the art of the time also inflected and explored its compelling images, as in Spender's review of Picasso's *Guernica* mural, which he felt portrayed an event in the media as well as in the world of objective fact:

... it is not a picture of some horror which Picasso has seen and been through himself. It is the picture of a horror in the newspapers, of which he has read accounts and perhaps seen photographs. This kind of second-hand experience, from the newspapers, the news-reel, the wireless, is one of the dominating realities of our time ... The flickering black, white and grey lights of Picasso's picture suggest a moving picture stretched across an
Thus Spain was also, crucially, the hyperreal "border at which fact overlaps fiction and vice versa" and this particular frontier is not only "extraordinarily animated and difficult", but perhaps the underlying border tension of the period's writing. As such, Spain also culminated the new reportage's struggle with conventional modes of representation.

A British reporter who had no ethical qualms about methods of serving the Republican cause was Claud Cockburn (1904-81). An ex-Times correspondent for Central Europe and America, he edited the mimeographed The Week, notoriously effective 'guerilla' inside-journalism against the British establishment and its control of the 'respectable' media. It was also regarded by Von Ribbentrop as the centre of Anti-Nazi intrigue and propaganda in London. Additionally, Cockburn covered events like the Gresford Colliery Disaster as a Daily Worker staff reporter. In his autobiography Cockburn expressed formally self-conscious, sceptical views about what he called the 'factual heresy', arguing that the real deception of press-reporting lay in the myth of neutrality:

To hear people talking about the facts you would think that they lay about like pieces of gold ore in the Yukon days waiting to be picked up - arduously, it is true, but still definitely and visibly - by strenuous prospectors whose subsequent problem was only to get them to market. Such a view is evidently and dangerously naive. There are no such facts. Or if there are, they are meaningless and entirely ineffective ... until the prospector - the journalist - puts them in relation with other facts: presents them, in other words. Then they become as much a part of a pattern created by him as if he were writing a novel. In that sense all stories are written backwards ... Journalistically speaking, 'in the beginning is the word'.

This did not mean that Cockburn totally disregarded facts, but it did
mean that he sometimes used the guise of I-witness objectivity for retailing misinformation when he considered it necessary. His answer to Richard Crossman's doubts about 'black propaganda' either suggests a genuine dilemma or is merely cynical according to your point of view: "After all, if he does not think the cause for which he is fighting is worth lying for, he does not have to lie at all, any more than the man who sincerely feels that killing is murder is forced to shoot at enemy soldiers." Such thinking contributed to Cockburn's own _Reporter in Spain_ (1936), published under the pseudonym 'Frank Pitcairn', after Cockburn had served with the Republican Fifth Regiment on the Madrid Front. 'Pitcairn's' testimony to the early phase of the war was corroborated in an introduction by the proletarian novelist Ralph Bates ('I add my witness ...'), who had been in Barcelona. _Reporter in Spain_ was lurid Münzenbergian propaganda, against British Non-Intervention and for the Popular Front. "These men cannot buy rifles, you have stopped them," accused Bates. "But you have not dragged the Italian and German airplanes out of the sky. They roar over the shallow pits where men from the threshing floors of tradition lie, with shot-guns. It is the same in Castilla, Pitcairn saw it." Significantly, Cockburn used the same tactic as Katz and Koestler on the Alcazar: "I myself saw in the Trade Union head quarters at Toledo the pathetic row of photographs of these hostages collected by the militia and posted up there, so that in any sortie by the rebels it might be possible for the people to be recognised and their lives saved." Conversely, in his account of the war as a whole the Republicans could do little wrong."

Cockburn, who knew Kisch and worked with Münzenberg's Paris organization, along with other Britons like Willie Forrest, was a willing and able pupil of Katz's methods for making propaganda produce
"some pervasive practical effects upon events". They were jointly responsible for some of the kind of imaginary events Orwell complained of in *Homage to Catalonia* and 'Looking Back on the Spanish War'. Their masterstroke was feeding the French Press a fabricated account of a mutiny against Franco at Tetuan in Morocco in March 1938, which Cockburn claimed helped persuade Popular Front Prime Minister Léon Blum to turn a blind eye to arms shipments across the border, because it suddenly looked as if the Fascists might still lose. The account employed every authenticating I-witness device to emerge "as one of the most factual, inspiring and yet sober pieces of war reporting I ever saw".84

Cockburn's *Reporter in Spain* was written at a frenetic pace to counter the overwhelming British press coverage of Franco's revolt as the salvation of Spain from anarchy and Communism, and Cockburn continued to produce reports throughout the war for both *The Week* and *The Daily Worker* under his alias. However, working-class volunteer Sid Quinn's memory, of being besieged on Mosquito Hill during the Brunete campaign and getting a 'morale-boosting' visit from 'Frank Pitcairn', sheds a critical sidelight on the effectiveness of Cockburn's propaganda activities: "We were under a perfect barrage of artillery and snipers when Pitcairn came up in a van, driven by a driver who had got wounded on the way. His lady friend had been killed on the way up, too." Cockburn told them Eden was going to end Non-Intervention: "The stupidity of it, the awful stupidity ... Sixteen men were killed at that meeting, the snipers just picked them off one after the other." (See *Apprentices*, pp.87-88.)

A more self-consciously artistic effort (though paying Cockburn homage in its title) was John Sommerfield's *Volunteer in Spain* (1937). Sommerfield contrasted the shame of seeing British warships enforcing
Non-Intervention off the Republican coast with the enthusiasm of his fellow volunteers, and recalled their confidence while awaiting the Spain-bound train in Paris:

'Man!' exclaimed little Jock. 'There's hundreds of us, bloody hundreds!'

We stared at one another, puzzled, delighted, not quite understanding, but full of hope. Under this echoing roof, before the staring electric clock-face, a moment of history was creating itself, of which we, sharing in it, began to be obscurely conscious.

Indeed, the sense that the Civil War clarified the struggle with capitalist hegemony at home (as depicted in MD) into open military confrontation is strongly marked:

... this was a land where our familiar and hidden daily struggles had broken out in open war, a land where we would no longer face and mingle with our enemies in the factories and workshops and behind the desks of offices, but would look into their eyes across the sights of rifles.

So is the Utopian sense of solidarity at their reception in Andalusia:

To those of us who had marched so often through the streets before, escorted by the police, who had marched through the rich streets where nothing was ours and the well dressed people had stared at us with cold eyes laughing in uneasy mockery, this welcome was something altogether strange and intoxicating. (See VIS, pp.25 and 28)

Early Republican Spain seemed a fulfilment of the prophecies of proletcult so that even "Obviously middle-class gentlemen strolled about in beautifully tailored boiler-suits", as a kind of protective class colouration. Sommerfield approved of the war's liberating effect on sex roles too. Militia women were "the living symbols of a whole generation ... who were freeing themselves from the bondage of centuries, from a triple burden of exploitation, religious, economic and sexual. A mute submissiveness still lingered in their large dark eyes, but the bullets in their cartridge belts were to be directed against the defenders of their tradition." (See VIS, pp.32-33.) However, the tone
of revolutionary machismo that characterizes Sommerfield's I-witnessing sometimes brings the Stalinist sense of predestination and masculine initiation ritual together in fatal oversimplification. Holding a (significantly) 1914 Remington for the first time: "I suddenly realized that all along I had expected it to happen, that the moment would come, either of my own choosing or forced on me by history, the moment in which I would find myself with a rifle in my hands to defend the things in which I believed." (VIS, p.48) It was as if Spain had given him contact with the essential, bedrock reality quested by some Leftist writers, set against which routine Britain seemed a illusion:

The last tubes were leaving from Piccadilly Circus, the young people up from the suburbs for a night on the town were going home ... A little way along other sentries were thinking the same sorts of things about Paris. But we were here, it was now, it was real; the rest was far away, far in miles, far in kilometres, but further still, infinitely far in imagination. (See VIS, p.75.)

But a gravemound in the mountain village of La Roda was, for Sommerfield, a parochial symbol of the private agony of the Spanish nation, which a foreign volunteer could barely appreciate:

Here had been the centre of the local putsch, the miniature insurrection of the oppressors. Here, inevitably, had been their first and last stand, with rifles, a machine-gun, boxes of ammunition and tinned food all prepared and hidden. And who had they been? - the priest, of course, the rich farmer's son, the great landowner's jackals, the grocer's assistants, and the local bank clerk, testing the dreams they had built round the shabby catchwords of reaction ... (VIS, p.43.)

Sommerfield shared the Leftist consensus that while all "ordinary wars were for a lie", this was a Just War and, therefore, an exception. Watching the Thaelmann Brigade march past singing Hanns Eisler's 'Scum', he commented:

It was the voice of free Germany, and they were singing it again going up to the front and knowing better than any of us what they were fighting against ... It was a brave sight. It had all the glamour and excitement that governments can use to make men leave their homes and die on foreign soil for foreign
markets, but it was ours, it was our army, and the glamour was real, and they were going up to fight and die for the only things in the world that are worth fighting and dying for. (See VIS, pp.120 and 78-79, respectively.)

Nonetheless, for all its truculent confidence, VIS expresses underlying doubts through the way events continually shift between clear historical perspective and empirical opacity. Political epiphanies were necessary reminders of why volunteers were there, otherwise "in a war ... like atoms in a chemical reaction, you are lost in a boiling confusion in which you are not conscious of the part you are playing."

On the 19th anniversary of the Revolution (Nov. 7th) "for a moment we, the raw material of history, *were dimly conscious of the parts that were assigned to us*, able to see configurations in chaos by history's "penetrating light" (See VIS, pp.79 and 84). However, between the fighting Madrid became as unreal a city as far away London:

> The traffic flowed, the streets became crowded with people going to work; on the surface, a busy, preoccupied routine of living was going on, but there was no conviction in it: the people were acting the parts of their daily lives without believing in them, because in the face of their anticipations there was no longer any point in the things they were doing. And when they saw us and cheered it was part of the pretence; we were the main actors in the play, but the illusion didn't work; they were like people who go to the theatre to forget some calamity in their own lives, and for whom the illusion doesn't work because however much they might be caught up in the action of the play they are remembering all the time at the back of their minds that when the last curtain descends they will have to go out into the cold night full of inescapable grief. (See VIS, pp.90-91.)

Sommerfield also shared frontline scepticism about inspiring propaganda: "when you are in a war the orator's phrases and the newspaper words don't mean a thing: expressions like 'brave', 'victorious', 'gallant', become nauseous and shameful." But this only intensified his trench-eye view of the ramshackle Republican militia as "the whole bones and guts of the Spanish people's struggle." However, he could be as portentous and rhetorical as Katz or Cockburn:
The fall of Madrid could have tipped the scales of history in favour of those forces that, more subtle than the hordes of Jenghis Khan and Tamurlane, threatened Europe from within. The issue of our struggle was as significant for civilization as that fighting on the plains of Tours and Poitiers when the army of Charles Martel drove back the invading Moors. (See VIS, pp.81 and 102.)

Similarly, Sommerfield's reportage is all the more plausibly heroic (like Reed's portrait of Lenin) for being deliberately anti-romantic. Volunteers had to be "not only prepared to die for their cause but for the harder and more immediate task of living for it." The only way to survive was "to develop a dumb-animal passivity, an apathetic oriental fatalism", as in his description of lugging a heavy machine-gun and trying to contract consciousness "into the space of time it took for each separate step" (See VIS, pp.37, 57 and 92).

Throughout, Sommerfield foregrounded questions of representation and subjectivity in ways which complemented the avant-garde preoccupations of his documentary fiction. Men waiting in the dark for the train to the front ironically simulate monuments to the already dead: "the dense mass of the artillerymen drawn up against the station wall, the lines of their cloaks and leaning bodies forming a single mass like a long bas-relief frieze." (VIS, p.89.) He recalled agreeing with Cornford's view that the war was "not like the books", yet confirmed the authenticity of Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms (1929) (an obvious influence on his tough, slangy, reporter's style): "I couldn't remember exactly how Hemingway put it, but the sentiments were all right. He is quite right about a number of things, especially the things which happen to you in a war, especially the unpleasant ones." (VIS, pp.69 and 74.) Similarly, the experience of attacking is couched in Futurist macho-technological rhetoric: "like the exaltation that bursts within the body when one takes a steep curve in a racing car, the physical thrill that heightens
the fear of death and extracts an intoxication from it". Moreover, much of his account is montaged from short, cinematic sections, epitomized by the chapter called 'Natural History of the War': a staccato anti-pastoral of bullets, aeroplanes, shells and other instruments of death, under telegraphic headings (See VIS, pp.97 and 104-110).

Sommerfield noted an ironic regression to stone-age conditions in the process of halting technological barbarism: "We went back to the days of pre-historic man, to the days before fire was known. We were always cold, often hungry, wary for danger, and accustomed to sudden death." Modern war was made possible by the abstract "poetry of mathematics" and "sublimities of chemistry", death striking "faster than the sound of its own passage" (VIS, p.103.). It was a question of impersonal brutalities, as in his description of sniping at Madrid's University City: "here was a movement and the movement stopped ... it was impersonal, clay pigeon shooting; you did not think that you were making widows and orphans, robbing mothers of their children." However, he did not keep its sickeningly physical consequences at a distance, as shown by the anecdote of the dog lapping brains in the last chapter, 'War Picture' (See VIS, pp.146 and 155).

VIS was dedicated to the Young Communist John Cornford, with whom Sommerfield served in the machine-gun company of the André Marty battalion of the International Brigades. Although he wasn't with Cornford when he was killed at 21 on the Cordoba Front (the year he graduated from Cambridge), Sommerfield's reference to him as "the type and symbol of the youth of today" (VIS, p.159) characterizes the instant legendary status Cornford achieved for the Left, intensified by Pat Sloan's posthumous anthology. However, the proletarian Walter Greenhalgh claims to have witnessed Cornford's death at Lopera and his
account is rather less iconic. With a white bandage on his head and looking like "Lord Byron", Cornford refused a helmet: "We wait and wait and finally John Cornford climbs up to the brow of the hill to look over and the early sun just catches his white bandage and that was it. He got one straight through the head. That shot was the beginning of the machine-guns to open on either side of us." (See Apprentices, p.41.)

A precocious poet and theorist, Cornford (1915-36) was representative in some ways of the more committed public-school generation who came after the New Country fellow-travellers, and took the dogmatic line on Modernism. Cornford wrote in 'Art of the Class Struggle' (1933) that impartiality was "utterly false", because artists must either side with "the dynamic force of revolution", or become part of the "inertia force of history".** Though sceptical of "academic" history's positivism ("documents are always documents in the history of thought, and the facts, except in early history, are rarely reported in any detail") Cornford accepted Stalinism's scientific alibi and rationalized repression and starvation as the expedient price for building Socialism. The Party could "make use of the tremendous accumulation of energy that will tolerate the worsened conditions in the interest of the psychological success of the plan at full speed". Consequently, he also shared the period wish-fulfilment in believing that Socialist Realism's conditions of production and consumption had solved the problem of mass-relevance for serious writers (See Collected Writings, pp.89, 163-64 and 105-06, respectively).

In a 1931 letter, Cornford's mother, Frances, identified the unconscious, fatal attraction of Stalinism to Cornford and his contemporaries, anticipating Orwell's theory of "transferred nationalism": "I am sure it was not army discipline, as has sometimes
been said, but the restfulness of complete necessity that made
unexpected people like Edward Thomas & Ben Keeling so happy at first in
the army". (Quoted in *Collected Writings*, p.142) But Cornford,
christened Rupert John, confidently predicted "The next war will
produce more Wilfred Owens and less Rupert Brookes", (*Collected
Writings*, p.106), meaning that Communists would not go into the imminent
world revolution blindfolded by jingoism. Nonetheless, as Cyril
Connolly noted ironically at the time, Spain too had its "Rupert Brooke
period". Cornford's Spanish writing conflated both Brooke and Owen's
positions, because the experience of warfare in which (as Orwell put it)
"the laws of nature" were "not suspended" any more than in 1914 (*CEJL
II*, p.287) tested his ideological certainty to its ethical and physical
limits: "I came out with the intention of staying a few days, firing a
few shots, and then coming home. Sounded fine, but you can't do things
like that. You can't play at civil war, or fight with a reservation you
don't mean to get killed." His poem 'A Letter from Aragon', with its
laconic repetition of "This is a quiet sector of a quiet front",
steadily piles up debunking horrors, and Cornford reported a similarly
ambivalent reaction to Republican air-raids in 'Diary Letter to Margot
Heinemann' (1936): "The comrades with me on the roof were shouting for
delight as each bomb landed. I tried to think of the thing in terms of
flesh and blood and the horror of that village, but I also was
delighted." (See *Collected Writings*, pp.174, 41 and 176, respectively.)
Later, in 'Full Moon at Tierz: Before the Storming of Huesca', history
was no longer "plasticine", but something far less mouldable - "roaring
sands". And though, unlike Koestler, Borkenau and Orwell, Cornford
(who also served briefly in its militia) denounced what he called the
POUM's "parody of the Bolshevik tactics of 1917", his typological,
'aerial' vision of the historical process was rapidly dissolving into close-up, I-witness details: "Though I can vouch for the truth of every fact given here, and I have put down nothing which has not been thoroughly confirmed; it is possible that wrong inferences have been drawn, that some of the incidents which I believed were typical may have been exceptional." Now, the "future", not 'history', would "show whether the analysis given is correct." (See Collected Writings, pp.38, 112 and 109, respectively.)

Had he lived, Cornford might well have renounced "history as the ultimate judge of human affairs". There is poignant indication of this in his final letter (to Margot Heinemann, 8 Dec. 1936) during the fighting at Madrid's University City. It includes one of those moments in '30s reportage when reality appears to speak in symbols unaided: "the fighting consisted of firing from behind barricades of philosophy books at the Fascists in a village below and in the Casa Velasques opposite." (Collected Writings, p.188) Similarly, Charlie Morgan recalled his own anger that the lack of basic training was not made up for by barrack-room lectures in Marxist theory: "We're pleased the Soviet union is fighting the battle for Socialism, but we need to be taught how to fight now, how to take cover, lie doggo ... We're not going over the top with a copy of Das Kapital in our hands." (See Apprentices, pp.65-66.)

Even in a Just War ideas of historical predestination did not give invulnerability either to doubt or to bullets.

In the new reportage's challenge to the documentary fabric of official history no text is more clearly a watershed than Orwell's Homage to Catalonia (1938). TDISTW showed a broad confidence that some kind of truth-telling synthesis between I-witnessing and mediated
sources could be reached, and it marked the beginning of a phase of optimism when political progress seemed inevitable. Consequently, HTC marks the onset of disillusionment about such inevitability and of deepening scepticism about the veracity of the hyperreal. Orwell was heavily indebted to Borkenau's *The Spanish Cockpit* both for much general background information on Spanish political alignments and for their context in international power struggles (Borkenau was also included in Orwell's list of the most important contemporary factual writers). Thus, in HTC, the documentary montage of Appendix II in particular foregrounds open contradictions between Stalinist sources and "history as I saw it".

It may seem trivializing to reduce mortally real struggles to questions of representation, but as Orwell was quick to realize, such questions were at the historical core of the Spanish tragedy. Orwell probably never knew of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, but Spain showed him that the propaganda war could be as influential as events in the objective world, and sometimes even more so since it could have sinister "pervasive, practical effects" on them:

I remember saying once to Arthur Koestler, 'History stopped in 1936', at which he nodded in immediate understanding. We were both thinking of totalitarianism in general, but more particularly of the Spanish civil war. Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper, but in Spain, for the first time, I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts, not even the relationship which is implied in an ordinary lie. I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting, and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed. I saw troops who had fought bravely denounced as cowards and traitors, and others who had never seen a shot hailed as the heroes of imaginary victories; and I saw newspapers in London retailing these lies and eager intellectuals building emotional superstructures over events that had never happened. I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but in terms of what ought to have happened according to various party lines. ("Looking back on the Spanish War", *CEJL II*, pp.294-95)
Reporting in the Republican and international press of the sectarian conflict between the Comintern and indigenous Leftist parties, such as the Catalan POUM ('Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista'), in whose militia Orwell served, shaped his future development as a writer as much as his experiences of the war itself. His earlier ideas about the mediation of fact came to a head and, henceforth, it was his major preoccupation. It was not so much that Orwell believed an absolutely neutral recording of reality could ever be achieved, but that he saw the danger of letting go of objectivity as a guiding concept or enabling myth. Most history, he argued, had always been "inaccurate and biased", but contemporary "abandonment of the idea that history could be truthfully written" made the construction of the past an even more insidious instrument for controlling the future:

If the Leader says of such and such an event, 'It never happened' - well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five - well, two and two are five. This prospect frightens me much more than bombs - and after our experiences of the last few years that is not a frivolous statement. (CEJL II, p.297.)

Hence in HTC the lines of combat shift from the Aragon front into Reed's textual and psychological "battle of the printing-presses": Fascist bombers rain newspapers over POUM trenches, troops are pinned down by megaphone cross-fire, Spain is infected with a murderous "plague of initials"- PSUC, POUM, FAI, CNT, UGT, etc. - so that individual fates are directed by the difference between sets of signifiers, and mortal agonies by a struggle between factional theories. Inconsistency between I-witnessing and mediation is implied from the start. Orwell's celebrated description of revolutionary Barcelona in December 1936 shows the streets themselves montaged with agitprop and recalls the early Soviet mobilization of avant-gardism. It is not difficult to detect the

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part this defamiliarization of everyday life by the publically-raised profile of art played in Orwell's enthusiasm, but it is bracketed by retrospective hints that all was not as it appeared. The thrillingly confrontational colours and designs of overalls, flags and posters camouflaged an internal political scenario far from simple which would re-enact the tragedy of Soviet society:

It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the black and red flag of the Anarchists; every wall was scrawled with the hammer and sickle and with the initials of the revolutionary parties; almost every church had been gutted and its images burnt ... The revolutionary posters were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues that made the few remaining advertisements look like daubs of mud. Down the Ramblas, the wide central artery of the town where crowds of people streamed constantly to and fro, the loudspeakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night. And it was the aspect of the crowds that was the queerest thing of all. In outward appearance it was a town in which the wealthy classes had practically ceased to exist ... Practically everyone wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls, or some variant of the militia uniform. All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for. (HTC, pp.2-3.)

Orwell learned that the war and the social revolution were becoming disconnected, and that the Spanish bourgeoisie would eventually slough their temporary protective colouration with Comintern blessing.

Spain contained undertones of both the Great War and that to come. Georges Kopp, the Belgian commander of Orwell's unit, described the phoney war on the Aragon front as "a comic opera with an occasional death", a phrase that could have come from Robert Graves's Goodbye to All That (1929). Ironically, the trenches were not the only factor recalling Great War I-witnessing in HTC. There was also, increasingly, a similar sense of dissociation from the propaganda campaign, which, Orwell argued, was the effect of a complex chain of political
machinations that he traced through subsequent events back to the factional struggle behind the lines (in both senses (See HTC, p.32)). As Cunningham comments, this was the '30s equivalent to what Sassoon called Base Details, "daunting evidence of the Spanish Revolution's decline and fall" and "a microcosm of Stalinism in action" with its pervasive apparatuses of censorship and denunciation. HTC foregrounds the hyperreality in which the war's mis/representation takes place and which made the POUM's role on this obscure front central to an international political context. The "open Fifth Column's" power emerges after a Fascist bomber drops newspapers announcing the fall of Malaga, to be met with a radio and newspaper counter-offensive. In its parallel universe, boisterous celebrations in the Fascist trenches opposite magnify into a full-scale battle won by the Republicans without actually firing a shot. (HTC, pp.43-45) Furthermore, as for Koestler, the suspiciousness of the Malagan defeat set up "the first vague doubts about this war in which, hitherto, the rights and wrongs had seemed so beautifully simple." (HTC, p.45) What was originally revolutionary romance, "the News Chronicle-New Statesman version of the war", Orwell re-emplotted as a grimly absurd political and media conspiracy (HTC, pp.188-89).

HTC reports nightmarish operations by language on the world: descriptive categories inflect back into apparently objective realities, reducing human beings to caricatures "embodying certain ideas." (CEJL I, p.347). In 'Looking Back on the Spanish War', Orwell wrote about the impossibility of hating someone who seems as defecatingly human as yourself: "I had come here to shoot at 'Fascists'; but a man who is holding up his trousers isn't a 'Fascist', he is visibly a fellow-creature, similar to yourself, and you don't feel like shooting at him."
But similarity is expediently forgotten when the other is constructed as a sub-human enemy, and the same dehumanization was transferred to dissenters like the POUM by telescoping three separate connotations of 'Trotskyist':

(i) One who, like Trotsky, advocates 'world revolution' as against 'Socialism in a single country'. More loosely, a revolutionary extremist.
(ii) A member of the actual organization of which Trotsky is head.
(iii) A disguised Fascist posing as a revolutionary who acts by sabotage in the U.S.S.R., but, in general, by splitting and undermining the Left-wing forces. (HTC, p.245)

According to Orwell, even before Barcelona, the Communist media were undermining the militia's public image. Since they "were also, on paper, Popular Army troops", they could be "praised in one capacity and blamed in the other", making the scapegoating of the POUM for the Barcelona street-fighting of May 1937, as a planned 'Trotsky-Fascist' uprising (HTC, pp.92 and 118), seem more plausible.

Though originally convinced by its agenda of victory-first-social-transformation-after, Orwell came to view Comintern as a counter-revolutionary force, a Machiavellian instrument of Soviet foreign policy, on which the Spanish Republic was being being skewered by the sham of Non-Intervention. Stalin, dependent on French capital for modernization and hoping for an alliance with the capitalist democracies against Hitler and Mussolini, extorted terms for aiding the Republic. The repression of the minority POUM was the initial stage in the internal propaganda battle against Spanish revolutionism (the powerful Anarchist movement's turn would come later). Consequently, hamstrung by virtual Communist monopoly of censorship and with "no footing in any press outside their own country", the POUM were in no position to defend themselves against reports "that scores of thousands of working-class
people, including eight or ten thousand soldiers who were freezing in
the front line trenches and hundreds of foreigners who had come to Spain
to fight against Fascism, often sacrificing their livelihood and their
nationality by doing so, were simply traitors in the pay of the enemy."
HTC also used literary montage, like TWP, to dramatize the clash
between I-witnessing and official accounts: "It is not a nice thing to
see a Spanish boy of fifteen carried down the line on a stretcher, with
a dazed white face looking out from among the blankets, and to think of
the sleek persons in London and Paris who are writing pamphlets to prove
that this boy is a Fascist in disguise." (See HTC, pp.206-08.)

Spain convinced Orwell that an official Left-wing press could be
"every bit as spurious and dishonest as that of the Right" (HTC, p.64).
The Soviet historical perspective, which had once helped to constitute
an oppositional stance for reportage, resulted in the new domination of
Socialist Realism. Orwell insisted that he joined the POUM "more or
less by accident" on the ILP ticket (and because Harry Pollitt refused
him CP papers),** but it is no coincidence that both small parties were
critical of Stalinism. The experience of a media pogrom, therefore, only
confirmed the kind of dissident course on which Orwell had already
embarked. The campaign against the POUM extended the logic of the
Stalinist Terror (1936-38) and, according to David Mitchell, furnished a
"sensational justification" for the Show Trials.* Koestler had been
monitoring the Republican reaction to them; now there was 'evidence' in
Spain itself. And, as we have seen, Trotskyism had become closely
associated with Formalism in Soviet demonology. HTC, by questioning the
ethics of Stalinist Realpolitik and media, was thus liable to the
double charge of political and aesthetic sabotage which had been
levelled at avant-garde reportage in the USSR and international Leftist
circles. Symptomatically, John Langdon-Davies's *Daily Worker* review referred to Orwell's failure to observe necessary *partiynost*: "The value of the book is that it gives an honest picture of the sort of mentality that toys with revolutionary romanticism but shies violently at revolutionary discipline." The climax of HTC therefore stresses the discrepancy between first-hand experience of events and their representation by authorized sources:

> When you are taking part in events like these you are, I suppose, in a small way, making history, and you ought by rights to feel like a historical character. But you never do, because at such times the physical details outweigh everything else. Throughout the fighting I never made the correct 'analysis' of the situation that was so glibly made by journalists hundreds of miles away ... If this was history it did not feel like it. (HTC, 120-21)

Such passages illustrate the pessimistic distance modern reportage had travelled since Reed, turning an implicit formal and epistemological tension into a critical split. Hence Orwell was anxious to open another channel of mediation between this distant events in Barcelona and British Leftist opinion:

> Nearly all the newspaper accounts of the time were manufactured by journalists at a distance, and were not only inaccurate in their facts but intentionally misleading ... Like everyone who was in Barcelona at the time I saw only what was happening in my immediate neighbourhood, but I saw and heard quite enough to be able to contradict many of the lies that have been circulated. (HTC, pp.130-31)

> ... it is necessary to try and establish the truth, so far as it is possible. This squalid brawl in a distant city is more important than might appear at first sight. (HTC, p.216)

HTC, therefore, deconstructs the documentary fabric of the official version. Orwell's perspective was, he admitted, partial too, and supplemented by surmise, other witnesses and textual sources, (sometimes unsubstantiated, as with the leaflet from The Friends of Durruti). However, he acknowledged the double-bind of counter-propaganda:
... no one can be completely objective on a question of this kind. One is practically obliged to take sides, and it must be clear enough which side I am on. Again, I must inevitably have made some mistakes of fact, not only here but in other parts of this narrative. It is very difficult to write accurately about the Spanish war, because of the lack of non-propagandist documents. I warn everyone against my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes. (HTC, p.227.)

It is clearer in this passage than perhaps anywhere else in Orwell's work that he did not regard his own reportage as a simple conduit for truth. HTC's Appendix II, like Reed's assembly of competing reports of the October Revolution, represents an engagement between the media of the Republican factions, POUM, PSUC, UGT and FAI-CNT.** Orwell highlighted inconsistencies and inventions by comparing accounts in various organs: for instance, checking the POUM's La Battala against the Communist Inprecor's allegations that POUM papers issued instructions to withdraw from the front during the May disturbances. Similarly, the official accounts did not simply fabricate facts, but bent the laws of Newtonian physics so that effects preceded causes in a concealed form of Vertovian juggling. The proscription of the POUM was an object lesson in the rewriting of history, so that "one was breaking the law by having previously belonged to it" (HTC, pp.159-60). When its militia took part in the murderous attack to the east of Huesca, they were, unknown to themselves, already designated a Fascist conspiracy. Orwell also got first-hand experience of pro-Popular Front censorship on the British Left when his version was refused publication by the New Statesman and by Gollancz.** Whatever the justice of Orwell's attack on Auden's poem (see CEJL I, pp.565-66), there is no doubt that some of the British Left condoned expedient murder, e.g. of the POUM's head, Andrés Nin, Georges Kopp and Bob Smillie (grandson of the Scots miners' leader), among others. HTC forcibly restated the dilemma that, even in a
'Good War', the first casualty is truth, "because such things as individual liberty and a truthful press are simply not compatible with military efficiency." (HTC, p.132)

However controversy about HTC's accuracy may continue,* its clash of discourses represents another stage in Orwell's shift away from naive objectivity into historical consciousness. Furthermore, this was an awakening he felt the England of 1938, sleeping its deep media-induced sleep, was unlikely to experience until "jerked out of it by the roar of bombs" (HTC, p.187). The somnambulist English were insulated from consciousness of how their own mundane fate was bound up with distant international crises by a narcotic hyperreality which largely reflected only what the appeasing National Government wanted it to reflect. This artificial, unimaginative insularity might temporarily protect the British from painful realities, as Koestler also thought, but made their final catastrophic impact all the more likely. When the International Brigades were disbanded they promised the Spanish Republic "that we will change our front but we will continue to fight" against the spread of Fascism (See Apprentices, p.141). Going home, therefore, simply meant journeying between the potential zones of a war against humanity that could break out anywhere at anytime. Another product of modern communications technology, the aeroplane, would soon be demonstrating this to the British population as a whole.

Fact and the LBC had highlighted the Sino-Japanese War, which broke out in 1937, as the Far Eastern zone of this same interconnected conflict. Consequently, G.W. Stonier felt that Journey to a War, the title of Isherwood and Auden's reportage on China, published in March 1939, hinted abstractly "at imaginary war and frontiers of the mind" as well as a conflict with a definite location in time and space."** Hence,
they treated the Sino-Japanese War as a specific instance of a global phenomenon that also had an internal, psychological dimension. Isherwood's sense of how ideological constructs can masquerade as objective realities came out most strongly (as *Lions and Shadows* shows) in his feelings as a homosexual about the cult of masculinity and its mythic "Test" in war to decide "Are you really a Man?" Isherwood, who never went to Spain to confront his own 'war complex', nevertheless produced this joint 'Chinese Testament' from six months I-witnessing of the war in China from January to July 1938. It too was representative of the alternative documentary form, montaged into: Auden's introductory verse sequence, 'A Voyage' (London to Hongkong); a 'Travel-Diary: Hongkong-Macao', kept by them both on alternate days, but edited and reworked by Isherwood; Auden's 'In Time of War: A Sonnet Sequence With a Verse Commentary'. All of which offered multiple perspectives on places, people and events, plus their own photographs.

They set out both to expose the colonial construction of "the mysterious, *l'Extreme Orient*" (*JTW*, 224) and to subvert the surgical representation of war-at-a-distance with messy, close-up details. As Isherwood described their visit to a Government operations room:

> Everything was lucid and tidy and false - the flanks like neat little cubes, the pincer-movements working with mathematical precision, the reinforcements never failing to arrive punctual to the minute. But war, as Auden said later, is not like that. War is bombing an already disused arsenal, missing it, and killing a few old women. War is lying in a stable with a gangrenous leg. War is drinking hot water in a barn and worrying about one's wife. War is a handful of lost and terrified men in the mountains, shooting at something moving in the undergrowth. War is waiting for days with nothing to do; shouting down a dead telephone; going without sleep, or sex, or a wash. War is untidy, inefficient, obscure, and largely a matter of chance."

Despite its often camp tone (the "disillusioned journalist is the Byron, the romantic Hamlet of our modern world" (*JTW*, p.20)), *JTW* is
also seriously self-conscious about the role of war reporting in global
hyperreality. The 'Travel Diary' is full of sketches of press
conferences and correspondents 'covering China' with their writings and
images. They met Agnes Smedley and Peter Fleming, The Times war
correspondent, Robert Capa and the Dutch cameraman, John Fernhout
(who worked on Spanish Earth) on their way to film Mao's Eighth Route
Army. They watched Chinese propaganda films, as well as newsreels of
battles, urban devastation, atrocities and POW camps. Moreover, they
noted how the output of the official media, as in HTC, was also
governed by the internal situation: images of a Popular Front against
the common enemy masked armed truce between Kuomintang and Communists
which would explode into revolution in 1947-49.

The Sino-Japanese war broke out in July 1937 and Western powers like
Britain, France and the USA, already possessing considerable
'concessions' in China (themselves obtained by past colonial
aggressions) observed a precarious, deeply-compromised neutrality
similar to Non-Intervention in Spain. Isherwood caricatured the
absurdity of the protected status of Western nationals in a logische
Phantasie: a conscientious Japanese bombardier "looking down in
perplexity on a wilderness of neutral flags, and finally espying a tiny,
unprotected Chinese patch: 'Don't you think', he says, 'we might be able
to fit a little one in, just there?'" (JTW, p.20) However, as Mao
predicted to Snow in Red Star Over China, sooner or later neutrality
would be undermined by a Japanese surprise attack. In GTB, as we have
seen, the I-witness's subjectivity is always subtly displaced into the
objects of his perception. Similarly, in JTW he is ostensibly both a
representative of a neutral power and a camera-eye reporting
objectively, though in practice he is shown to be neither. Political

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neutrality was, thus, exposed as as much of a dangerous delusion as innocent I-witnessing: "One's first entry into a war-stricken country as a neutral observer is bound to be dream-like, unreal", (JTW, p.18) and Isherwood and Auden's undermining of the pretence of non-involvement in indiscriminate atrocities 'in front of your nose' implicitly indicted Western policy-makers.

JTW's indirect judgemental perspective emerges in its early shot of a Japanese gun-boat:

There she lay, murderously quiet, anchored right across our path. We passed very close. You could see the faces of her crew, as they moved about the deck, or polished the sights of a gun. Their utter isolation, on their deadly little steel island, was almost pathetic. Self-quarantined in hatred, like sufferers from a fatally infectious disease, disowned by the calm healthy river and the pure sanity of the sky. They were like something outside nature, perverse, a freak. (JTW, p.19)

But Isherwood was concerned less with simple anti-Japanese or anti-Chamberlain propaganda than with analyzing the forces which suppress imaginative sympathy and make both aggression and exploitative indifference possible. The gunboat's crew suffer from the same ideological plague afflicting GTB's Nazis,' which allows them to 'justify' genocide against the Chinese people. Moreover, as a homosexual, it seems unlikely that Isherwood could have taken words like "outside nature, perverse, a freak" for granted. However, instead of rejecting them altogether, in this passage he defamiliarized and recaptured their meanings from the oppressor. The Japanese crew's isolation ironically objectifies genuinely unnatural distinctions, the dream barriers separating a 'divinely chosen' race from their common humanity.

As we have seen HTC ended on a siren note against Britain's indifference to its guilty historical connection with the global
manoeuvrings of Empires, old and new. Consequently, the effort of resolving the contradictions of taking afternoon tea at an Oxbridge missionary's during a Japanese air-raid becomes emblematic of the text's attempt to co-ordinate knowledge of events in different hemispheres into one consciousness: "My brain tried to relate these images to the sounds outside; the whine of the power-diving bomber, the distant thump of the explosions. Understand, I told myself, that these noises, these objects are part of a single integrated scene. Wake up. It's all quite real. At that moment, suddenly, I arrived in China." (JTW, p.22) Similarly, JTW attempts to activate its neutral readership by a kind of montage pre-emptively displacing bits of pastoral Britain into the war zone to integrate what ideology and geographical distance alienate. In southern Hu-nan, "Charming, compact villages of grey and white houses clustered around their square watch-towers, which resembled the towers of English country churches." In Hankow, "Not only the Race Club buildings but even the grounds surrounding them might well be in the heart of Surrey", while the countryside along the Kiukang-Nanchang railway was "as green as Devonshire, with flowering hedges, and little hills and lanes." (See JTW, pp.37, 152 and 175) Moreover, at the Shanghai Bund (one of the first targets of the Japanese surprise attack in December 1941), islanded by the occupying army and the lunar landscape of the devastated city, the colonial replica of the 'peaceful' West was so incongruously complete, that it resembled "a beautifully-contrived charade, the perfect image of another kind of life" projected "from its source on the opposite side of the earth." But the source of that hallucination of secure affluence was just as endangered by the opposite, European end of the Fascist axis, as another co-ordinating moment in JTW had already made clear with the news of Hitler's Austrian Anschluß (See JTW, pp.229
and 48-49, respectively).

Significantly, the viral motif associated with the gunboat reappears in the report of a Japanese air-raid. Lit by searchlights, "It was as if a microscope had brought dramatically into focus the bacilli of a fatal disease. They passed, bright, tiny, and deadly, infecting the night." War is a 'disease' broadcast technologically, in the complementary forms of propaganda or bombs. Moreover, the air-raid is spectacular, pyrotechnical: "the watchers around us on the roof exclaimed softly, breathlessly: 'Look! look! there!' It was as tremendous as Beethoven, but wrong - a cosmic offence, an insult to the whole of nature and the entire earth." (JTW, p.60) Thus, Isherwood undercut the irresponsible rhetoric of Italian Futurism, its fetishizing of technology and violence. War as a mass-media spectacle, from which the deterrence of felt horror had been expunged, was the logical hypostasis of sensational journalism's vicarious, hyperreal thrills. The ultimate denial of modern humanity's "legitimate claim to being reproduced" is what the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko has dubbed 'warnography'. Similarly, as Benjamin wrote:

Mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses. In big parades and monster rallies, in sports events, and in war, all of which nowadays are captured by camera and sound process, the masses are brought face to face with themselves ... This means that mass movements, including war, constitute a form of behaviour which particularly favours mechanical equipment.**

"Fear of war" was on Shklovsky's list of vital concepts to be ceaselessly reclaimed from the voracious jaws of automatization, and Grierson too believed documentary film had to find a way "to make peace exciting if we were to prevent wars."** Hence JTW underlines the same genuinely unnatural contradiction between technological means and human ends.

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Isherwood eventually abandoned Popular Front politics and evaded the imminent European war by emigrating to America with Auden in January 1939 and becoming a pacifist. There is no doubt that the Chinese experience was a major factor in resolving his ambivalence about violence as a means for furthering causes. Moreover, displaced echoes of the Great War in JTW touch on the traumas of his own political unconscious, as in this implicit allusion to his father's death:

We arrived in Cheng-chow after midnight, two hours behind time... Outside in the station-square, moonlight heightened the drama of the shattered buildings; this might have been Ypres in 1915. An aerial torpedo had hit the Hotel of Flowery Peace...

(JTW, p.64)

Later, an otherworldly hotel becomes a temptation away from the reportage's political objectives: "It was all far too beautiful to be real. 'If I make the sign of the Hammer and Sickle', I said, 'everything will disappear.'" (JTW, p.169) But, more seriously, it prefigures Isherwood's swapping of Marx for Vedanta. The hotel's name, 'Journey's End', was also the title of R.C. Sherriff's 1929 play (part of the delayed spate of counterfactual texts on the Great War which was such a pre-programming influence on '30s writers) and the owner had known Rupert Brooke. 'Journey's End', then, seems to symbolise the exorcism of Isherwood's own war complex and its neurotic Test of 'real' manhood.

After Prater Violet (1946), he more or less abandoned literary reportage and the documentary novel's preoccupation with the nature of reality for a faith constituting all objective appearances as a veil of Maya.

In JTW the neurasthenic babble of an air-raid casualty draws attention to broadcasting's role in constructing hyperreality: "'Please can you tell me the fact?' 'What fact?' we asked. 'The fact about thinking. Is it done by radio-waves? ...'" (JTW, p.177) This takes us into another critical theatre of contemporary war-reporting - the
technological war over the ether. Orwell noted the contradictory potential of the radio and aeroplane for abolishing physical distances and frontiers only to reinforce mental ones. They intensified nationalism and cut down unofficial "means of communication between one country and another" (CEJL III, p.173), creating the prospect of exclusive states (in both senses) of media containment: "The result is that each national radio is a sort of totalitarian world of its own, braying propaganda night and day to people who can listen to nothing else." (CEJL III, pp.174-75.) However, Orwell's inside knowledge of the relationship between propaganda and broadcasting was based not only on his first-hand experience of Stalinism in Spain but on his experiences as a professional propagandist at the BBC, as the transcripts of his radio war (rediscovered in the mid-'80s) confirm. 60

As we have seen, many Leftists were either disillusioned with Stalinism during the Spanish Civil War, or broke with it over the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939, which seemed like a cynical betrayal of all the Popular Front stood for (though from the Soviet point of view, Munich probably seemed to scupper the chances of an anti-Hitler coalition). However, the propaganda and volte face, which can corrupt even a 'Just War' were by no means a totalitarian monopoly, as Orwell was at pains to point out. After the Pact was shattered by Hitler's invasion of the USSR in June 1941, making the USSR an eligible ally for the West again, there was a sustained British and, soon, American, agitprop campaign to rehabilitate the pre-war Bolshevik bogey into 'Uncle Joe'. In 1942 at the height of this, Orwell wrote of the media's expedient overriding of historical contradictions: "the extraordinary swings of opinion which occur nowadays, the emotions which can be turned on and off like a tap, are the result of newspaper and
radio hypnosis." (CEJL II, p. 288) Similarly, the radio censorship exercised by the Ministry of Information (MOI) (situated in the white tower of Senate House in Malet Street, like Minitrue, with its telegraphic name MINIFORM and headed by Brendan Bracken, a personal friend of Churchill, known to subordinates as B.B.) helps to explain the connections between Orwell's '30s reportage and his post-war writing.

Orwell broadcast weekly news summaries for the BBC's Eastern Service countering the offensive from Berlin by Radio Azad Hind ('Free India'), because he believed that Axis victory would postpone Indian independence "far longer than the most reactionary British Government would either wish or be able to do." (OWC, p.93) Orwell's commentaries, edited together from transcriptions of Axis broadcasts and MOI press releases, started in December 1941 and continued until he resigned in August 1943 feeling like "an orange that's been trodden on by a very dirty boot." (CEJL II, p.349) Radio propaganda was a long-range psychological weapon operating behind enemy lines like the bomber, but more difficult to intercept. Grierson believed it had rendered the Great War's "strategy of position" obsolete. Consequently, as W.J. West puts it in his introduction to Orwell's War Commentaries, besides the land fronts, Orwell reported "other campaigns ... carried on in worlds without frontiers" like the sea and sky, but all suffused by the hyperreal war over the ether. (OWC intro, pp.16-17)

However, West's argument that post-1941 pro-Stalinism (see especially OWC, pp.20-22) was the result of Communist infiltration at the MOI mars his valuable research by suppressing correspondences between official British policy and the manipulations of mass-opinion satirized in Nineteen Eighty-Four. The conversion of the pre-war 'red menace' into the 'glorious Red Army' was directed by Governmental
Realpolitik and carried out openly as Orwell noted (See for e.g. CEJL III, p.224). Later, at the onset of the Cold War in 1947-8, the Soviet image was reversed again by similar methods. Moreover, official pro-Stalinism was duly disseminated by capitalist newspapers like Lord Rothermere's once pro-Fascist Sunday Dispatch - "one of the very worst of the gutter papers (murders, chorus-girls' legs and the Union Jack" (CEJL II, p.267). Many of these same media-barons had been Rightist fellow-travellers in the '30s, as Orwell recalled in 'Who Are the War Criminals?' (1943) (CEJL II, pp.363-66). Pro-Stalinism was, therefore, just another round in the game of 'Machiavelli' which the appeasing National Government had played so badly: "This disgusting murderer is temporarily on our side, and so the purges etc. are suddenly forgotten. So also with Franco, Mussolini etc., should they ultimately come over to us." (CEJL II, p.461, and cf. CEJL II, pp.478-79.) Hence to claim that Oceania's schizoid alternation between alliance and war with either of the other superstates, while preserving the illusion of continuity with ideological principles, is relevant only to totalitarianism is itself tendentious. Furthermore, the publication history of Animal Farm (1946) shows how Orwell's critique of hyperreality was muzzled until it became politically expedient to promote it (See CEJL III, p.212, and IV, pp.433-34).

Perhaps the most significant single experience that Orwell underwent in his radio work was from the wartime experiments with Basic English. C.K. Ogden, as Paul Chilton points out, argued in Basic English (1930) that the English language had "evolved towards a structural simplicity and semantic purity" truly "basic for the whole world". Ogden claimed that Basic represented true facts of nature, for "the fundamental operations of physics ... when caused by the human organism as a whole"
could be covered "by ten of the sixteen operational symbols in the Basic vocabulary". Basic seems initially to have appealed to Orwell's interest in clear, efficient communication: "In Basic, I am told, you cannot make a meaningless statement without its being apparent that it is meaningless ..." (CEJL III, p.244) However, he was soon making reservations similar to Koestler's view that "simplicity of style" was to be admired, "but not if it leads to oversimplification or that kind of linguistic asceticism of the Ogden school which actually obscures the content." Consequently, Nineteen Eighty-Four's thought-controlling 'Newspeak' seems to have originated partly as a parody of Basic, which used only 850 words. Orwell gradually realised Basic extended the objectivist myth into an ultimately privileged medium for reporting; a 'deviceless' language, which recorded facts neutrally. Moreover, Orwell's suspicion may have been aroused by the fact that in September 1943, Churchill announced his conversion to Basic as a lingua franca for international communications, in a speech at Harvard University: "Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people's provinces or lands, or grinding them down in exploitation. The empires of the future are the empires of the mind."

Stalin too had shown interest in this new instrument of informational control, and had Orwell stayed at the BBC, he might, like Empson, have been reporting the war in 'Newspeak' which was, therefore, also the ultimate official 'Newspeak' (See OWB, pp.62-63). Both Basic and Orwell's parody abolish the plurality of available alternative signifiers and, hence, constitute reality in ideologically restricted forms. As Empson wrote, how could Basic deal with the difference between 'ship' and 'barge', let alone rhetorical figures like Churchill's own "Italy would be left to stew in her own juice?" (Quoted in OWB intro, pp.63-64.) Transcoding
into Basic entailed questionable decisions about eliminating 'non-essential' meanings from the message. Ironically, far from being objective, Basic merely made systematic the whole subjective process of factual categorization and selection implicit in the 'ordinary' language of reporting.

Though HTC did not achieve wide influence or sales before World War II, Orwell's war broadcasting shows how its critique of the documentary fabrication of hyperreality and history would develop beyond the '30s context into the post-war satire *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949. Back in 1944, Orwell attacked the hypocrisy of "denouncing war while wanting to preserve the kind of society that makes war inevitable", of creating metaphysical adversaries as an alibi for keeping the military-industrial complex in place and repressing internal dissent (CEJL III, p.215). He warned that a sustained media hate-campaign in a society nominally at peace would be worse than physical conflict itself, because it would be a war of attrition against imaginative sympathy with what is 'other' to the dominant ideology: "By shooting at your enemy you are not in the deepest sense wronging him. But by hating him, by inventing lies about him and bringing children up to believe them ... you are striking not at one perishable generation, but at humanity itself." (CEJL III, p.233) Nietzsche's "'He who fights too long against dragons becomes a dragon himself'" symbolized, for Orwell, the intensification and displacement of fears about the real menace of Fascism into a shadowy 'Red-conspiracy': "'Too long' ... meaning 'after the dragon is beaten'." (CEJL III, p.267) Not even post-war science could fix internationally objective standards of realism, precisely because scientists on both sides refused to think scientifically about politics and obligingly produced the atomic
weapons demanded by governments (See CEJL IV, pp.23-26, and pp.26-30). Orwell's thinking about the control of hyperreality and the precariousness of the post-war world is close to Martha Gellhorn's. An American war reporter also with her roots in the '30s, she encompasses both Shklovsky's and Kundera's positions in believing "that memory and imagination, not nuclear weapons, are the great deterrents" against war's "horrible repetition", which of itself can only end in extinction.67 Paradoxically, imaginative forms of reporting are vitally necessary in order for us to realize what the facts of phenomena outside our experience would be like before they are upon us and it is too late. It is ironic, therefore, that Orwell's later work, which in many ways epitomises the '30s critique of official reporting and the quest for an alternative new reportage, should itself have been hijacked during the Cold War, in the same key move of cultural assimilation that continues to privilege the 'recording' tradition of documentary over the broken tradition of experimental literature of fact in our society.
Notes to Chapter VIII

1. See Grierson on Documentary, p.238.

2. See Cunningham (ed.) Spanish Front, pp.xx-xxi. and below.

3. Judith Cook Apprentices of Freedom Foreword by Jack Jones (London: Quartet, 1979), pp.6 and ix, respectively. (Henceforth, all page references to Apprentices will be given in brackets in the text.)


7. For a full list of these texts and their effect on ‘30s writers see Hynes Auden Generation, pp.38-42 and Cunningham British Writers, pp.44-52. Also for particular individuals, see Paul Fussell The Great War and Modern Memory (Oxford: OUP, 1975; pbk. 1977).


10. Cf. John Cornford’s mother below, this present Chapter, pp.402-03.


17. See also Chapter III, section ii, p.164.

18. Cunningham *Spanish Front*, p.xxv.


20. See Cunningham *Spanish Front*, xxviii and above Introduction, p.7


22. See ibid., p.142.


25. See John Sommerfield *Volunteer in Spain* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1937), pp.23 and 14, respectively. (Henceforth, all page references to VIS will be given in brackets in the text.)

26. The phrase "raw material of history" had already been used in MD, see above Chapter VII, Section 1, p.358-59.

27. Interestingly, T.C. Worsley found Volunteer in Spain's Hemingway impression unconvincing:

"I noticed that it was quite a common thing in Spain for people to behave as if they were characters in Hemingway's forthcoming novel on the Spanish War, and since some evasion from the intensity of suffering is essential in war-time for the mere preservation of sanity, perhaps relapsing into the sentimental toughness of a Hemingway character is as good a
way as any other. But to continue to fake your feelings (whether conscious or unconscious) once you are out of it seems to me no part of a writer's business."

See 'Propaganda and Spain' Life and Letters Today Vol. XVII, no.9 (1937), p.16.


29. See John Cornford: Collected Writings ed. Jonathan Galassi (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986; published originally as Understand the Weapon, Understand the Wound, 1976), pp.44-45. (Henceforth, all page references to Collected Writings will be given in brackets in the text.)


31. See Note 15, above.

32. See above Chapter I, section ii, p.50.

33. See this present Chapter pp.295-96, above.

34. See George Orwell Homage to Catalonia (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938; repr. and revised Harmondsworth: Penguin paperbacks, 1989), p.188 (Henceforth, all page references to HTC will be given in brackets in the text). The acronyms of the main Catalan Republican Parties stood for: Partido Obrero Unificacion Marxista (POUM), a small, dissident Marxist party; Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña (PSUC), the Catalan Communist party; Federation Anarquista Ibérica (FAI), the Anarchists; Confederacion Nacionas del Trabajo (CNT), the anarcho-syndicalist trade union; Union General de Trabajadores (UGT), the Socialist trade union.

35. See Cunningham British Writers, p.427

36. See Crick George Orwell, pp.314-15

37. See Mitchell Spanish Civil War, p.151.

38. See Daily Worker (21 May 1938), Supplement, p.4.

39. See above Chapter II, section i, p.80.

40. See Crick George Orwell, pp.338-42.


43. See Isherwood Lions and Shadows, p.46. For the reasons why Isherwood never made it to Spain see Finney Christopher Isherwood, pp.136-37.

44. See W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood Journey to a War (London: Faber, 1939; pbk, 1986), pp.224 and 191-92, respectively. (Henceforth, all page references to JTW will be given in brackets in the text.)

45. For Smedley and reportage see above Chapter IV, section i, pp.185-87. Peter Fleming's Chinese I-witnessings, One's Company: A Journey to China in 1933 and News From Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir, were published by Cape in 1934 and 1936, respectively.

46. See Snow Red Star, pp.94 and 102.

47. See above Chapter VII, section ii, pp.376-77.


49. See above Chapter I, section i, p.31. Also Grierson on Documentary, p.225.


51. See Grierson on Documentary, p.238.


54. See Koestler Yogi and the Commisar, p.7 and cf Orwell's Letter to Ogden, OWB, intro., pp.47-48. For the similar view of the primary theorist of linguistic determinism, B.L. Whorf, see Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf ed. J.B. Carroll (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1956), pp.82-83.

56. See Crick *George Orwell*, p. 363.

CONCLUSIONS
Empires of the Mind

By investigating the origins and critical impact of the new reportage in the '30s, I have questioned the received idea that all so-called anti-modernism was merely a qualified return to the narrative realism of the nineteenth century, rather than specific developments of particular Modernist trends. I have attempted to show how the new reportage exemplifies the linguistic theory of the basic constitutive function and inherent figurativeness of representation. In this way, reportage deconstructs conventional distinctions between metaphorical and ordinary language, and between fictional and factual discourse. The thesis has, subsequently, interrogated the dominant tradition of documentary (i.e. the apparently objective recording of facts and historical events), by reconstructing an alternative broken tradition of radical reporting, which is both counterfactual and criticises the status of documents (including photographs and film) as privileged forms of realistic representation.

In so doing, I have shown how the implications of Russian Formalist defamiliarization led to an avant-garde literature of fact in the USSR and Weimar Germany, and I have discussed its potential not only to represent suppressed facts but to subvert automatized concepts and transform conventional categories of realistic representation. I have indicated how this literature of fact laid a basis for challenging the official paradigms defining historically significant data and for putting the dominant model of hyperreality under scrutiny.
Consequently, I have demonstrated the new reportage's self-consciousness about mediating and its frequent use of montage to expose the 'mater-real' quality of documents and the fallacy of history as a seamless, uninterrupted narrative.

Following on from this, I have mapped out the widespread growth and forms of a parallel alternative reportage in '30s Britain which did not simply resuscitate the realistic project of Naturalism but built on the Modernist legacy. Its attempts to construct an alternative version of hyperreality that would co-ordinate "things (men, acts) widely separated in space or in the social complex" and reveal the essentially cooperative nature of mass society have been analysed in detail. I have shown how British new reporters, both proletarian and bourgeois, helped re-draw the ideological map of Britain by defamiliarizing internal-travelogues into under-represented areas of society. Subsequently, I have shown why coal-mining and its communities were represented as the archetype of economic exploitation in '30s texts and came to epitomize the necessity for post-war industrial and social transformation.

The importance of the way in which '30s avant-garde documentary novels effectively complemented the new reportage, by using montage and by foregrounding questions of representation to investigate the interface between factual and fictional modes, has also been stressed. In the course of this, I have examined '30s novelists' attempts to reproduce Vertovian cinematic techniques in literary form to depict social and political crises. Finally, I have surveyed the role of war-reporting in the '30s, especially that of the Spanish and Sino-Japanese Wars, pivoting the discussion around Orwell's critique of the
documentary fabrications of hyperreality in *Homage to Catalonia*. Its implications for the mass-media propaganda techniques of the Second World War and after, have been traced through the relations between Orwell's radio broadcasting and his post-war satires.

I have focussed primarily on prose forms of reportage, from individual I-witnessing of contemporary events in articles and autobiographies, to 'participant observation', encyclopaedism, documentary novels, Mass-Observation and photojournalism. The historical and cultural factors which gave reportage literary prominence at the time, as well as issues, such as unemployment, poverty, the rise of Fascism and Appeasement, which it represented, have been outlined accordingly. In addition, the implications of the clash between the new reportage and the attempted unification of the Leftist historical perspective in the '30s under Stalinist Socialist Realism have also been analysed. I have, necessarily, taken account of the growth of mass-media reporting, especially its mimetically privileged visual forms, such as documentary film and newsreels, noting their effects on writers 'creative interpretation of actuality', and writers' ambivalent emulation and suspicion of the 'objective' camera-eye aesthetic. Overall, I have explored some of the ways and means by which new reporters expressed their awareness of connections between political and cultural representation, in order to question authorized representations of fact and the sanctioned national self-image.

The question remains: what has happened to the legacy of the new reportage and literature of fact of the inter-war period? It may well be true, as Miles and Smith argue, that the final effect of the Spanish
Civil War on Britain's intelligentsia was not to radicalize them, "but, if anything, to produce a drift back to centrist politics". However, what emerged from this drift was a complex product of loss of faith in Stalinism, on the one hand, and temporary necessity, on the other. Thus the limited freedoms of capitalist Britain, which might provide the basis of socialist transformation if their inherent contradictions were resolved, had to be preserved from the far more immediate evil of Fascism in the imminent European War which threatened any potential for progress whatsoever. As Day Lewis put it in 'Where are the War Poets?':

They who in folly or mere greed,
Enslaved religion, markets, laws,
Borrow our language now and bid
Us to speak up in freedom's cause.

It is the logic of our times
No subject for immortal verse -
That we who lived by honest dreams
Defend the bad against the worse.

or, as Orwell put it in The Lion and the Unicorn (1941), the Left had to hang on to "half a loaf", because it was better than "no bread" at all (CEJL II, p.82). Moreover, in the process of contributing to the war effort in the media, it was possible for many Leftist writers to assist in the definition of Britain's social-democratic war aims and contribute to the change in public consciousness that ensured their post-war implementation in the welfare state. This may not have been the looked for revolution of the '30s, but it was an undeniable safeguard against any return to the conditions of that decade. It may be true that it was partly an adaptive concession on the part of Britain's ruling élite to retain their supremacy, as Miles and Smith, as well as Paget, argue - a paternalistic, 'national-collectivist' forestalling of much more radical
But to many on the Right of British politics, the Beveridge Report and its consequences seemed more than radical enough, and they tried to prevent its recommendations becoming realities in every possible way. The welfare state reforms in health, housing and education did not, and have not, transformed the unrepresentativeness of Britain's political and cultural infrastructure in themselves, but they were the minimal necessary precondition for any subsequent social and economic progress. The dire effects of their erosion by the New Right in the '80s is sufficient proof of that. Moreover, this erosion has been carried out in the name of a jingoism which has capitalized on the aftermyth of heroic wartime resistance (based to a great extent on the real collective resources and initiative which ordinary Britons discovered in themselves when the repressions of peacetime capitalism were suspended), while surreptitiously uncoupling that myth from the social-democratic rationale of Britain's war aims, in order to undermine their legacies. It is clear from this, that the nationalist politics of the New Right are more directly descended from the populism of Philip Gibbs than of J.B. Priestley.

The part that the new reportage played in the '30s (and later during the war and the reforms of the '40s) has also been distorted or suppressed in a recent campaign of organized forgetting and historical manipulation. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of George Orwell and the media triumphalism surrounding 'Orwell's year'. In and around 1984, both the respectable and tabloid flagships of the New Right ran features that reached similar conclusions, tailored to their readerships. Consequently, Orwell's warnings against totalitarian
control of hyperreality were represented as if they constituted a rejection of socialism itself. For instance, Paul Johnson wrote in *The Sunday Times*:

Orwell's point that the individual conscience is indispensable has been proved. To be sure his Big Brother world has not come to pass. But its spectre has not been exorcised either. I like to think of Orwell... reading Crossman's Diaries and perhaps glancing at a recent headline: 'Mrs Thatcher Calls for Return to Victorian Values'. Where, one wonders, would his instinctive sympathies lie now?  

Similarly, *The Sun*’s first leader of the New Year parrotted that 'What we must do to keep Big Brother at bay' was to go on supporting the Prime Minister thanks to whom "the reality of 1984" would be "a time of liberty". It appeared that Big Sister both prevented Orwell's prophecy of "Marxist tyranny" coming to pass and fulfilled his hopes for the survival of the morally responsible individual, bearing witness to the real facts of the time. Hence, both these articles are clear examples of the capitalist media power that continues to succeed in Britain where Ingsoc's fantastic repressions never materialized. Ironically, the capitalist media have even constructed an alibi for their own integration propaganda out of the nightmare effect of the latter: it is no coincidence that Rupert Murdoch annexed *The Times* to his media empire in 1984, with scarcely a murmur from the Monopolies Commission. Most grotesquely, the *Daily Mail* featured doctored excerpts from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the first week of that year, accompanied by appropriate interpretations from historian John Vincent, although he omitted Orwell's satire of the narcotic newspapers produced in the lowest basement of the Ministry of Truth.  

The political alignment represented by the wartime coalition which
replaced Chamberlain in May 1940 was paradoxical, if not bizarre. Headed by the Tory maverick Winston Churchill and, increasingly, the Labour leader Clement Atlee, and supported by ex-Popular Fronters like Michael Foot and the others who wrote the 1940 exposé of the National Government, *Guilty Men*, it was a compromise, brought about by necessity. But its temporary and provisional nature merely suspended divisions of opinion about why the war was being fought, based on the social and economic conditions of the '30s, which emerged in all their harshness in the 1945 election campaign. Equally, Churchill turned against the official Conservative policy of Appeasement not because of any fundamental abhorrence of Nazi ideology, but because of his early realization that German expansionism could not be contained as a mere buffer between the Soviet Union and British interests (an anachronistic extension of the European 'balance of power' theory which had been the basis of British foreign policy since 1815). Hence Churchill's prime motivation in the '30s was the belief that the Third Reich represented a threat to an already declining British Imperialism, not opposition to tyranny *per se*.

Day Lewis asked 'Where Are the War Poets?' only a few months after hostilities began. In fact, the artists of World War II were not necessarily dashing off verses or dispatches from the battlefronts, but were often to be found, like Orwell or Priestley, broadcasting at the BBC, like Harrisson and M-O, reporting for the Department of Home Intelligence, or like Jennings making documentaries about the home-front such as *London Can Take It* (1940): all, more or less, under the direct orders and censorship, of the MOI. Thus as Miles and Smith put it, many
from the "alternative cultural canon of the interwar period, were to be drawn into the biggest exercise in mass communications ever undertaken by the British state." The rewriting during the Spanish Civil War of Wilfred Owen's dictum - "All the reporter can do today is warn against authorized versions of the truth" - was qualified by the subsequent involvement of many of the radical intelligensia in morale-boosting propaganda work out of a renewed, but deeply-chastened sense of political necessity. For example, just as Orwell's commentaries were designed to counter the Fascist radio-offensive in India, so too Priestley's 'Postcript' broadcasts were not only broadcast for their own value in promoting the idea of post-war social-democratic reconstruction, but also specifically to counter Lord Haw Haw's promotion of the Nazi New Order on the home front.

The mobilization of Leftist writers during the war might seem a long way from the alternative, informational culture envisioned by LEF, and illustrated by the work of Vertov and Kisch, but it was in a, albeit complex and mixed, line of descent from their avant-garde theory that art must be based on contemporary facts and engage with the modern media in the service of the 'social commission'. Moreover, as we have seen, many British artists carried on the old Popular Front idea, exemplified by the radical encyclopaedism of Fact and the LBC, that "A united front against fascism" necessitated "a united front too against the social conditions of the 1930s", so that the ideal of building "the New Jerusalem was an essential precondition for winning the war." And they projected this vision through their reporting of the war in text and image, one way or another. Like Hopkinson in his signed PP editorial
on the Beverdidge Report, they were vigilantly determined that the promise of post-war reconstruction would not simply be exploited by the Government for its inspirational effect without firm commitments to implement it once Fascism was defeated. The result of the 1940s' paradoxical combination of millenarian socialism and new patriotism was an authentic form of populism which was highly successful. Nevertheless, it is precisely the political uncoupling of this populism from its wider social objectives which is so falsifying and damaging today. The post-war consensus may have outlived its value, but the way it has been destroyed has allowed the New Right to recolonize the history of the '30s and '40s and to threaten to disinherit the British Left from a vital part of its own cultural history.

The new informational imperialism of the post-war period may not have taken the fantastic forms of Nineteen Eighty-Four, but it has fulfilled Churchill's prophecy that "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind" in subtle ways. This has happened simultaneously with (and as if without contradicting) decolonialization and the spread of democracy. The ideological 'war without frontiers' continues for what Orwell's Winston Smith calls "the few cubic centimetres inside the skull" (mistakenly believing that this inner territory is inalienably his own) wherein both empirical reality and mediations are apprehended and dis/connected. Increasingly, official News-speak gives the appearance of transparent access to global facts by documentary 'recording'. Hence, Jean-François Lyotard's recent hypothesis, "that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control of territory, and afterwards for
control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour" was borne out by the propaganda war which recently mediated the struggle for the oil-rich Persian Gulf. 11

Though the war in Spain might have been a specific flashpoint in the development of many '30s writers' attitudes to Stalinist history, the wider evidence of '30s reportage confirms that all history is the history of interpretation and representation, and that reported facts, by definition, do not speak for themselves. As Isherwood believed, the innocence of camera/I-witnessing is in the ideology of the beholder. It is doubly ironic, therefore, that Orwell's late satires on the documentary fabrication of hyperreality were hijacked by Rightist Cold Warriors. This has helped to popularize the identification of propaganda and censorship with (usually, Leftist) totalitarianism. It has also limited the critical impact of the new reportage through posthumous ideological appropriation of one of its leading British exponents, demonstrating Ellul's argument that restricting the perception of propaganda to obvious distortions by political antagonists diverts attention from, and promotes unconscious collusion with, its wider and more insidious effects. 12 The near disastrous public ignorance maintained by British media control in the '30s was intensified, but also redirected, during the Cold War. In the '30s such control meant that a genuinely defensive war against Fascism was impossible to start until September 1939, when it was almost too late and produced incalculably greater destruction; conversely, from the late '40s until the late '80s, the pressure towards a war of mutual nuclear extinction with the Soviet Union was difficult to avoid: in both cases for the
same reason. Furthermore, the blocking of genuinely democratic access to the media is no less now when the Cold War appears to be ending, because an increasingly multi-national, military-industrial complex may be in the process of inventing new ideological 'others', to ensure its continued existence and to repress political and cultural transformation. This only makes the freeing of Orwell's critique from its post-war capture, by putting it back into the wider context of '30s reportage and the broken tradition of alternative documentary art, more urgently relevant.

'30s reportage consistently reiterates the point made by Kisch in the '20s about the Hugenberg-Konzern that censorship's ultimately determining factor is economic: information is a commodity manufactured, reproduced and distributed like any other. As J.B. Priestley wrote:

Newspaper editors are fond of writing with passion about the freedom of the Press, but by this they mean only freedom from direct government control and not the indirect government control that can be exercised through their proprietors. Nothing is said to readers about forbidden topics and 'black lists'. Other indirect control can be exercised by the very wealthy advertisers, whose concerted action has been known to have changed the policy of a newspaper.

This upsets the popularized equation of censorship with lurid 'sci-fi' state repression. One of Orwell's earliest pieces, 'A Farthing Newspaper' (1928) (CEJL I, pp.34-37), exposed the vested interests in 'popular' journalism, anticipating Madge's 'Press, Radio and Social Consciousness' which helped initiate M-0. In the early nineteenth century, Britain's rulers felt that information was in itself subversive, and attempted to make newspapers inaccessible to the majority through stamp duties. In the twentieth century, instead of being crudely withheld, information is supplied in tacitly regulated
ways. The stamp duty's modern equivalent is, ironically, the cheapness made possible by the economics of mass-circulation: newspapers no longer profit directly from sales, but indirectly through the advertising which shapes their editorial policy. Hence, Orwell agreed with Priestley that British press freedom was largely theoretical, since the fact of ownership "by a few people operates in much the same way as state censorship" (See CEJL IV, pp.59-60). We are necessarily dependent on the media, but that dependence can also be sinisterly habit-forming because of the way they operate under capitalism. The "dope", demanded from the British reporter, as Orwell called it in 1928, is generally the integration propaganda of capitalist newspapers nominally independent of the state. The method of this has evolved into what John Pilger calls "anti-journalism", the new reportage's narcotic opposite, which deliberately reinforces the dominant ideology, insulating consciousness from the shock of the real while ceaselessly appearing to present global facts in unmediating, ordinary language.

Orwell also shared the belief of his Leftist contemporaries that the élite who both ran the British state and owned its most powerful businesses had a common interest in "preventing the common man from becoming too intelligent" (CEJL II, pp.380-81). The somnambulist English, living mundanely by an automatized web of codes constructed as common-sense, were denied the kind of stimulating media that might cause them to question the status quo, because "Power can sometimes be won or maintained without violence, but never without fraud". Hence, as Madge and Spender also thought, the media promoted the interests of a dominant minority as if they were the common will and interest of the
people (CEJL IV, p.193). The democracy of the British state was a half-truth, like its justice, liberty and objectivity and Orwell shared the tenet of '30s Leftist reportage that the masses were both politically and culturally underrepresented. That made media claims to be the 'voice of the people' a form of ventriloquism keeping society out of touch with itself: "The whole idea of trying to find out what the average man thinks, instead of assuming that he thinks what he ought to think, is novel and unwelcome." (CEJL III, p.167) Accurate documentation of real mass wants and conditions was vital, but, as M-O, Fact and the LBC found, social surveys were economically censored because "a subject only gets investigated if some large, wealthy organization happens to be interested in it." (CEJL IV, p.357)

The overwhelming evidence from the '30s suggests that genuine democracy is a potential based on the free flow of - not a so-called free market in - information, requiring the widest possible social access to the means of production and distribution. Such things are not optional extras in a democracy, because without them the majority is not so much silent, as silenced - by under-education and lack of means and opportunities for representing themselves and regarding their mundane reality from historically significant perspectives. The basis of inequality is the mystification of the 'secret state' and its indirect instruments, monopolistic media. Hence, Orwell's words on Governmental hostility towards the radio discussion programme, The Brains Trust, are as relevant to British broadcasting now (after the reporting of the bombing of the Baghdad bunker, the Spycatcher affair, and the controversial television documentary on the Gibraltar
shootings) as they were in 1944: "You or I, perhaps, would not think of
the BBC as a dangerously subversive organization, but that is how it is
regarded in some quarters and there are perpetual attempts to interfere
with its programmes." (CEJL III, p.202) Hence, the 'due impartiality'
clause, inserted by Tory libertarians (including ex-Mass-Observer,
Woodrow Wyatt) in the present Government's Broadcasting Bill, could be
taken seriously only if the media balance it ostensibly seeks to ensure
were extended to Britain's press, which is even more overwhelmingly
Conservative than in the '30s. This double-standard is confirmed by the
fact that in 1988 the ITV documentary Death on the Rock was denounced by
the PM because (she alleged) it would prejudice the outcome of the
official investigation into the shooting of the three unarmed IRA
members by the SAS. Though the programme was not due to be shown outside
Northern Ireland, its makers were pilloried for 'trial by media', the
double-standard of which was confirmed by the fact that there was no
equivalent outcry against the smearing of the chief witness, Carmen
Proetta, in The Sun, a newspaper freely available in Gibraltar itself.

On the '30s Left it was generally felt that, as Orwell put it,
individual writers could no more avoid the political implications of
the media than the corner shop-keeper could "preserve his independence
in the teeth of the chain-stores" (CEJL I, p.373), because they were an
integral and indispensable part of the multiplicity and simultaneity of
modern consciousness. However, Orwell also believed that the
monopolizing of information was partly mitigated by the fact that
modern society still needed to maintain a cultural intelligentsia to
construct its hyperreality. "The striped-trouserred ones will rule", but
the possibility of alternative representations of the facts could be kept alive. Certain documentary films, for example, "that are all wrong from the bureaucratic point of view will always have a tendency to appear" (CEJL II, pp.381-382). However, inadvertent pearls produced by bits of grit in the ideological state apparatuses are no substitute for fundamental economic and political changes. Hence Orwell's more searching conclusion, that the media's "immense educational possibilities" could only be realised when they were "freed once and for all" from vested interests (CEJL III, p.54), was the same as Madge's, that the press could be redeemed only by representing society with true proportionality. In the 1990s this still has to be achieved. In fact, the reverse is happening. The media increasingly constitute the arena in which issues are regarded and popularize the ideology which best serves their restricted ownership. As Charter 88 has pointed out, Britain suffers from interconnected forms of constitutional and cultural 'disproportional representation'. But the Catch 22 remains that such interests repress democratic consciousness for change because they hold the keys to the doors of public perception necessary for raising it.

The object of Nineteen Eighty-Four's Party propaganda is the negation of history in its widest possible sense as process and change while simulating it through documentary fabrications. The Ministry of Truth edits and reconstitutes the past to agree with the present hegemony's day-to-day manoeuvrings. Similarly, disproportional representation in Britain's media ceaselessly constructs an inauthentic image of nationhood, just as the state of Oceania is also
a 'state' of total hyperreal containment identifying the Party's interests as those of community as a whole. Orwell's fantasy of hermetic linguistic and informational closure would not literally be possible under any actual regime, even with today's state-of-the-art technology (as Paul Chilton has shown). But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* remains rooted in the wider '30s debate about the political responsibility of forms of representation and in the challenging of dominant historical perspectives by the new reportage.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Party denies individuals the right to witness unofficial versions of events, and prevents the past's depleted layers being filled out with the 'graffiti of the people'. Similarly, Orwell's 'Looking back on the Spanish War' foregrounded the exclusion of the majority from the material construction of history. It is not just history's fallen protagonists like Trotsky/Goldstein who are posthumously translated into 'unpersons', for the same process implies a silenced majority of countless potential reporters of their own anonymous lives. The struggle for representation is, indeed, "the struggle of memory against forgetting", and Kundera's words illuminate not only the aspirations of '30s writers, but also the continuous crux posed by the informational possibilities of the modern media. Reconstructing the broken tradition of the new reportage and documentary restores writers like Orwell to the context of theories and practices which make them so significant. This context can still aid the silenced majority to recover and develop ways of analyzing their dependence on hyperreality. In this way, it might also help to create more democratic ways of representing us to ourselves and "limit our
capacity for the inhuman".
Notes to Conclusions

1. Miles and Smith Cinema, Literature and Society, p.214.


7. See Note 2, above.

8. Miles and Smith Cinema, Literature and Society, pp.229 and 239.


10. See Orwell Nineteen Eighty-Four, p.29.


15. See above Chapter IV, section iii, pp.228-30.


17. For Spender's view of the press, see above Introduction, p.15.

18. See above Chapter IV, section iii, pp.228-30 and 236.

19. See Orwell Nineteen Eighty-four, pp.221-23.


22. See above Chapter I, section ii, p.51.
23. See above Chapter I, section i, p.40.
and would be hoisted when he crossed the Central. . . .

The government composed of members of all parties was in danger. One is any truth in the government will take

It must be understood that the rights of the Central

The word "guaranteed" is not mentioned in the

The government composed of members of all parties was

was only one woman when a stocky little woman

When Kerensky arrived, the story of the Kerensky Rebellion

The word "guaranteed" is not mentioned in the
On the 30th of November the Military Revolutionary Committee issued a warning:

"On the 30th of November the Military Revolutionary Committee...

plotted, striked, captured, and controlled. No strikes! No strikes!
of December! Revolutionary orders. Revolutionary prophecies!"

The proclamation begins with:

"On November 30th, the Military Revolutionary Committee..."
VICTORY OF SOCIALISM.

"...The Tsarist Congress..."

"...The Tsarist Congress..."

...The Tsarist Congress..."
APPENDIX B

If reportage was one of the distinctive new approaches, photo-reportage was another. Together, they helped build a documentary tradition that is still very relevant today. The master reporter was the Austrian Communist Egon Erwin Kisch, here depicted by three leading artists: right, above, Rudolf Schlichter (c. 1927) shows him outside Berlin's Romanisches Café against a poster column featuring the Prague football team for which Kisch once played and John Reed's pioneer reportage Ten Days that Shook the World.

Christian Schad, 1928 (right, below), sets Kisch among Eiffel-Tower-like girders, while Umbo's montage (above) makes him a well-articulated body out of all the paraphernalia of modern communications. Opposite are two anonymous illustrations from the brilliantly edited picture magazines of the time— in this case, the Kölnische Illustrierte (left) and the Berlin Weltspiegel (right above). Below right, Willi Muenzenberg's appeal for 'worker photographers' able to record what the capitalist press could not or would not see.
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