



University of **HUDDERSFIELD**

University of Huddersfield Repository

Nolan, Michael

An Egalitarian Gaze: Photographic Representations of Working People in Britain, 1919- 1939.

Original Citation

Nolan, Michael (2020) An Egalitarian Gaze: Photographic Representations of Working People in Britain, 1919- 1939. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/35301/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

An Egalitarian Gaze.

Photographic Representations of Working People in
Britain, 1919- 1939.

Michael Nolan.

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy.

The University of Huddersfield.

February 2020.



Tom, Annie, Mary and Paul. Castlegate, Huddersfield, circa 1938.

To Diane, Lauren, Daniel and Ryan.

Copyright Statement.

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/ or schedules to this thesis) owns any copyright in it (the "Copyright") and he has given The University of Huddersfield the right to use such Copyright for any administrative, promotional, educational and/or teaching purposes. ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts, may be made only in accordance with the regulations of the University Library. Details of these regulations may be obtained from the Librarian. Details of these regulations may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made. iii. The ownership of any patents, designs, trademarks and any and all other intellectual property rights except for the Copyright (the "Intellectual Property Rights") and any reproductions of copyright works, for example graphs and tables ("Reproductions"), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property Rights and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property Rights and/or Reproductions.

Acknowledgements:

The origins of this thesis lay in the previous generation of Nolans and Ryans, whose lives and stories have constantly inspired me. More immediately, I would like to thank all of the archivists that I have had the pleasure of working with. Invariably they were welcoming, enthusiastic and keen to help me explore their treasures. Keith Laybourn, Liam Devlin and Alex von Lunen, my supervisors, have been excellent, carefully developing my crude enthusiasms into, hopefully, something better. Above all, I would like to thank Diane. She prompted me to take up a PhD in the first place, she gave me the space to pursue it, and she was unflagging in her confidence. Thanks Diane.

Contents

Abstract.....	11
Introduction	12
Chapter One. Obfuscations. The Marginalisation of Working People.	29
i. Michel Foucault – a toolkit for understanding the photography of working people?	31
ii. One group of amateur photographers and their selection of images.	36
iii. Five Professional Photographers and their Representations of Working People.	46
iv. Two Newspapers and Two Photographers: How the Press Photographed Working People.	77
v. Conclusions	103
Chapter Two. Immigrations: the impact of the German- speaking exiles on the photography of working people in Britain.	108
i. Germany.....	109
ii. Britain.....	118
iii. Conclusions.	141
Chapter Three. Explorations. Photographic journeys among the working classes.	146
Conclusions.	189
Chapter Four. Exaltations. A Counter Narrative.....	192
i. A Family Photography.	197
ii. The Press.	243
iii. Conclusions.	289
Conclusion	294
Bibliography	302
References.....	314

List of Photographs:

Chapter 1.

1. From the archive of the Huddersfield Naturalist, Antiquarian and Photographic Society.
2. From Woodend Museum, Scarborough, Box PH5.
3. From Grimsby Local History Library, Box G727.
4. From the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, (P238-40).
5. From Arthur G. Credland, *Harry Cartlidge, 1893-1987: Hull Photographer* (Hull, 1998).
- 6-7. From Peter Hagerty, *Liverpool Through the Lens: Photographs by Edward Chambre Hardman* (London, 2007)
- 8-10. From Robert Elwell, *John Maltby* (London, 2000).
11. From, J. Allan Cash, *Living on my Camera: Ten Years of Free Lancing* (Aylesbury, 1946).
- 12-13. From E.O.Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures: The Success of a Photographer* (London, 1945).
- 14-15. From W. Pett Ridge, *London Types*, (London, 1926).
- 16-17. From the Woodend Museum, Scarborough, Box PH21.
- 18-19. From Grimsby Local History Library, Box 727/387-1.
- 20-23. From the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, respectively- P2719, P400, P2720, P8421, P3317.
- 24-25. From Heritage Quay, Huddersfield University, Hartley Contacts, 0293, 0294 and S/CO54/1344.
- 26-30. From Kirklees Local History Library.
- 31-32. From *The Daily Herald* archive, the National Media Museum, Box 1327.
- 33-37. *The Daily Herald* archive, Box 1328.
- 38-40. *The Daily Herald* archive, Box 1328.
- 41-44. *The Daily Herald*, Box 1320.
45. *The Daily Mirror* archive, Box 60.
46. *The Daily Mirror* archive, Box 59.
47. *The Daily Mirror* archive, Box 69.
48. *The Daily Mirror* archive, Box 71.
49. *The Daily Mirror* archive, DM 8931G.

50-54. The Grant Papers, National Media Museum.

55-56. *The Daily Mirror* archive, Lensman file.

Chapter Two

1. From August Sander, *Faces of Our Time* (1929).

2. From Helmar Lerski, *Everyday Faces* (1931).

3 and 4. From his Charing Cross Road series.

5 and 6. From Duncan Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart, In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Edinburgh, 2013).

7. From Bill Brandt, *A Night in London* (1938).

8. Bill Brandt, *Picture Post*, 1939.

9. From Karl Hutton, *Speaking Likenesses* (London, 1947).

10. From Mike Seaborne, *Cyril Arapoff: London in the Thirties* (London, 2006).

11,12,13. Walter Nurnberg archive, National Media Museum, Box BA/WN1 and BA/WN4.

Chapter 3

1. www.boltonworktown.co.uk

2. *The Woman's Dreadnought*, 23rd October, 1915. International Centre for Social History, Amsterdam.

3. *The Woman's Dreadnought*, 23rd October, 1915.

4. Friends of Salford Museums Association, *The Samuel Coulthurst Photographs: Victorian Salford and Manchester* (Salford, 2000)

5. *The Samuel Coulthurst Photographs*.

6. *The Samuel Coulthurst Photographs*.

7. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

8. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

9. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

10. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

11. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

12. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

13. www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

14. www.streetsofliverpool.co.uk

15. www.streetsofliverpool.co.uk
16. www.southtynesideimages.uk
17. www.southtynesideimages.uk
18. www.southtynesideimages.uk
19. www.southtynesideimages.uk
20. www.southtynesideimages.uk
21. www.southtynesideimages.uk
22. Woodend Museum, Scarborough (Box PH5-P1).
23. Woodend Museum, Scarborough (Box PH5-P1).
24. www.mirrorpix.com
25. www.mirrorpix.com
26. Worktown Photographs, Bolton History Centre.
27. Worktown Photographs, Bolton History Centre.
28. Jessica Sutcliffe *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester,2016)
29. Jessica Sutcliffe *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester,2016)
30. Jessica Sutcliffe *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester,2016)
31. Museum of London.
32. Museum of London.
33. Museum of London.
34. Jessica Sutcliffe *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester,2016)
35. Museum of London.

Chapter 4

1. Fred Hartley-Weaving room women with shuttles, c.1910; Huddersfield University, Heritage Quay Collections, Hartley Contacts, 0800-0999.
- 2-4. Broadfield Mills, Lockwood, Huddersfield in the Kirklees Local History Library, Huddersfield.

5-8. The Linkman and Warhurst Family Albums, The Manchester Archive, Manchester Central Library.

9-11. ZZ140, The Bolton History Centre, Bolton Library.

12-16. From the online archive of Jack Hulme's photographs at www.wakefield.gov.uk/museums/photography

17-19. From Bob Abley, *Underground Images: A Photographic Recollection of Roddymoor Miners c.1945* (County Durham, 2001).

20-28. Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Photographic Collection.

29-33. From Grimsby Local History Library Collection, Box 727/387-1.

34-36. From the private collection of Dr. Alec Gill, contactable through the Hull History Centre.

37-39. *Labour* (1933-38) in the People's History Museum, Manchester.

40. Bert Hardy, *My Life* (London, 1985), p.22, c.1923.

41-43. Bert Hardy, The Elephant and Castle, *Picture Post*, 1949.

44-46. Bert Hardy, The Gorbals, *Picture Post*, 1948

47-52. *The Daily Herald* Archive Box 1328.

53. Thurston Hopkins, 'Life in Liverpool,' *Picture Post*, 1955.

54-55. *The Daily Herald* Archive, Box 1320.

56-59. Labour Party Photographic Archive. The People's Museum, Manchester. Folders 2 & 3, Housing- Slums.

60-61. www.mirrorpix.com

62-63. Labour Party Photographic Archive, Folders 2 & 3.

64-69. The Communist Party Picture Archive, The People's History Museum, NMLH.2000.10. Boxes 31, 45, 62.

70-71. *The Daily Herald* Archive, Box 1327.

An Egalitarian Gaze: Photographic Representations of Working People in Britain, 1919 -1939.

Abstract.

This thesis explores the nature of the photography of working people in Britain during the inter-war years (1919-1939). This period saw the emergence of powerful practices of photographing working people in continental Europe and this research has enquired into the existence of similar traditions here. It asks if differing ways of representing them can be identified and what was their significance; in particular it examines whether it is possible to find modes which are distinctive in their positive depiction of the working class, and, if so, what are their social and political significance? These questions have been researched through four broad, and often, little used categories of photographic archives: those produced by European political refugees; those produced by individual, usually professional and middle-class, photographers; those produced by working people themselves; and those produced for those parts of the press that were supportive of the Left.

From these a range of representations have been identified, often interpenetrating and contesting for meaning. They demonstrate that this photography was not simply a means by which a dominant culture transferred its values and requirements to a passive working class. Rather, it was part of a cultural arena within which competing forms can be found. Central to this thesis has been the discovery of an honorific mode of representation, positively celebrating the qualities of working people. It becomes visible when compared to other contemporary photographic conventions. It becomes visible when employing the methodology of those historians who have focussed on the active creation and consumption of cultural objects by working people. And it becomes visible when the fractured nature of much of the archive of working-class photography is reconstituted into its original form - a domestic or familial photography - which helps to clarify the nature of both its production and its consumption.

Once this honorific representation is made visible its significance emerges. Its existence expands awareness of the range of ways in which working people were represented photographically. And this range, in turn, enhances understanding of this photography as a cultural field in which these different representations competed for attention. But it also has a cultural significance, in that working people can be seen to be actively using photography to give value and meaning to their lives, to be actively engaged in their own self-formation. It also has a formal political significance in that this mode was taken up and used by a wide range of popular newspapers and journals that were sympathetic to the working class, contributing to their social formation. Thus, within these honorific representations there is a rejection of contemporary biological explanations of social differences, and a similar rejection of any concept of working people being moulded by power into passive units of production and consumption. Rather, it is a form which displays strong horizontal conjunctions between working people, little interest in displays of material wealth, a vigorous assertion of their humanity and economic importance, and an expansion of the idea of the 'deserving poor' to the point where it included almost everyone. It is a photography that emerges at precisely the time when changes in wage structure, employment and urban settlement patterns suggest that a strong sense of homogeneity, or class formation, was developing among working people and at the heart of this thesis is the discovery of a contemporary mode of representing working people that is honorary, celebratory and, perhaps most remarkably, egalitarian. When placed into the context of contemporary economic, political and cultural developments, a photography is recovered and described, distinct from others, which can be seen to form a part of the emergence of an alternative discourse in British society about the personal worth and economic value of working people.

Introduction

The inter-war years witnessed an extraordinary blossoming of photographic activity across Europe and America. Much of this was concerned to portray the everyday and, within this, working people. Part of the reason for this was the rapid development of photographic technology. This made possible the widespread use of photographs in books, magazines and newspapers. And it made relatively affordable cameras accessible to large sections of the population. Both cardboard and leatherette cameras, with a simple meniscus lens, a single view-finder and no choice of aperture size, and a thriving second hand market, combined to make photographs a ubiquitous part of life. But this was also a time of economic and political upheaval in which the everyday was often far from mundane. It is this combination of a swiftly emerging popular visual culture, in the context of troubled times, that makes this period of photographic history so important. As more people had access to cameras, their photography discloses how they sought to situate themselves within this new culture. Photographs were seldom the product of accidents, but were taken with an intent to give a significance to their subjects. It is little wonder then, that at a time of instabilities and uncertainties, that this photography of the everyday was so popular. Using the new medium, individuals and social groups had the opportunity to assert what they felt was significant, to assert their own values and purposes. The photography of the everyday provided a space in which they could affirm, or re-establish, their personal and social identities.

Not surprisingly, there was a range of ways in which individuals chose to present the everyday. Some, such as Andre Kertesz or Brassai (Hungary) attempted a straightforward, 'realistic' documentation. But some, such as Man Ray (France), Alexander Rodchenko (U.S.S.R.) or Laszlo Moholy Nagy (Hungary), were concerned to develop revolutionary new forms which encouraged viewers to see the everyday in radically new ways. And it was just as radical to present working people in ways which celebrated both their humanity and their work. Boris Ignatovich (U.S.S.R.), Irena Blukhova (Czechoslovakia), Tina Modotti and Marianne Yamplowsky (Mexico) were all engaged in this sort of photography. Others used the medium to explore issues of class, race and gender, highlighting issues of injustice and

oppression. Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans (U.S.A.), John Heartfield and Hannah Hoch (Germany), despite widely differing approaches, are obvious examples of this type of documentation.¹ This is not a comprehensive list. It merely presents a sample taken from across this photography and it does no justice to the numbers of photographers involved, to the vast numbers of amateur photographers, to the quality of their work, or to less radical photographers who were equally interested in photographing the everyday. It is also deficient in the sense that it contains no British photographers. This is not an oversight. British photography seems to have been immune to the artistic and political radicalism that was so prevalent in so many other countries. For example, in 1929 the first great exhibition of this new photography, the Film und Foto Exhibition, was displayed in Stuttgart, Berlin and other German cities. It showcased the work of 191 photographers from all over the world. But there was only one British representative- Cecil Beaton, who was more renowned for his portraits of the rich and famous, than for any radical depictions of the everyday.² It is scarcely credible, however, that those issues that so affected photographers from all around the world did not also affect those here. After all, Britain was experiencing similar economic and political difficulties and British people enjoyed the same access to cameras. If, indeed, British photography was in some way different from that to be found elsewhere, this prompts the intriguing question of how was the everyday depicted here? And in particular, given the subject of this thesis, how were working people represented photographically in this photography of the everyday?

There are two aspects to the issue of working-class photography. How did working people photograph themselves? And how did others photograph them? Very little work has been done on the photographs that working people in this country took of each other. What has been written has arrived at fairly negative conclusions. Duncan Forbes, for example, has studied the Workers' Photography Movement. It was set up in 1934 by the Communist Party, but he dismisses its significance, believing that it was never effective enough to articulate a coherent political message, let alone influence many people. And it certainly never managed to develop or sustain

a counter-hegemonic life matrix for the delegitimised experience of the proletarian subject, whose existence otherwise appeared fragmentary and incoherent in comparison with the dominant narrative of bourgeois life.³

It is debatable just how many working people actually participated in this Movement and Forbes believes that that photography at this time never became an instrument that enabled working people to establish their own independent identity.

Similar negative conclusions have been made about the photography of working people done by others. This 'outsider' photography has received noticeably more discussion in the historiography, and this has centred on its efficacy in either representing the reality of working-class lives or in producing social change.⁴ Jorge Ribalta, for example, felt that this sort of documentation in Britain was done within a tradition of the 'victim,' in which depictions of the underclass were couched within older forms of an appeal by the poor to their masters for a redress of grievances. Forms which only served to reinforce existing structures⁵. John Roberts has developed this theme, arguing that the documentation of working-class conditions was set firmly in a national nostalgia for the imagined cross-class stability of the Edwardian era. He felt that their everyday life was presented as a melancholic narrative in which older forms of community were ravaged by the economic upheavals of the period. Implicit in this were conservative solutions which involved a return to these forms rather than the creation of any new social structures.⁶ John Tagg, too, has built upon this approach. He believes that photography, particularly that associated with the state, was an integral part of an extension of social discipline, responding to the growing size and complexity of modern industrial societies. It was simply an expansion of those techniques of social control that measured and classified the human body, objectifying it and inscribing it with the preferred norms of social and personal behaviour. Norms that were then used to establish the required docility and compliance, particularly in the burgeoning urban populations. During the inter-war period he identified a persistent and consistent repetition of images of working people that depicted them 'as passive, but pathetic, objects offering themselves up....to the benevolence of the paternal state'⁷. He also considered that the growth of amateur photography was incapable of offering any resistance to this social control. It was a cultural activity without any wider significance.

While commercial and art photography both were held in high esteem by the public, amateur photography was largely ignored and felt to have little relevance beyond hobby status.

Each of these narratives, to a greater or lesser extent, have their origins in the works of Michel Foucault. He suggested that as a society forms new knowledge about itself this was invariably constructed in ways which supported and renewed existing power structures. Between the wars British society experienced the rapid introduction of cheap cameras, such as the Box Brownie, the subsequent spread of photographic activity across wide sectors of the population, and the emergence of a new and popular media culture, as newspapers and journals, such as *The Daily Mirror*, turned to photography to attract new readers. Together these constituted the development of a 'new knowledge' as both individuals and social groups re-visualised themselves within this culture. It is this process that makes Foucault's ideas about the relationship between power and photography, as a form of knowledge, particularly pertinent to the photography of this period. This is a relevance enhanced by the centrality of the human body - the subject of the photography of working people - in his thought. Foucault felt that the generation of the levels of docility and compliance in the workforce required by modern industrial capitalism originated in the individual's self-formation - how each person regarded themselves and their place in the world. And this self-formation was heavily influenced by the ways in which the human body was disciplined. The careful classification and ordering of the body's gestures and behaviours into gradations of acceptable and non-acceptable norms became a framework within which each person attempted to fit. As each individual adopted these 'acceptable' norms of personal gestures and behaviours they reinforced those power structures that benefitted from these.⁸ It is little wonder then that Foucault's ideas have attracted historians of the photography of this time. Here was a society forming a 'new knowledge' of itself. As photographers chose what to photograph and how to do this, and as viewers chose what images they liked and which they wished to preserve, they were choosing aspects of their own lives, or those of others, that they felt were important enough to preserve. In effect they were establishing their identities - as individuals and as parts of larger social groupings - in the new media culture. Not only does the photography of the period give a window onto this process, but,

historians such as Roberts and Tagg would argue that, it also reveals how this process worked to reinforce pre-existing social and power relations.

There is, therefore, a historiographical strand which describes British documentation of working people as artistically and politically isolated from developments in many other countries. It was entangled in older, almost semi-feudal or pastoral, traditions in which the helpless, passive, cheerfully enduring poor sought a redress of their problems from their social superiors. And it was mired in forms of presenting the human body which were largely concerned with renewing power rather than developing either objective or independent accounts of working-class life. In these circumstances it is perhaps unsurprising that British photography had so little to offer the Film und Foto Exhibition in 1929.

There is, however, another historiographical strand which rejects this Foucauldian-based discourse. For example, Edward Said, author of *Orientalism*, grew increasingly disenchanted with this line of thought, describing Foucault as 'the scribe of domination.' He felt that Foucault's ideas portrayed an all-embracing 'carceral state' where power endlessly reproduced itself and was ever-victorious. Here little resistance to power was possible, let alone successful. Said felt that while Foucault produced an extraordinarily sophisticated body of thought ultimately it presented a depressing and deeply pessimistic view of human history that encouraged only political quietism.⁹ Christopher Pinney, historian of the visual cultures of colonial and post-colonial societies, further argued that the adoption of Foucauldian perspectives has produced histories of photography that have been 'over-scripted by state-dominated narratives which inserted power into social photography...[so that] even when it thought it was acting in the interests of freedom, was merely acting as an insidious agent of state power'¹⁰. Consequently histories of photography were written which imposed a pre-conceived, Foucauldian, political hypothesis onto evidence that did not necessarily support this. He felt that this created a profound methodological issue, 'in its concern with the ideological effects of picture taking [it] lost sight of the dialogic space that frequently emerges during the process of picture-making'¹¹. Or, more crudely, individuals were more than passive recipients of a dominant ideology that was transmitted through

cultural mediums such as photography. Much more has been written about areas of working-class culture other than photography. These studies suggest an alternative, perhaps more egalitarian, methodology. Robert James, for instance, in his study of working class cinema-going habits, insisted that 'working-class consumers were not cultural dopes'¹². And, indeed, that there was a universal human ability to make active choices, to find forms of independent self-representation and to develop strategies that assisted their own interests. Jonathan Rose, critiquing the historiography of British working-class culture, developed the same point, 'critics repeatedly commit what might be called the receptive fallacy, they try to discern the message a text transmits to an audience by examining the text, rather than the audience'¹³. When the audience was incorporated into the study of any working-class cultural activity, what emerged was not a Foucauldian narrative of a population passively absorbing an imposed ideology. Rather these studies uncovered the development of active, independent, interpretations of the world, often completely different to those of the dominant culture. This raises the interesting possibility that working people were also using photography as a part of the active creation of their own autonomous culture.

These are, then, two, apparently diverse, discourses that have been applied to the study of photography. On the one hand, those Foucauldian histories that insist on the universality and perpetuity of power, a power which was capable of continually reproducing itself in new forms of knowledge and new forms of cultural activity. On the other there are those studies of working-class culture that demonstrate activities which clearly resist, and seek to replace, the dominant set of values. These are not, however, mutually exclusive. Foucault himself believed that 'in relations of power there is necessarily a possibility of resistance'¹⁴. Even within his 'carceral state' he felt that resistance could emerge and operate and it may be that a more nuanced view of cultural activity could be possible.

Some historians have attempted a kind of synthesis of these two historiographical strands. For example, Elizabeth Edwards suggested that it was more productive to regard a cultural activity, such as photography, as a 'mythscape'. This is a space in which social identities are constantly made, re-made and transmitted. She argues that this concept is useful 'because it

accounts not only for ideological instrumentality....but also for social agency.’¹⁵ Annebella Pollen agrees with this, feeling that the photography of the everyday can be ‘both the site for the unthinking reproduction of dominant forms and as a subversive space where such norms can be resisted’¹⁶. Chris Pinney, too, has developed a similar line of thought. Rather than employing the term ‘visual culture’, he suggests that ‘visual economy’ would be more helpful. This gives a sense of the cultural arena as a site of ‘unequal flows and exchanges’, almost of a market place in which different cultural forms compete for attention.¹⁷ Within this ‘economy’ every individual and social grouping have the opportunity to access ‘a creative, transformational space’¹⁸. In this space each had the chance to develop their own independent identity, to accept identities created by others, or, in most cases, to develop a mixture of both. Here, in this ‘economy’ there is ‘a contest between different schemata, and a complex process of negation, contradiction and critique’¹⁹. This may well have been an unequal contest, but Pinney sees it as

a key area for the thinking out of politics...Rather than visual culture as a mirror of conclusions established elsewhere by other means, I try to present it as an experimental zone where new possibilities and new identities are forged. This is not an ordered laboratory with a single script: the reverse is true - divergent political, religious and commercial interests ensure a profound contingency to all outcomes.²⁰

Ostensibly, this open-ended, more combative, view of visual culture is at odds with those histories that present Foucauldian certainties. But it is a perspective that acknowledges the existence, within the cultural arena, of the values and interests of the dominant elite and those of every other group in society. This was an arena in which the competition may have been inequitable, but it was one in which all participated. Regarding cultural activity as this sort of ‘combat zone’ can create a common ground upon which cultural historians can meet. Writing during these same years, Antonio Gramsci developed a very similar view. When he considered how change was effected in an advanced capitalist state, he argued that the cultural life of that state was a crucial battleground. He felt that changes in cultural attitudes and activities prefigured, and were an essential prerequisite of, significant political change.²¹ This viewpoint, that identifies multiple voices within the cultural arena, can provide a useful theoretical framework within which to approach the photography of working people.

This thesis adopts this sort of approach. It attempts to identify the range of ways in which working people were represented photographically, and their significance. In this, the work of those historians who have described the cultural arena as a competition for representation, and the consequent political importance of this, has been utilised.²² But, as it addresses the self-representation of working people, it has drawn upon the approaches of those historians who have been concerned to tell the story of hitherto forgotten groups.²³ This approach has developed to include a whole range of analyses of, for example, attitudes to work and leisure, or domestic and gender issues, and the photographic collections presented here would provide excellent material for these considerations. But to attempt to examine all the potential applications of these archives may well have resulted in a long and unfocussed survey. Rather, this thesis concentrates on identifying the nature and significance of the representations and self-representations of working people.

Differences in interpreting photography can arise, of course, as much from the nature of the sources that historians address, as from any variations in theoretical approaches. Foucault himself based much of his work on state institutions, such as prisons, hospitals and schools, which enjoyed captive audiences. Perhaps inevitably the messages that the state wished to transmit were at their most explicit and effective in sites such as this. However, there were other sites that were more remote from the centres of power, or where the relationships of power were structured differently, and where the audiences experienced different constraints. These sites may well produce evidence in which the semiotics of power are found to be weaker, and where resistance and alternatives to these can be discovered. For instance, when John Tagg studied the photography of areas of late nineteenth-century Leeds destined for slum clearance he found little evidence of an improvement in working-class living conditions. This sort of slum clearance photography, which is frequently to be found in archives of inter-war photography, can be seen as 'a mark of celebration' but he saw it rather as 'a mark of subjection'²⁴. He argued that these slum clearances were not an attempt to ameliorate the lives of the poor, but were more concerned with creating spaces more suitable for surveillance, 'a desirable space in which people will be changed....[into] disease-free, orderly, docile and disciplined subjects.'²⁵ But when Liam Buckley studied post-colonial Gambian studio photography he sees popular culture creating entirely different

modes of presenting people to those employed in colonial times. These modes he places firmly within Gambian popular culture which used photography

as a vehicle for social and symbolic messages about how, for example, the disempowered take on power, and how the meanings of modernity can be contested and where experiments can be conducted by those not well placed in relation to class and power²⁶.

And it may be that differing ways in which power was structured influenced the ways in which the character of a photography was formed and interpreted. Rather than drawing universal inferences from just one type of evidence, a more accurate picture could emerge from investigating a range of sources whose origins lay in a variety of power relationships. Tagg, for example, uses images made by the borough engineers of Leeds, and there is a developing tradition of members of the middle class photographing working people. Looked at in isolation they may well indicate that the values and interests embedded in this photography dominated society. But this can only be verified by looking at the supposed subjects of this domination. Evidence that the photography of the working class themselves was carrying signs of different values and interests would undermine such a narrative of dominance. In its place would be an account of an arena in which competing photographs were at play. And in which descriptions of the middle-class photography of working people are not illustrations of dominance, merely of the attitudes and intentions of one class towards another. Of course this is easy to say, but in reality, as far as this country is concerned, the photography that working people produced has scarcely been addressed. Nonetheless, a study of the photography of working people that included both the work of others and of themselves, and of photographs produced both close to the centres of power and in more remote locations, should provide a broader, more accurate, indication of the function and significance of this cultural activity.

Approaching a range of photographs in this way may also enable a synthesis of the narratives of resistance with those that focus on the dominance of power. The two are not necessarily incompatible. Evidence of a dominant ideology does not necessarily exclude evidence of resistance to that ideology. Bringing these two discourses together into a

coherent whole may indicate their utility and limitations, providing a more adequate account of this cultural arena. It could also contribute a more rounded explanation of both the character of this photography and of its significance in the lives of working people. Empirically, it would not be sufficient to attempt this synthesis by studying the photography of one or two societies or photographers or newspapers. In order to understand the full nature of this arena a careful sampling across a comprehensive range of photographic activity is necessary. And this is what this thesis attempts.

This thesis has investigated, therefore, over thirty photographic archives. These have been chosen to cover an extensive spread of photographs of working people, taken for a wide variety of purposes and audiences, and by both amateur and professional photographers with an equally extended range of backgrounds and ambitions. Some, such as the borough engineers of South Shields, have been chosen because of their proximity to the state and to power. But others have been selected because they originated in the far-flung corners of the Yorkshire Dales or the North Sea, which would seem to be, physically at least, more remote from the centres of power. Sampling across this range quickly makes it obvious that the new visual culture developed so rapidly at this time because of demand. People were fascinated by photography and wanted its products. Consequently a vibrant commercial market emerged. This was never a single, coherent market, but rather consisted of a series of 'sub-markets', often with entirely different ambitions. For example, there was a high-art market in photography which was both very lucrative and enjoyed a very high profile. Famous photographers, such as E. O. Hoppe, operated in this market and, at times, found ways in which images of working people could be used to make money. There was another wealthy market that showed a persistent interest in working people. Part of this market was state sponsored, prompted by concerns about the 'condition' of the working-class in this period of repeated crisis. But there was a more general, public, interest in what was happening among the underclass. Both often resulted in quasi-anthropological expeditions to photograph them. These interests or concerns were reflected in the national and regional press. Here a new media market emerged, often explicitly linked to the formal political life of the nation, which was interested in using photography as an important element in building mass readerships. Again, images of working people were regularly employed in

these endeavours. Finally, there was also a rapidly developing market for family photographs, which included the working class.²⁷ Their market may have been severely constrained by financial considerations, and it may have relied on Sunday school photos, street photographers and friends or relations with second-hand cameras. But the demand for this photography was as great here as in any other part of society. Between them these markets produced, possibly for the first time in human history, both a large number and wide variety of visual representations of working people. This thesis takes samples across these representations.

The intention of this sampling is not to identify which of these markets and their photographs represented working people the most realistically or truthfully. Rather it is concerned to identify the narratives about working people that different groups sought to establish through their photography. These differing narratives have been established, initially, by studying the composition of the photographs themselves. The organization of space, the structure of the images, the manner in which bodies are represented, the activities they are engaged in, the props and settings within which bodies are placed, and the anticipated viewpoint of the viewer, have been considered. From this, repeatedly recurring sets of commonalities and variations can be unpicked. In these it is possible to identify the regularity and widespread repetition of particular approaches to representing working people, and the ways in which they interconnect, reinforce or conflict with each other. Where clusters of strong, repeated and predictable similarities are found, distinct conventions of photographing working people can be found. In their collective characters they reflect the intentions of those photographers who chose to frame their images within these conventions, and they reflect the character of the differing narratives about working people.²⁸ Where clusters of profound, repeated and predictable differences can be seen it is possible to reflect on the relationships between these differing conventions. This moves the study from a consideration of image content to that of the role that these played in the world that created them. And a fresh set of issues arise from this. How have these different sets of representations arisen? How are they used in everyday life? What behaviours do they encourage and which do they restrict or prohibit? What behaviours are offered in the images that viewers can adopt or assign to others? Who gains or loses by them?²⁹ And

significance does not simply lie in the intentions of photographers and the content of their images, but crucially in the impact of them on their audiences. These were never passive receptors of these representations but brought their own previous social and cultural experiences to the interpretation of these photographs. This thesis then uses a methodology which combines a study of image content, the identification of the various conventions or discourses that can be found, and a consideration of the impact of these upon, or the significance for, their audiences. This is a methodology which is extended across a range of these discourses. But it is the inclusion of the photography that working people took of themselves that is a crucial part of understanding the whole spectrum of photographs of the everyday during this period. It is true that this has been little studied. But, without its inclusion in the discourse, this thesis suggests that it is impossible to understand either the full significance of each differing mode of representing working people or the relationships between them. These differing modes may well appear to be distinct entities, but in reality they were tightly entwined elements of a single organic body. If a major component of this organism is excluded then its full character, the character of each of its elements and their relationship to each other, cannot be properly seen. This thesis argues that this can be addressed by studying each component part - including the photography that working people took of each other - and the relationship of these parts to each other. In this way it becomes possible to see more clearly the complete character of this photography. And, in turn, this enables the study of this photography to contribute to the debate, outlined earlier, about the nature and significance of the cultural arena.

This approach is not without problems. Analysing photographs is a notoriously unstable activity, in which meaning can often be dynamic or elusive. This is compounded when an eclectic range of photography is studied. And it is further aggravated if, as this thesis argues, the differing ways of portraying working people can be seen to interpenetrate and permeate each other in a cultural competition for attention and dominance. In order to address this, a common methodology, described above, has been adopted throughout to minimize the risk of reading each different photography in a different way. Nonetheless, some instability of meaning within these images of working people will still persist. But this, in itself, can be instructive. This instability is, perhaps, inevitable in a photography that can

contain, to varying degrees, the semiotics of both power and resistance. These degrees fluctuate across the spectrum of photographs studied here. But it is the very nature of these fluctuations which expose the interplay of power and resistance in this cultural arena. It may be true that there are perils arising from a study of a broad spectrum of photographs, perils that can be minimized by adopting a common methodology. But it is equally true that this kind of study gives insights into the 'political' character of cultural activity that may not be so apparent from an examination of just one element of this photography of working people.

The central activity in this thesis is, therefore, a sampling across the range of different ways in which working people were depicted. It is this that has determined its structure and direction, and it moves from a range of very conservative, hierarchical images, through a more sympathetic series of portraits, to the more assertive imagery produced by working-class photographers themselves. Chapter One examines the, largely, middle-class, outsider, photographers of working people, whose work has often dominated the historiography and which has often been felt to be antipathetic to their subjects. Chapters Two and Three move on to consider two differing approaches to photographing working people. But, in these shorter chapters, both approaches are united by the ambitions of the photographers to produce a more sympathetic imagery than anything seen in Chapter One. They are also united by the fact that they are both outsider photographs, and, it is argued, by their shared failure to produce images that had any real significance for their subjects. Finally Chapter Four goes on to look at the photography produced by working people of themselves. Unlike anything seen in the previous three chapters, it argues that here was a powerful imagery that had real personal, social and political significance for working people.

So Chapter One explores the established, mainstream, traditions of depicting working people. An assortment of differing photographic activities, created for a variety of purposes and by a wide range of photographers, have been sampled. These include the new photojournalism, and the work of both amateur and professional photographers. Some of these are explicitly sympathetic to the working class, some are apolitical in a formal sense,

and some overtly conservative. Many are from the north of England, but within this region a wide array of industries and locations are represented. Despite the apparent disparate nature of this sample, however, remarkable commonalities are distinguishable. This applies whether the photography is rooted in older, powerful, traditions of pastoralism or pictorialism, or couched within a very modern technological utopianism. Working people are consistently presented in ways which marginalise them - pushed to the rear or sides or shadows of the image. They are placed in contexts which determinedly ignore the realities of their lives, preferring to create idyllic fantasies. And they are repeatedly situated at the base of social hierarchies. This was a photography that could never provide working people with a narrative of the importance of their lives. Much of this would seem to confirm that discourse that sees this new photographic activity as creating a new knowledge that merely served to reinforce existing social structures. But, even here within these deeply conservative modes of representing working people, it is not possible to identify the fully developed systems of classification that, for example, Foucault was able to describe in the institutions he studied. Away from the centres of power, and it may be that the 'carceral state' never attained its all-embracing, ever-renewing character.

Chapter Two addresses the impact of the European political and aesthetic avant-garde on photography in this country. The Nazi's rise to power in 1933 prompted a great exodus of artists and intellectuals over the course of the succeeding years. Some of these, including some photographers, came to Britain. A number of historians have felt that these exiles invigorated, aesthetically and politically, a rather insipid British photography.³⁰ This chapter, however, suggests that their numbers were never enough to make this sort of impact on a well-entrenched British tradition of social documentation. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the brilliant developments in portraiture and in capturing the beauty of the everyday that were such features of continental photography. But, it is argued, that these impacted on British photography before 1933, and did so through the strong commercial links that existed between Britain and Germany. Passage through these channels helped to remove much of this photography's potential for carrying overt political messages. In this way a relatively conservative, mainstream, tradition of social documentary may have been,

to some extent, aesthetically enhanced, but its fundamental purposes and character remained undisturbed.

Chapter Three looks at the developing middle-class consciousness of the working class, which led to attempts to more formally document their lives. This prompted photographic 'expeditions' into working-class communities for a variety of purposes. Some were motivated by sheer curiosity, some by a nostalgia for a fast disappearing world or by a more political concern for working people, whilst others were commissioned by a local authority. But these expeditions had a more distinct or generic character than the photographs seen in Chapter One in that they shared much of the observational methodology used by the early ethnographical attempts to record the peoples of the Empire. Despite, or maybe because of, this the end product was a photography that was remarkably similar to that seen in Chapter One. Indeed, the conclusions of both chapters are closely related. In its practices, content and purposes the photography of these 'expeditions' appears to be one which marginalises working people and places them in hierarchical structures. Again it is a photography which fails to produce a visual language that is of any real significance to its subjects. This failure arose because these middle class photographers were consistently unable to bridge the vast social distance to these subjects. They were also mired within paternalist and liberal political traditions that could see working people only as passive victims requiring the assistance of their social 'betters'. And they were hindered by the aesthetic limitations of artists and photographers of the Left in this country. These were unable to devise techniques that may have allowed them to break down these social and political barriers. Despite the best intentions of many of the individual photographers it appears that here was another photography that served only to reinforce existing power structures. But, again, this was never a fully developed or completed model of social control. It argues that an empathy for working people appears in at least some of this photography. In this was a suggestion that, perhaps, all was not well and that the existing social order was not quite everything it could be. This never amounted to a radical photography but it did hint of the possibility that, even if a dominant ideology existed, alternative perspectives could be formed.

It is this possibility that is explored in Chapter Four. This examines the nature of the photography that working people took of themselves. Again, a range of photographs have been examined, but in this case they all share the same purpose. This working-class photography was a familial photography, collected to celebrate and share significant memories. As such it provides an insight into what they felt was important enough to preserve and the ways which they chose to do this. Most importantly, they actively developed modes of representing themselves that were entirely different from those seen in earlier chapters. In this familial photography working people put themselves at the centre and front of the image, no longer marginalised. Strong horizontal links are repeatedly to be found and a non-hierarchical, egalitarian, photography was produced. They created narratives of their own lives which asserted their human worth and their economic value, narratives which very obviously resisted and opposed those of the dominant ideology that were presented in earlier chapters. While there is a significance in this cultural resistance, its formal political importance is considerably enhanced when the very same modes of representation were adopted by elements of the national and regional press, and by some of the political parties. Each of these adopted exactly the same methods of honouring and celebrating working people. It is true that these newspapers and parties were largely of the Left, but together they represented an important element of the national discourse. This embrace of working-class photographic modes suggests an almost Gramscian pattern of political change. In this model, cultural changes, occurring quietly and unnoticed, can contribute to significant adjustments in the more observable political life of the nation. This was an egalitarian photography which recognised the value of almost everyone. It made the point that all were of worth, expanding the concept of the 'deserving poor' to include nearly everyone. Indeed, these values, apparent in this photography, can be seen to be closely aligned with other elements of working-class culture of the period. And it is no coincidence that, at the close of this period, the political settlement of 1945 was celebrated for its egalitarian outcomes.

The inclusion of this, hitherto little-noted, photography that working people created for themselves, introduces two elements into the historical debate about the photography of this period. First, it enables a more complete perception of the significance of all the

photography presented here. Without its inclusion in this debate, it is reasonable to assume that the photography taken by others of the working class did indeed represent a dominant, all-embracing ideology, against which there is little prospect of resistance. But when it is incorporated into the debate, it becomes clear that photography was a cultural arena within which differing voices, values, perspectives and identities were being thought out and fought out. Secondly, this is a photography that permits an insight into the thought processes, or self-formation, of working people. Above all, there is an assertion of their own value. This is especially evident when this photography is set into the more general context of British working-class culture at this time. If this is done it becomes apparent that assumptions of a working class passively internalising the semiotics of control are undermined. Instead, working people can be seen to use photography to create a distinct narrative of their own personal and social worth, and to assert their own separate identities. This was a narrative that never displayed an interest in displays of material wealth or hierarchical structures. Rather it focussed on the individual and collective qualities of working people, from char-lady to laboratory technician, from sewage worker to perfume maker. Not only did this photography indicate that resistance was possible, but at the heart of this resistance there was a remarkable egalitarian gaze.

Chapter One. Obfuscations. The Marginalisation of Working People.

This thesis is concerned to examine the nature and significance of the differing ways in which working people were portrayed. As such it is clearly important to understand the ways in which this dominant culture looked at and presented them. The importance of this is indicated by the ubiquity or the quantity of this photography and its surviving archival materials. But it is further underlined by the central position it has taken up in both the theoretical and empirical historiography of this photography.³¹ And it is the pivotal position of this photography that underpins the structure and length of this chapter.

At the beginning of his great work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said outlined his methodology. In approaching the vast archives of art, literature and politics, which provided his evidential base, he abandoned any attempt to engage in a comprehensive survey, instead he searched for 'strategic formations' that were

a way of analysing the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even genres of texts acquire mass, density and referential powers among themselves, and thereafter in the culture at large.³²

This chapter has a similar ambition, attempting to identify similarities in the modes of representing working people that can be seen across a wide range of archives, and then to understand their significance. It also does not attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of what is an enormous archive, rather it takes samples across four areas of professional photography, photojournalism and amateur photography. Each of these areas had different functions and served different purposes, and together they can appear to be a rather disparate or eclectic collection of archives. But it is this wide spectrum that provides the significance of this sampling, as the chapter will seek to argue that typicalities or 'densities' of representations of working people that can be discerned across a wide variety of sources, and that these are united by the marginalization of working people in both private perceptions and public discourse. This connection between the private and public functions of photography is particularly important, and it is suggested here that it is this connection that provides much of the political significance of this photography. Potentially photography

at this time could have furnished British society with a new way of seeing itself, of forming new knowledge about itself, on both an individual level and a civic level. This had happened during this same period, for example, in both continental Europe and North America. But this chapter examines the nature of the connections between public and private photographs, and between their representations of working people, and concludes that these were firmly located within older forms of knowledge, forms which served to maintain and strengthen older forms of power. In doing so, it utilises the thinking of Michel Foucault about the links between the individual human body (the subject of almost all the photographs discussed here) and the formations of power, between personal self-formation and civic or social-formation, and, of course, between power and knowledge. It contends that, as the use of photography developed during this period, a new knowledge was produced about society which served to reinforce pre-existing social hierarchies.

Foucault, of course, developed his ideas from his studies of the institutions of the state. Here his subjects were to a greater or lesser extent entrapped, under constant scrutiny, and, ultimately faced with physical violence if they failed to conform to institutional expectations. Whatever significance this chapter may have lies in the wide range of photography it studies, from amateurs to photojournalists. This wide scope is deliberate, designed to encompass a variety of environments, purposes and audiences, outside of the physical constraints within which Foucault's subjects found themselves. He claimed a universality for his theories about the generation of power and knowledge which extended way beyond his immediate areas of study. This chapter seeks to explore the validity of this claim within photographs that were carried out in, potentially, somewhat freer areas of human activity. And it suggests that, while Foucault's ideas may provide a powerful tool for understanding the nature of these photographs, they may not be all-embracing, and, possibly, the continuous production of a knowledge that persistently generated power was not completely successful in all circumstances.

i. Michel Foucault – a toolkit for understanding the photography of working people?

Any crude imposition of theory onto photographic practice is clearly perilous. Christopher Pinney, for example, has written that, 'A school of photographic theory arose which persuaded a generation of academics and their students that there was no such thing as 'photography', there were only multiple 'photographies,' and these were all informed by a wider discursive context (the disciplinary state, following early Foucault)....and as there was no such thing as photography, it was certainly not capable of doing any good.'³³ Elizabeth Edwards also felt that a rigidly theoretical approach, which saw photography as a mere function of existing power structures, 'at one level hinders historical understanding rather than explaining'³⁴. She identified, at the heart of facile adoptions of overarching theoretical models, a methodological issue - 'the myth of photographic truth'³⁵- in which the discussion searched for an illusory reality, and the debate about 'positive' and 'negative' images, particularly of working people, which supported these models was insufficient. It produced 'a levelling of images, a homogenizing of function, based on the acceptance of the realist transparency of photography'³⁶. Edwards demonstrates in *Raw Histories*, for example, the fundamental instability of interpretations based largely upon the image, and urges an analysis of photos which includes their conditions of production, consumption and preservation. Foucault himself, of course, never attempted to write a history of photography, many of his own studies being based on the institutions of the state. But his ideas have encouraged historians, such as John Tagg and John Roberts, to develop interpretations of the photography of working people which detect very conservative and hierarchical ways of regarding them. Clearly this is of interest to a thesis which is concerned to understand the nature and significance of the range of ways in which working people were represented. Therefore, this chapter offers a relatively wide empirical base, describing a range of sites of photographic production and consumption removed from these institutions. And from this fairly broad archival span it is possible to consider, first, the utility of Foucault's ideas as a means of assessing the significance of the photography of working people within contemporary matrixes of power formation. And to consider, more generally, the utility of his ideas as a universal explanation of power formation. Indeed, if photography is to have any significance beyond the personal reactions of individual photographers and viewers to particular subjects and images, then a means of moving from a purely personal

response to a wider social significance needs to be found. Foucault attempts to provide exactly this, he urges that

Historians should not look for the headquarters that preside over its [power's] rationality; neither the caste which governs, nor the group which controls the state apparatus; nor those who make the most important economic decisions.³⁷

Rather than looking for the origins of power in some sort of conspiracy among the ruling elite, he suggests that it should be searched for in the ways in which a society produces knowledge about itself. These are located at a micro-level, in 'creative sites where knowledge is formed'³⁸. These sites - here photographic studios and clubs, the offices of publishers and newspapers - are staffed by individuals, each with their own position in, and relationship to, power, and they are engaged in producing knowledge that flourishes or perishes according to 'how useful or resistant to power' it was.³⁹ This knowledge was not the possession of the ruling elite, indeed it 'is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who were dominated'⁴⁰. And 'it is often the case that no-one is there to have invented it'⁴¹. Rather power is located in the knowledge that each member of society forms about themselves and the world they live in, and often manifested within the very way they, or others, present themselves to the world through their bodies, gestures and behaviour. Or, for this thesis, in the way that each individual photographer chose to present the bodies, gestures and behaviours of working people.

It is here, in Foucault's positioning of power within the individual, in how he connects this to the development of new knowledge about society, in his entwining of self-formation and social-formation, and, particularly, in the way in which he saw the human body, and social perceptions of it, as being at the heart of power relations, that make his ideas so interesting to the historian of photography. These power relations were

centred on the body as a machine; its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness, and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterised the discipline, an anatomo-politics of the human body.⁴²

So that

In every society the body was in the grip of very strict powers which imposed upon it constraints, prohibitions or obligations.....exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself - movement, gestures, attitudes, rapidity, an infinitesimal power over the active body.⁴³

This 'subtle coercion' was designed to mould human bodies into 'meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine'⁴⁴ and it consisted of,

Small acts of cunning, endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious; mechanisms that obeyed economics, too shameful to be acknowledged, or pursued petty forms of coercion.⁴⁵

Foucault was able to identify and describe these 'small acts of cunning'. 'Scientific classification' is probably the best known, in which working people, of all races, were the subjects of 'modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences' and which structured hierarchies and classifications of people, largely according to their usefulness or amenability to the economic and social order. In turn these classifications presented 'normalising judgements' referring individual actions to the norms established by the new hierarchies, and so differentiating individuals from each other, measuring quantitatively their value, introducing constraints based on a conformity to norms that must be adhered to, and tracing 'the external frontiers of the abnormal'⁴⁶. Arising from this application of established norms were 'dividing practices' which gave each individual a social and personal identity, separate from others and, at times, separate from themselves. And each of these techniques impacted on 'the way a human being turns him - or her - self into a subject' so that here is a process of 'self-formation in which the person is active' and which takes place 'through a variety of operations on people's own bodies, on their souls, on their thoughts, on their conduct.'⁴⁷

As economic forces gathered people together in large urban spaces, these techniques of discipline had a clear political purpose, and an almost three dimensional character.

They must also master all the forces that are formed from the very constitution of an organized multiplicity, it must neutralise the effects of counter power that spring from them and which forms a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate it; agitations, revolts, spontaneous coalitions - anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions. Hence the fact that the discipline uses procedures of partitioning and verticality, that they introduce between the different elements at the same level, as solid separations as possible; that they define compact hierarchical networks; in short that they oppose to the intrinsic, adverse force of multiplicity, the techniques of the continuous, individualising pyramid.⁴⁸

Foucault describes an exercise of power that was used to produce maximum political docility and to optimise the economic utility of each human being; a power that did not operate within the relationship between state and citizen, or even within the transactions between social classes, but operated constantly in each person's daily relations with others and with themselves; that operated as 'a network of relations constantly in tension, in activity'⁴⁹. This is a power that operated every time every human thought about themselves, 'in every manner of speaking, doing, or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as a subject of learning,' as each person forms knowledge about themselves they do so in relation to the classifications, normalising judgements and dividing practices that had been established, and steadily expanded, from the seventeenth century.⁵⁰ Photographers, as they selected how to create their images and which to present to others, can be seen to be actively generating 'subjects of learning.' If, indeed, these images do contain the classifications and techniques of discipline described by Foucault, then they acquire considerable significance.

Foucault traced this power through histories of prisons, asylums, hospitals, poor houses, the police and human sexuality. Central to these histories has been the way in which the human body and the spaces it occupied were organised. He sees this process as absolutely integral to historical development, believing it to be

an indispensable element in the development of capitalism: the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production.⁵¹

This then is a fundamental historical process, and one that he describes in very physical terms - dividing practices, individualising pyramids, compact hierarchical networks, partitioning and verticality, horizontal conjunctions. It is a process centred on the ways in which humans form knowledge about themselves, or picture themselves. It is an argument that sees control of the human body at the centre of the development of power. And, of course, there is a cultural form that is intimately concerned with the representation of human bodies and the spaces around them, and that is equally tied up in the way that humans see themselves and those around them - photography. It is in the centrality of the human body, the ways in which this was organized, presented and then disseminated throughout society, in the writings of Foucault that make his ideas so potentially powerful for the study of photography. If this, very powerful, discourse about knowledge and power has any contribution to make to the understanding of the significance of photography then surely it has to be found in the photography of working people. At precisely the historical moment when this new technology was becoming widely accessible, when a new form of knowledge was being created, at a time of some economic, social and political tension, surely it is here, if anywhere, in the organization of working-class bodies within this new imagery, that new forms of older power relations are to be traced. This chapter goes on to attempt this tracing through a series of empirical studies of a deliberately wide-ranging sample of amateurs, professionals and photo-journalists and their representations of working people. For each of these it tries to identify the nature of the semiotics in the imagery, and then to understand the character of the commonalities to be found across these archives - in the imagery but also in their shared audiences and purposes. It then attempts relate these to Foucault's ideas and, to identify their utility and their limitations as a tool for interpreting the photography of working people at this time. Each of these studies appear to confirm that, while there was a wide range of both producers and consumers of photography, they shared a common interest in presenting working people in ways that fixed them firmly within hierarchical structures, but perhaps not as completely as Foucault may have anticipated. It is the nature of these common ways of looking at working people which gives this chapter its significance.

ii. One group of amateur photographers and their selection of images.

One group of, very active, amateur photographers was the Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society (HNPAS). They provide an interesting example of the work of many amateur photographers of the period, not least because of their energetic efforts to establish a common approach to their photography across the Society. This was a group that appears to bear strong resemblances to the earlier Survey Movement and within whose activities and imagery it may be possible to trace some of the Foucauldian forces described earlier.⁵² Its archive is stored in old suitcases and cardboard boxes in the attic of the Society's chairman. It is fragmentary, uncatalogued and what has survived owes more to luck than system.⁵³ But it is of interest, not least because the Society was founded in 1850, eleven years after Fox Talbot made his first photograph, making it one of the first photographic societies in the world. While this is just one of many such societies, it provides a worthwhile sample in that its archive, for the inter-war period, reveals a vigorous organization of enthusiastic amateur photographers. Their activities provide a fascinating insight into how they carefully sought to develop common approaches to their photography, and how they chose to select and present their images – or how they created a new knowledge about the world through their photography. The Subscription Book shows that in 1926-27, for example there were 130 paid up members; 79 men and 51 women, who paid between 6s.- and £1/16s- depending on age, sex and the range of activities they wished to access. The Society's aims were simply expressed: 'Its objects shall be the study and advancement of Natural History, Photography and Antiquities'⁵⁴. Its activities were more complex. Every summer saw a series of fortnightly excursions that were more than just pleasure trips (Photo 1); at the bottom of each year's programme of visits was written 'Camera on EVERY outing please.' These trips had a serious intent.

It was quickly realised that sufficient scope for work in a field of research which had long been neglected was now possible, and that in all possibility a valuable amount of record work would be the outcome of the movement. Further outings were arranged..... [so that] every possible place of local antiquarian interest within a radius of ten miles of Huddersfield had been visited.⁵⁵

Photographs taken during these summer excursions were

During the winter sessions....discussed, the photographs being included in an album acquired for the purpose of keeping records. Just what happened to this album is not known.⁵⁶

While the album has gone there exists, for the inter-war period, an almost complete record of these summer outing programmes which give some indication of the possible contents of their photography. Their excursions were to:

Halls and Castles - 39%	Local Villages - 17%	Churches - 16%
Beauty Spots - 13%	Woods and Parks - 13%	Other - 2%. ⁵⁷

The costs of these trips were additional to the annual subscription and were not cheap; the excursion to Skipton Church and Castle, Sawley Abbey, Waddington Old Hall and Church, Browsholme Hall and Clitheroe Castle cost 15s/6d, including lunch and tea.⁵⁸ If anything the winter lecture programmes were even more purposeful. During the 1919-1939 years the Society held 289 lectures; 137 of these were topographical, often relating back to summer excursions and members' holidays; 88 were related to the natural world (birds, flowers and fungi being the most popular); while 64 related to antiquarian interests (old roads, ecclesiastical architecture, Norman carving, and medieval crosses for example).⁵⁹ This programme was supplemented by workroom lectures and demonstrations. In 1920 the Society had purchased a workroom for these purposes and, for an additional 2s/6d, members could participate in these activities. Between 1919 and 1939 there were 136 workroom activities: 75 per cent of these were of a technical nature (for example on the bromoil process, mounting, sulphide toning, exhibition printing, intensification and reduction, retouching and spotting, and enlarging), while 25 per cent were concerned with giving compositional advice.⁶⁰ This advice is of interest in that it gives another glimpse of the nature of the Society's photography: much was of a general nature (what makes a picture, and sun pictures in city, town and country, for example), but some were more specific (the principles of art applied to photography, a talk on architectural and record work, pictorial ideals, pictorial composition, and pictorial technique). The intensity of this activity can be seen, for example, in the 1934/35 Winter Lecture Syllabus, in which six general lectures were programmed and 20 workroom sessions were provided in the six months between October and March. Much of this activity was geared towards the Society's annual

exhibition or 'Conversazione' as they liked to call it. This was competitive, with classes and prizes in portraits and figure studies, architectural and record work, pictorial, scientific and engineering, still life, natural history, and 'any subject'⁶¹. It was an event that attracted enormous interest, in 1923 there were 13,684 visitors to the exhibition.⁶²

While the Society's record album and most of the members' photography are not preserved in the archive, there remains a collection of glass lantern slides taken by members. These are largely undated but seem to cover the period from the early Twentieth Century through to the 1950's. They have been partially catalogued and this gives another insight into the nature of the Society's photography (Photo 1). The catalogue shows that the most popular subjects were:

Huddersfield scenes -140	Lake District scenes - 113	Birds - 108
Church fonts -50	East Coast scenes - 45	Devon/ Cornwall scenes - 28
London scenes - 25	Wales - 21	Cartoons - 19
Other - 126. ⁶³		

Membership of the Society between the wars was not cheap, and in reality it must have been an overwhelmingly middle-class organization. But in return for the membership fees it did give its members considerable support in their photographic pursuits, providing thorough guidance, through their programme of summer excursions, winter workshops and annual exhibitions, on the processes of photography from composition to exhibition. It gave access to a Society rooted in the foundations and traditions of British photography; when a long standing member, Mr T.E. Watkinson died in 1938 his obituary noted that 'he took his first photograph, that of his father, nearly sixty years ago'.⁶⁴ These traditions and guidance encouraged members to adopt a common content, form and purpose in their photography: as this archive shows that content was largely rural, the natural world, the old, the picturesque and the romantic; the form was often the pictorial; and frequently the purpose seemed to be to capture and preserve an older, vanishing way of life. They represented a culture and a hegemony of the past, which was widely disseminated through their very popular exhibitions.

Photo 1. From the HNPAS collection.



A very similar type of photography has been explored by Elizabeth Edwards in her study of the Survey Movement. She felt that it was

simply nostalgic and backward looking, as irredeemably entwined with bourgeois picturesque aesthetics and class hegemonies.⁶⁵

Indeed it was a photography

of a social hierarchy, centred around the conservative elements of church, manor, parsonage and cottages, which themselves constituted the pastoral idyll of the unchanging rhythms of the rural.⁶⁶

Her comments on the depiction of the everyday are of particular interest here. In the kinds of photography glimpsed in the HNPAS archive she saw an engagement

with the background space of the everyday, the forgotten and unnoticed reminders that were embodied in the everyday topography of the ancient buildings and traces of the past that were to be found layered in the midst of a town. Such recognition charged these reminders with a sense of identity by encoding the familiar and bringing them into consciousness.⁶⁷

At the heart of this process was the selection of content: 'There is a selective tradition in any cultural/historical tradition which legitimises certain forms of historical knowledge and preserves aspects of cultural heritage that accorded with the dominant values and interests of an historical moment'⁶⁸. Edwards felt that the power of this sort of careful or guided selection of particular aspects of the everyday, the way in which it helped to 'encode the familiar', enabled this mode of photography to have a 'role in shaping subjects and contexts, that allowed certain things to be said and done'.⁶⁹ For example, Edwards is quite clear that it is buildings that were by far the most common subject for the photographers of the survey movement, which she felt 'was an appeal that privileged time over people, 'old' over 'folk'.⁷⁰ Indeed, she was puzzled about the lack of people in the archives of the movement, estimating that they only made up about 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the total subjects, and leaving her thinking that 'the relative absence of folk customs [and so people] is one of the perplexing features of the survey overall'.⁷¹ This is matched in the archive of HNPAS: of the 542 slides listed in the Catalogue of Lantern Slides, 306 are landscapes, 108 are birds, while the next largest category, 50, is of church fonts. Again people are not a significant subject for the amateurs of the HNPAS. This is important, the selection of content is significant in understanding the nature and purposes of a photography. Annebella Pollen states this clearly.

A photograph is there for a reason: someone with an operating camera meant to take that image. These pictures are not accidents....Minimally, these pictures are the results of someone purposefully deciding to look at something while using a camera. In short these images have been created with the purpose and intention of implying significance to what is shown.⁷²

It is interesting that the images produced by the Huddersfield photographers fit so neatly into the categories established by Edwards in her study of the Survey Movement. Both display a consistent and sustained selection of subjects, and both address the same

audience - themselves, the predominantly middle-class memberships. Both are profoundly backward looking, celebrating a more stable, pastoral past, while studiously ignoring the crisis in the industrialised society within which they lived and prospered. Both reduced the population of that society, particularly the working people, almost to the point of invisibility. These are common characteristics established at a local level by societies such as the HNPAS, which were shared across the country. If the selection of subject matter reflects its significance to the photographer and the audience, then it is significant that this is a photography that excludes working people. If they were to view this photography they would see nothing of their own lives, or of its meaning or significance. This was a photography that disassociated or, as Foucault would say, divided them from their own lives. Equally, it was a photography that revealed something of the social concerns and social aspirations of these middle-class photographers who prioritised an idyllic and hierarchical past while almost completely ignoring the existence of working people.

The allure and power of these kinds of selections can be detected in their longevity. Edwards dates her study of the Survey Movement from 1885 to 1918 ⁷³, while the HNPAS was founded in 1850 and had a very similar focus, at least up to 1939. But this power can all so be seen in the way it was utilized across British society, far from the enthusiasms of middle-class hobbyists. There was a widely adopted aesthetic, dominated by pictorialism, in which the skill of the photographer creates a 'beautiful' picture, one in which the human being, if present, is simply a component in a carefully composed picture. This aesthetic was extremely important in creating a framework within which many photographs, and many of working people, were taken at this time. Elizabeth Edwards considers that

Pictorialism was the dominant aesthetic of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries.... a broadly constituted pictorialism formed the core values of the photographic press, photographic societies and photographic exhibitions at all levels.... in terms of its subject matter- often landscapes, rural idylls and allegories of life and work- the pictorial was a pursuit of the beautiful through individual vision, articulated photographically through hand control over colour, tone, detail and the making of pictures.⁷⁴

It has already been seen that within the pictorial tradition subject selection involved the rather backward looking or conservative elements of English society - rural landscapes, churches, manor houses, village scenes, folk customs 'which themselves constituted the pastoral idyll of the unchanging rhythms of the past'⁷⁵. This conservative character of content choice was strengthened by the styles adopted by pictorialist photographers who

found their imagery, their mannerisms and their explanatory rhetoric in a wholesale raid on the history of painting, culling features from the old masters, impressionism, academicism, symbolism and art nouveau. A pictorial photograph was less a representation of the world than a representation of painting as a repository of high art values. That is, overall endeavour was to produce markedly crafted 'painterly' works, works that looked like legitimate art rather than everyday photography.⁷⁶

This cultural conservatism was further compounded by the role of the photographer within the pictorialist tradition, in which the vision and skill of the artist is central to the production of beautiful images which rise above the everyday realities and contain a power of beauty capable of making an emotional impact upon the viewer. Allan Sekula is very wary of this relationship between the pictorialist photographer and the everyday: when the photographer becomes the 'seer' or the 'expressive genius' then the resulting images become 'invested with a magical power to penetrate appearances and transcend the visible'.⁷⁷ In reality this led photographers away from the everyday towards a photography which had a 'desire to abandon all contextual reference and to convey meaning by virtue of metaphorical substitution'⁷⁸. A photography was created which disassociated the image from its social context and served to suppress the real lives of working people. The central activity in pictorialism was not the capture of any reality but the creation of the magical image by the genius artist. And this pictorialist tradition was widely adopted by amateur photographers. For example, Photo 2 is from Scarborough, an entry in one of the photographic competitions for holidaymakers which were common at the time in many of the seaside towns, and elements of pictorialism can be seen: it is a carefully composed and created image with an obvious 'beauty', but could have been taken at any time, in almost any coastal location, and the human being is just one of many compositional elements. It lifts the human subject out of his social embeddedness, and it is evident that the social context of the images is unimportant in both its content and in the ambitions of the

photographer. It is very typical of many of the images produced by holidaymakers. Photo 3 was produced by a trawler man, sailing out of Grimsby. Among the images he took of his life at sea were those of the world in which he worked, and here he turned to those pictorialist modes which were oblivious to the presence of people. The Yorkshire Museum of Farming holds a fascinating collection of photographs, largely donated after they have been left unwanted at the end of farm sales. It is largely uncatalogued, but these were photographs that were produced by, and for, farming families. Inevitably, they contain pictures of prize animals and new machinery, but they also contain images of the farming people themselves (Photo 4). Even here, in the wildernesses of the Yorkshire countryside, these farmer photographers turned to pictorialism as they tried to capture their world. Again a mode of representation was produced which reflected little of the individual people who worked in the fields or in their circumstances. Holiday makers, fishermen and farmers were happy, at least at times, to present a world in which the human being, particularly a working human being, was either absent or was presented as a compositional element in some kind of pre-industrial pastoral idyll.

Pictorialism, was not merely the product of middle-class, metropolitan England, it can be seen to be utilized by holidaymakers in Scarborough, miles out in the North Sea and in the remote valleys of the Dales. During this period there was a circulation or a dissemination of widely shared sets of images and styles among amateur photographers who came from a wide range of social situations. Underlying these images and styles was a deeply conservative perception of the world. When working people were included in the picture they may well have been a secondary element in the composition, but their presence was not a matter of oversight or serendipity. They were fixed there as a component part of an established and carefully structured 'mythology' about English society. This was one that often reduced working people almost to the point of invisibility, and one which was fundamentally disinterested in their individuality or humanity. Widely-shared characteristics in both the content and form of these images created by the amateur photographers of this period can clearly be discerned. These reveal modes of representing working people with a very clear political significance, one that Foucault may well have recognised. While invisibility itself is not necessarily a concept that he would have employed and in terms of

the finely graded classifications he was able to identify in his own studies it is a very crude one. He was rather more concerned with the visibility and transfer of those physical behaviours that carried with them elements of discipline and power. Nevertheless, reducing working people to this point clearly reinforces strong hierarchical perceptions - they were so definitely at the bottom of the continuous pyramid as to be unworthy of representation. Invisibility is also very much a dividing practice, in which working people were removed from the mainstream social discourse, in both their own and others' eyes. Hierarchical networks, continuous pyramids, and dividing practices are all, of course, very much Foucauldian concepts. Amateur photographers were producing ways of looking at the world, forms of knowledge, which excluded working people, which marginalized them, and there is an obvious social and political significance to a process in which the production of knowledge can be seen to be reinforcing existing power relations.

Photo 2. A competition entry for the Hudson Prize, Scarborough.



Photo 3. At sea, Grimsby.



Photo 4. Yorkshire Museum of Farming.



iii. Five Professional Photographers and their Representations of Working People.

This section takes a sample of five professional photographers. Each made their living from widely differing activities, but each had the opportunity to include working people in their work. Despite these differences, remarkable similarities emerge in the way they represent working people. They also display strong parallels with the work of the amateur photographers, and, as such, they would appear to support a Foucauldian interpretation of this photography. Indeed despite the differences in their motivations and audiences there is every reason to anticipate that the forms of marginalization and hierarchization that can be seen in the images of the amateurs of the HNPAS and the Survey Movement extended into the work of the professional photographers of the period. The fact that they were working for commissions, almost exclusively provided by middle-class patrons who had their own commercial and aesthetic interests, would suggest that this was, if not probable, certainly possible. This likelihood was increased as this was a time when the boundaries between amateurs and professional were blurred. Amateurs aspired to the conventions of the professionals and individuals passed regularly between the two. Harry Cartlidge, the first of these professional photographers, operated across the gap between amateur and professional photography in a way that appears to have been quite common during this period⁷⁹. He was employed by the Dock Authority in Hull for most of his working life, usually as a clerk, but also he was regularly called upon by his employers to use his photographic skills. Harry supplemented his income by writing about photography in a whole range of journals and newspapers, winning the prize money in photographic competitions and by getting his work published in regional and national newspapers. His first two published articles - 'The Photography of Village Churches' and 'Our Disappearing Windmills' - place him firmly in the traditions of amateur photography seen earlier.⁸⁰ It is small wonder that he was successful in getting his photographs published, he was very aware of the appeal of the everyday to potential audiences and he was a very gifted pictorialist. Photo 5 contains a wonderful control of light and shade creating a thing of beauty from the familiar. One in which the human being becomes a rather insignificant compositional element within the image and one in which the attractiveness of the image completely overwhelms any consideration of the social context within which their objects may have operated. In this photo the two working people are useful elements in the image mainly because they

provide a darkness to contrast with the light behind. These are familiar characteristics of pictorial photography that have already been seen in the work of amateur photographers. And they produce representations of working people that focus on 'beauty' while reducing their presence in the image to just another element. This section attempts to trace how common they were across a range of professionals, arguing again that commonalities can be discerned in the modes of representation used and suggesting that Foucault's ideas can be useful in understanding their importance.

Photo 5. The Tug Monamia, Hull, 1929. Harry Cartlidge.



The similarities between the ways in which amateur and professional photographers depicted working people can also be seen in the work of Edward Chambre Hardman. Born in County Dublin, in 1898, his early career was as an officer in the Indian Army, where he picked up photography as a hobby. Leaving the Army in 1922, he set up a studio in Liverpool and became the city's leading portrait photographer. In 1938 his continuing success led him to open a second studio in Chester. Yet he was also a keen landscape photographer and he travelled extensively around the country to capture the beauty he saw there. His Liverpool

studio was in the very centre of the city, which had experienced enormous fluctuations in its fortunes during his lifetime, and he was very much attracted to images of the old and new, of change and decay, often capturing these in a very striking manner. He explicitly did not regard himself to be engaged in any form of social documentary, however he thought that

some pictorialists are too much influenced by criticism: they do not experiment sufficiently and are afraid of doing what is unpopular at the moment....Some critics....would have you believe that it is almost a crime to produce a pictorialist photograph.... The things we pictorialists strive after do not seem to matter in the least. It is subject interest only which counts.⁸¹

Despite this, in the course of his photography out in the city he regularly captured images of working people. Photo 6, 'Girls by an engravers sign' from 1925, which has a very strong composition based on an astute use of light: the dark on the left is separated from the light on the right by a series of very strong and connected verticals - the edge of the shadow, the bollard, the key and then the chimney, while the brickwork and steps provide horizontals to set this off. The light of the sun falls on the girls' dresses which serve as the focal point of the picture. Despite the strong composition there is a transitory feel to the image; the sunlight would only penetrate this narrow alley for a short time on a sunny day, and as it has done so it has fleetingly captured the girls' pose. Beauty is brought to the city. Of course, this is not an attempt to depict a social reality, it is an attempt to capture beauty by a highly skilled pictorialist. The central subjects are the working people of Liverpool but there is no attempt in this image to establish a relationship with them or to explore their individuality or the conditions of their existence. If anything space and bodies are organised here in a way that encourages the viewer to completely forget any realities that faced working people. Photo 7 was taken in 1934 and is titled 'Barrow boy stops for a light'. Again the composition is superb: the evening sun through the railings casts hard, then soft, verticals across the picture; the ruts in the road provide some horizontals to set this off; and the young boy stops on his way home from work between the vast pillars of the cemetery beyond. It was a photo taken in the crumbling splendour of the Georgian terraces of Hope Street and it could easily have been a melancholy image of decay and poverty. But it is not, it is a study of the setting sun streaming across the road. The barrow boy is left as an undefined, unexplored blob of dark to set across the vertical shadows. While the content of

the picture is death, decay and child labour, the received image is of a more than compensating beauty. Body and space have been organised in this image to isolate this boy from both his social and economic context and from his peers. Both photos create beautiful images which perhaps create a sense of the transience of time. But, as with Cartlidge, the working people are included because they provide a useful compositional element, and not because of any interest in them as individuals, or because of any interest in documenting any 'reality'.

Photo 6. Girls by an Engraver's Sign, Liverpool, 1925. Edward Chambre Hardman.



Photo 7. Barrow Boy Stops for a Light, Liverpool, 1934. Edward Chambre Hardman.



Neither Cartlidge nor Chambre Hardman expressed any interest in such a documentation of working people. But there were some professionals who were of the Left, expressed a concern for working people and who secured access to large audiences for their photography during their lifetimes. John Maltby, for example, did photographic work for the National Union of Unemployed Workers.⁸² His archive contains pictures in which working people appear, but they often seem secondary to the workplace process they are engaged in, rather than for any intrinsic merit they may have possessed. The exception is a rather fixed image of a roasted potato seller, but even here the viewer is not clear if the main focus is the man or his oven (Photo 8). Part of the reason for what appears to be merely a passing interest in photographing working people may well rest in Maltby's principal business interest. In 1935 he won a contract with Odeon Cinemas, to take four pictures of each new cinema that was built around the country. At £3 for each set of four this was a nice earner as between 1935 and 1939 Odeon built 250 new cinemas. More importantly it led Maltby away from documentation into a career as an architectural photographer. This was a period

when architects were realising the commercial importance of sensitive and spectacular pictures of their creations and Maltby's business developed rapidly into this area. By the 1950's he was employing four photographers, two printers and several clerical staff. A market had opened up and Maltby was quick and able enough to profit from this. His biographer, Robert Elwall believes that 'he produced some of the most enduringly evocative images of British architecture and design during the twentieth century.'⁸³(Photos 9-10).

Maltby's architectural work spectacularly outshines his rather static pictures of working people, it is a photography full of optimistic images of a consumer led, entertainment orientated, technology driven future. Elwall describes his pictures of the new cinemas as,

Depictions of glittering art deco dream houses with their stream lined, cream tiled fronts, brash lettering and boldly accentuated towers....conveying the aura of refulgent opulence, [were] imaginatively created to allow film goers to forget temporarily the grim reality of their daily existence.⁸⁴

While his photos of Battersea Power Station show 'where the floodlit power station gleams like a beacon of hope in an otherwise Stygian gloom [which] exemplifies the period's faith in redemption through technology'⁸⁵. These are images very similar to the work of American Precisionists of the time; men such as Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth and Ralston Crawford with their positive affirmations of the power of capitalism and its new technology, to create a new and better world. But they depict a future that seems to offer little immediate or direct succour or hope to the man stood on the wet streets of Liverpool hawking roasted potatoes. And they seem remote from much of contemporary Left-wing discourse, of which Maltby was a part, about the future. Part of the reason for the qualitative difference between Maltby's images of people and those of buildings may simply have been the power of the market, in which the financial attractions of architectural work would massively overshadow anything that, for example, the National Union of Unemployed Workers could offer. It would be perfectly understandable if Maltby gave his greatest care and imaginative flair to the work which offered the best returns. He may well have had a strong political commitment to working people and he dabbled in their documentation, but

the market restricted this from ever developing into either a major preoccupation or from impacting on a significant audience.

At first sight, Maltby's work, with its attractive images of the new leisure industries, seems a long way from the nostalgia for a pastoral past that was so prominent in the work of many contemporary amateur and professional photographers. But it was based on exactly the same aesthetic- the pictorial manipulation of light and dark, the prioritisation of beauty and the, often, total absence of the working people who worked in these futuristic buildings. Indeed, it could be argued that that it was an aesthetic that was just as conservative as any pastoral imagery, in the sense that it promised a future that did not require any political or social adjustment. Rather, this was a future that would be delivered purely by technological change.

Photo 8. Roasted Potato Seller, Liverpool. 1930's. John Maltby.



Photo 9. Odeon Cinema, Weston-Super-Mare, 1935. John Maltby



Photo 10. Battersea Power Station, London, 1935. John Maltby.



J. Allan Cash was typical also of many at the time who saw in the rapidly growing photography industry an opportunity to forge a career.⁸⁶ His experience was similar to that of John Maltby in that he, too, found that the economic necessities of making a living constrained the opportunities that any sympathy he had for working people could emerge in his photography. The Depression of the 1930's led to unemployment, forcing him to look for new ways in which to supplement his income. He turned to photography and 'I started to take the sort of photographs that I believed would sell. Not news pictures - I had no hankering for the hustle and bustle of that side of the profession - but pictures of general interest, curious or beautiful things'⁸⁷. And from the beginning of his photographic career he was driven by this search for marketable images, 'I realised forcibly how it was possible to make striking pictures from the most ordinary subjects. I became very enthusiastic'⁸⁸. Cash was also a man of the Left. Terry Dennett locates him, on his return to London, supporting the Workers' Camera Club in a similar way to John Maltby.⁸⁹ And his autobiography reveals very pro-Soviet opinions based on visits to Russia, and very anti-fascist views arising from trips to Italy and Germany.⁹⁰ As he travelled abroad he was always concerned to capture the lives of people from the lower classes (Photo 11). This photograph is from Cash's autobiography *Living on my Camera: Ten Years of Freelancing*. One of the major themes of the book is how he built his business, in many ways it reads like an instruction manual or self-help guide for budding professional photographers. It reveals the effort he put in: travelling widely to gather material, then tramping around London, hawking his pictures, supporting his published work with lecture tours, carefully listing what had sold well and then following this up on subsequent tours,⁹¹ 'trying, trying, trying all the time to widen my markets to get more of my stuff published'⁹². By 1939 he had established a flourishing business and he was able to attract audiences of between 400-1500 on his illustrated lecture tours. Even today his picture agency continues to sell on-line his images of ordinary people from around the world. At the heart of his success was an acute awareness of what the market would buy. Before he set off on a photographic trip to the Balkans in 1937 he spent time identifying what would sell.

I made a mental note to take some really pictorial stuff wherever the opportunity offered, especially for photographic papers and exhibition purposes. Railway travel in the Balkans ought to make up an interesting article, so I put that down on my list

of subjects. Motoring too seemed a good subject for me. I had several markets connected with motoring and the Balkans ought to provide some new material. Peasant customs and peculiarities of the country would certainly be worth photographing, in fact anything out of the ordinary or different'⁹³.

As he travelled he built up his stock of images, looking constantly for exemplar types, 'Of 'types' one can never have too many. Human interest pictures are always worth getting. Aged people and children are of never ending fascination and the two together can be irresistible'⁹⁴. And so he collected pictures of monks, 'he looked exactly the part' and of ordinary people, 'I have another good example of a peasant caught in a suitable pose,'⁹⁵ and 'I show an Old Believer, a fine type of Danube Fisherman'⁹⁶. These were 'types,' not individual people, and they were foreign types, not British working people. These images were for viewing by a middle-class audience, not by the subjects themselves, and certainly not by any audience that might recognize some of the realities behind these images of labour.

By 1939 foreign travel was difficult and Cash took up a post with the British Council. He was engaged on a project about 'the British way of life.....typical places in Britain - a village, a cathedral town, a market town, a port and an industrial city'⁹⁷. In 1940 he was taken on as a War Office photographer and initially was working on pictures of the British way of life for use in propaganda abroad. This seems to have opened his eyes to his own country.

I should like to see some provision for our pictures [of England] to be used in this country, for many of the things we cover with our cameras are largely unknown among our own people and I feel much good could be done by publishing our achievements in many fields amongst ourselves, as well as abroad'⁹⁸.

This is, of course, what he had never done in his own photography, it was an activity only stimulated by the emergence of a new patron - a government driven by the necessities of war to search for and utilize an imagery that addressed the whole nation. Despite his own political views and his interest in the lives of ordinary people, in his market-driven approach to his work it had never occurred to him to attempt to capture the lives and achievements of ordinary people in his own country. Rather he had gone abroad to collect images of

working people; producing pictures that emphasised, not a community of experience but, the strangeness and difference of people in other countries; pictures not of individuals but of 'generalised 'types' that met external, market-orientated perceptions. These were not images designed to enable their subjects to recognise and understand something of their own lives; they were designed to sell to those people who bought photographic magazines, who went to photographic exhibitions and who attended Cash's lecture tours. The photographic exploration of exotic foreign lands was a fashionable entertainment of the time. Despite Cash's political leanings and his interest in the lives of ordinary people, these images were merely a commodity in a fashionable enterprise that was without the power to reflect or inform the lives of working people in this country. Both Maltby and Cash were caught up in the profitable enterprise of cultural production for the entertainment business. For these two, Left-leaning, photographers this was an enterprise which largely excluded the representation of British working people.

In the work of these professional photographers it is possible to see an aesthetic quite close to that to be seen among the amateurs - a concern to create an image of beauty from the everyday through the unique vision of the artist/photographer and their control over light and shade. This crossover is unsurprising at a time when the line between professional and amateur photography was indistinct, and amateurs can be seen to be regularly making money from their work, often going on to develop this into a career. The largely middle-class audience for the work of both groups of photographers was also very similar. This was not necessarily an aesthetic which set out to deliberately exclude working people, rather, that when they were caught up in its imagery they were presented artistically, incorporated into long lasting and pervasive pictorial modes. Even those professional photographers with a political sympathy for the working-class found that the possibility of developing alternative modes of representation were severely restricted. There was no market for this, and their interest in the everyday was subsumed by the growing power of the consumer and entertainment industries, attracted by a cultural form, pictorialism, that was adept at presenting the allure of shiny surfaces, but disinterested in anything that might lay beneath.

Photo 11. Unchanging Egypt. J. Allan Cash.



The fifth and final professional photographer professional photographer in this section is E. O. Hoppe, who, in contrast to the other four, deliberately brought working people into the centre of his images, at least for a time. His life and work have been well documented. Mick Gidley thought that he was 'during his heyday, perhaps, the world's most famous photographer'⁹⁹. At the time Cecil Beaton, another photographer with an international reputation, believed that

Hoppe's pictures were entirely different from the other photographers of that period, for they were all imbued with a controlled and subtle romanticism and atmospheric glow - they were the work of someone with taste, perception, appreciation, of someone who used the camera as an artist'¹⁰⁰.

He shared an ambition with many amateur photographers in his driving concern to establish photography as an art, explaining that, 'I was fired with a youthful and overwhelming ambition to rescue photography from the mediocrity into which it had fallen, to see it

recognised as an art¹⁰¹. And this was entwined with his commercial ambitions to produce work that was perceived as exclusive and therefore expensive: 'Far be it from me to infer that photographers should be snobs; but it must be borne in mind that while anyone can splash paint on a canvas or press a camera release, it takes years to bring to fruition the powers of a creative artist'¹⁰². Much of his commercial success arose from the careful cultivation of a sense of social exclusivity through an emphasis on the role and status of the artist/photographer¹⁰³.

In my own case, realising the need for photography to be accorded its proper status, I determined to follow the example of the medical profession and regard each sitting as a consultation. As a specialist diagnoses a complaint at a consultation, I endeavoured to interpret and imprison my sitters' character in silver bromide.¹⁰⁴

This insistence that his own photographic portraits were an artistic creation, and hence costly, was based on his claims that only an artist could produce photographs that truly revealed the inner nature of the sitter. Hoppe repeatedly mentions his own skill at achieving this in his autobiography.

To be able to do this requires many years of observation.....I remember photographing that charming man, the late Judge Parry. He had come to the studio from the courts where he had been trying a particularly complex case, and found it difficult to throw off the impersonal mask of the judge. My first exposure I knew was a failure. So I talked for a few minutes about my travels and happened to touch on the curious folklore of Rumania, and to my delight the judge's mask swiftly faded to reveal a kindly, humorous and imaginative man, who professed to believe in goblins.¹⁰⁵

In his autobiography he is at pains to describe this combination of advanced technical skill and a profound understanding of the human character which lay at the centre of his art. He is the archetypal photographer as a celebrity artist and his work was undoubtedly a very successful commodity. Hoppe's insistence that his work was art brought him cultural status and a lucrative income: here was another photographer completely attuned to the demands of the market. This awareness also made him very sensitive to changes in the market, 'to refuse fashionable interpretations of the contemporary scene would only imply closing

one's eyes to its presence'¹⁰⁶. While Hoppe always practised high society portraiture, opening a New York studio at one stage, he was always quick to diversify into promising new markets. Brian Stokoe regarded him as 'A consummate commercial and aesthetic opportunist who had drawn freely from the plurality of available iconographies, appropriating styles and genres as he went'¹⁰⁷. He had reinvigorated Edwardian society portraiture, achieved fame through his exhibitions and associations with leading cultural figures, profitably engaged with the emerging magazine market, established his own picture agency and, in 1925, become an internationally renowned topographical photographer¹⁰⁸. It is intriguing to find such a commercially minded photographer, an internationally renowned master of his profession, acclaimed for his explorations of the personality of his sitters, bringing working-class subjects into his portraiture, and in doing so, apparently ignoring the modes of invisibility, hierarchy and marginality that have been seen earlier.

Images (Photos 12 and 13), from Hoppe's autobiography, share a compositional simplicity with a very close facial focus and very little other detail. This is close to Hoppe's belief and practice that the photographer should be concerned to reveal the inner person, and here the viewer is given little choice but to look into the eyes of these subjects, and to speculate about their mood, character and life stories. This speculation, however, is 'free floating' in the sense that the absence of any social, occupational or personal detail in these pictures prevents the viewer from placing the subjects into any social context. While the viewer can speculate in very general terms about the human condition, this condition is detached from any material context and so from any social or political meaning. Even this speculation about each individual subject is not completely open ended in that they are presented very much as 'types' rather than any sort of exploration of human nature, the viewer is presented with stereotypes - a Russian Fisherman, a Charlady or a Sheep Rancher. If these pictures are meant to entice the viewer into speculation about human nature then the way they are composed carefully limits the range of this speculation.

In 1926 W. Pett Ridge published *London Types* which consisted of twenty-four rather melodramatic vignettes about working-class life in London. Hoppe was asked to provide

twenty-five photographs from his collection of images of working people; one was used as the frontispiece while the others were used to illustrate the main character in each story (Photos 14-15).

These images are very similar to those to be found in his autobiography; again Hoppe presents close ups, often just of the face, emerging from a darkened background. Again there is very little detail to allow the viewer to develop any independent opinion about social context; which has to be gathered instead from the text. Indeed, it is possible to argue that Hoppe abandoned, or at least limited, his search for the inner-being when it came to his working-class subjects. Sally Ann Baggot and Brian Stokoe see in these depictions of working people 'street photography stripped of its politics, rendered safe for a popular British market'¹⁰⁹. This was a middle-class market, opened up by recurring panics about the 'condition of the working classes' during this period of crisis. They see his photographs as confirming concepts of the deserving and undeserving poor and of respectability,

The notion of respectability constituted an intimate constellation of economic, religious and social ideologies.....It operates in *London Types* to maintain the boundary between the respectable lower classes and those whose pursuits place them beyond the pale of economic independence, cleanliness and social reserve and a grateful acceptance of their place in the social order.¹¹⁰

One of the stories in *London Types* is 'The Wedding Present' in which Mrs Gould's son invites his wealthy bride-to-be to his mother's rooms in order to 'see how the poor live'. Mrs Gould (Photo 14) can be found polishing and cleaning her rooms before the visit; informing her guest that 'my best time occurred when I was in service' and showing a present received from a previous employer, 'I value it more than anything else in the world'; while her wealthy visitor, looking around states 'I think I was happier when I was moderately hard up'¹¹¹. Like most of the stories in *London Types*, it is a reassuring tale of subservience. Baggot and Stokoe thought that the book was more revealing about middle-class perceptions of working people, legitimizing their moral superiority.

The gaze it invokes is, therefore, not quite so innocent. There is an illusory intimacy evoked by Hoppe's images.....which has the effect of softening the uneasy meeting

across boundaries of class, but such a meeting is not an equal one. Very few of Hoppe's subjects return the viewers gaze, the reader is cast in the role of voyeur, at liberty to scrutinize these images.¹¹²

They see in Hoppe's images of working people

An intensely ideological tract.....masking the economic truth of a lower class who were, unlike the assimilated images depicted here, far from satisfied with their lot and had organized [in the 1920s] on a grand scale to protest the fact. Middle-class anxiety at such social unrest resounds throughout, in the recourse to an older, mythically stable social order.¹¹³

This was the market that Hoppe had so astutely tapped into with these images of working people. In these he was able, not just to anaesthetize the everyday, but also to contribute to the formation of a knowledge that reinforced hierarchical, middle-class concepts of the social order. These pictures gave a middle-class audience the opportunity to look upon working people from a safe distance, but to do this through a filter which provided those images of a social order they wished to see. Hoppe was not interested in presenting representations of working-class lives in which his subjects might recognize something of their lives. His images of working people were much more concerned to enable their middle-class viewers to identify their own assumptions about, and aspirations for, the working-class.

Perhaps Hoppe's greatest value to this study is in his self-advertisement, particularly in his autobiography where his motivations become so evident - especially his careful tuning-in to the requirements of the market. In doing so he was simply making explicit exactly the same motivations that governed the work of each of the professional photographers covered here. They could not survive without being similarly attuned. This was a market dominated by the wealth and buying power of the middle classes. It was one that required an art photography firmly rooted in the pictorialism that was so dominant. And it was a market by the wealth and buying power of the middle classes. It was one that required an art

Photo 12. Charlady, 1921. Photo 13. Smiler Jim, 1938. E. O. Hoppe.



Photos 14-15. E. O. Hoppe from *London Types*.



photography firmly rooted in the pictorialism that was so dominant. And it was a market that presented working people in ways that the middle-class buyers of these images found acceptable - safely placed in pastoral myths, or in the shadows, or in carefully structured hierarchies, or in attitudes of subservience. If anything, among these professional photographers, there is an extension and intensification of the same semiotics that can be seen among the amateur photographers of the period. Despite a variety of contexts in which these amateur and professional photographers worked, it was the demands and expectations of their shared audiences that produced this commonality of representation across their work. Fundamentally, photographers and audience, shared the same disinterest in reflecting the life experiences of working people, consequently producing a photography from which it was almost impossible for them to recognize anything of their own lives. Here, again, they were marginalized in the eyes of middle-class photographers and audiences. Perhaps even more importantly, working people were marginalized from their own lives. This was a photography which persistently created frameworks within which it was only possible for them to see themselves firmly rooted in hierarchical arrangements, and in attitudes of subservience or insignificance. The impact of this constantly repeated imagery on the self-formation of the dominated is precisely how Foucault believed that the production of knowledge produced a social discipline that lived inside the individual, maintaining and strengthening existing hegemonies. Even those professional photographers such as Maltby and Cash, whose political opinions questioned the nature of contemporary power relations, found themselves so thoroughly enmeshed within them that they were unable to fashion a photography that could question those hegemonies. Indeed, they often produced images which had the opposite effect. This is, of course, a very Foucauldian concept, whereby the centres of knowledge production, knowledge which strengthened power, were to be found throughout a society, even among the dominated and among those that questioned this domination.

iv. Professional Photographers and the Workplace.

Hoppe was not the only photographer interested in working people. By this period there was a well-established tradition of commissioning photographers to depict the workplace which often meant that the workforce was, necessarily, included in the imagery. This section looks this tradition in five differing industries. Despite this variation, it finds, again, a commonality of form and content across these industries which position working people in the image in remarkably similar ways. These are similarities that, again, seem to support Foucauldian interpretations of this photography.

Evidence of the first of these industries comes from the Woodend Museum in Scarborough, which contains a set of photographs from the 1930's of a remarkable East Coast activity that centred itself on Scarborough - big game fishing. During this period wealthy anglers from around the world gathered to fish for the enormous tuna that were to be found in and around the Dogger Bank. It was a short-lived activity that had disappeared by the 1940's. Nonetheless, for a short period, when these monsters were brought into the harbour and weighed, they attracted a considerable amount of attention from the holiday makers and visitors, the successful anglers often posing for photographs. Angling for tuna fish of this size is not an easy task; these are powerful creatures that require a team of strong, able and knowledgeable men to land and kill. These photographs are of Colonel Peel who arrived in Scarborough in his own yacht and employed a team of fishermen to assist him in making his catches. These teams can be seen in Photo 16, next to the fish, and in Photo 17, on the extreme left of the frame, in images that are very typical in this archive. Both pictures appear to message a very distinct social hierarchy. While the fish takes centre stage in Photo 16, there is a physical 'stepping up' from left to right; with the two capped seamen together on the left, the skipper with pipe in the right, the crowd of onlookers keeping respectfully in the background, and finally Colonel Peel, uncapped, physically larger and casually dressed, dominating the gathering. The tuna may have been in the centre, but the big fish was clearly on the right. Again in Photo 17 it is the catch and then the Colonel (in the centre in the light suit) who take the centre stage. The onlookers in the background appear to be a rather well-

to-do group of admirers, while his team of fishermen can be seen in flat caps, stood on the crane at the back and to the left of the frame. If effective team work was essential to catching the tuna, this was certainly not the central message of these photos. Rather they contain a clear reflection of existing social relations, with Colonel Peel very obviously the dominant figure. While it is unclear who was responsible for the arrangement of bodies for these pictures, the end product appears to consolidate the contemporary hierarchy.

Photos 16-17. Colonel Peel and his catch, Scarborough.





A second example of this tradition of photographing the workplace can be seen in the fishing industry of the east coast of England, a photography which dates back to at least the 1890's and continued to the demise of the industry in the 1970's and 1980's. The Grimsby Local History Library has a collection of eleven boxes of photos, collected and donated over the years, mostly from local people. Those pictures taken on land are largely connected with the procedures of bringing the fish to market - landing, processing, displaying and selling along the Grimsby fish quay. Photos 18 and 19 are very typical of this genre, revealing the impressive sizes of catches before the stocks were fished out, and both show a fascinating organisation of bodies and space. There is the usual careful, pictorial, interplay of light and dark, but it is noticeable that the bulk of the light and space in both images is given over to the fish, laid out for sale, while the bodies of working people are pushed to the side and back of the composition; they are silhouetted and separated from the viewer by both distance and darkness and there is no sign of any communication between them. The quay upon which the fish were landed was known locally as 'Pneumonia Alley' for obvious

reasons, but there is no reflection of that context in these images. The focal point of these photographs is the market and the central activity is the sale of goods - the productive process. Working people are seen here as a subsidiary element to this; they are there but their importance relative to the market and its goods is indicated by their position, size and clarity in the photos. In precisely the same way as in the tuna fishing photography they are pushed to the rear and sides of these pictures, at least implicitly, placing them within a hierarchy in which they found themselves again at the bottom, and their social role and social worth reduced in significance for any viewer. And, of course, hierarchization, diminishment and marginalization are powerful ways of securing working people within the existing systems of power, and productive, relations.

Photos 18-19. Grimsby Fish Dock, 1920's. Grimsby Local History Library.





Farming is a completely different industry but the archive of photos at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming is also dominated by pictures of people at work. As with the tuna fishing pictures, many of these have been carefully arranged by the photographer, the bodies of the sitters have been painstakingly organized. This archive is largely uncatalogued, but it is reasonable to assume that these were taken on behalf of the landowners who commissioned the photographs. Photos 20-21 are typical of many that can be found throughout the archive, in which an attempt is made to picture the essential components of a farm. In both photos the preparation for the photograph has clearly taken time and thought, and the results are an impressive display of the farm's wealth and success. In both the workmen are dwarfed by the draught horses which are placed at the front of the image, and by the haystacks to the rear. In both there is no physically smaller object than the men who made up the workforce. Once again the bodies of working people are pushed to the back of the image, reduced in significance. Photos 22-23 shows gangs of men preparing the earth for sowing, and actually sowing potatoes. The individuality of the men lost as they dip

their heads or turn their backs. Here the dominant image is that of the neat, orderly furrows stretching off into the distance, an orderliness arising from the careful organization of labour into effective and productive work. In each of these, and many more in this archive, the individuality of the working person is very much secondary to both their role in the process of production and to the other components of this process. This is a photography, across a whole range of contexts, which was producing a new visual knowledge about society and one which, despite the variety in the nature of the sources, was remarkably consistent. It was a new visual knowledge in which modes of representation persistently diminished the importance of working people, securing them firmly 'in their place' as relatively insignificant components of the economic and social life of this society. Here would appear to be a very Foucauldian process of knowledge production.

Photos 20-23. Yorkshire Farms. Yorkshire Museum of Farming.



Photo 21.



Photo 22.



Photo 23.



A photography of the workplace that secured working people within clear hierarchical frameworks was common practice during this period and is frequently found in the archives. For example, Fred Hartley was a Dewsbury photographer, operating in the years on each side of the Great War who made his living from portraits and from local scenes and events. Many of his local topographical scenes are couched in the pictorialist explorations of light and dark that were so omnipresent at the time. But he received commissions from local businesses who wished to portray their workplace. (Photos 24-25)¹¹⁴. Inevitably these often included the workforce. Careful thought has clearly been given to the organization of these pictures, in an effort, not just to show the business at its best, but also to offer some kind of explanation of what it was about. An integral part of this organization was the equally careful insertion of the workers into these poses, and in these placements hats, waistcoats, jackets, uniforms and position within the image all seem to acquire a significance as a carefully constructed and elaborate hierarchical structure was presented for display. This is, exactly what could be seen in a completely different context - the farming pictures - and,

remarkably, appears to be an element as important, in these images, as the processes and products of the business.

Photo 24. The Star Laundry, Dewsbury. Fred Hartley.



Photo 25. Unnamed Fruit Seller, Fred Hartley.



A final example of this kind of workplace documentation can be found in the photographic archive of the Kirklees Local History Library, in Huddersfield, where there is, a remarkable collection of just over 100 images, taken by an unknown photographer, of the inside of Broadfield Mills, a textile mill in Huddersfield. This collection is undated but probably originates from just before the Great War. The photographer was clearly commissioned to photograph the business of this textile mill, but in this case it was very much a larger-scale enterprise than those tackled by Fred Hartley. It is this that makes it worth examining as it provides a sustained gaze into the daily life of the workforce as the photographer was thrown into close proximity with them. This is important as this physical closeness within relatively small spaces made it difficult to relegate the workers to the rear or sides of the image, but which, nonetheless, display the same careful positioning and organization of bodies within the image. And the size of the commission also provides a sustained insight into the ways in which these were represented (Photos 26-31). Therefore, in the pictures of the spinning shed (Photo 26-27) the bodies of the workforce can be seen to be physically embedded, or inserted, into the machinery, and the principal relationship captured is between them and their machines, with little evidence of any horizontal relations between members of the workforce. Photo 28, of the mending room, underlines the careful and methodical organization of space and bodies to enhance the efficiency of production, which can be seen throughout all of the photographs of the factory. While the dress code in the factory seems to be almost at the level of medieval sumptuary laws. So, for example, the chemists in the laboratory wear dress suits (Photo 29); the highly skilled weavers and the warpers wear their distinctive white jackets (Photo 30); the less skilled bobbin sorters wear a darker jacket (Photo 31). Within the factory there appears to be a carefully structured hierarchical order. These images, all from one institution, Broadfield Mills, appear to reinforce what also can be seen from a wide range of professional photographers across the region. It would be wrong, however, to regard the sources used here as a comprehensive coverage of the available materials, or to regard the modes of representation seen here as the only ones to be found. Nonetheless, the sample used represents a range of industries and geographical locations and, despite this, it reveals a range of professional photographers, working in a wide variety of contexts, sharing the same characteristics when they include working people in their images. They produced a photography which 'put them in their place'. Whereas pastoral modes of representation appeared to contain, in its search

for the remnants of an older, more stable, quasi-rural social order, implicit hierarchical values, in this workplace photography they were much more explicit. Here working people were placed either in a position of insignificance - at the rear or sides of the image - or within processes of production that are presented as being organized around some finely structured vertical hierarchies. Again, the knowledge that this workplace photography produced seems to reinforce existing power relations in a very Foucauldian manner. These processes, of reducing the significance of working people in the image and of placing them in hierarchical contexts, which are evident in this workplace photography, are exactly the same processes that have already been seen in the work of both amateur and professional photographers. The settings in which the photographs were taken may vary widely, but the end products were remarkably consistent.

Photo 26. Spinning Shed, Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield.



Photo 27. The Spinning Shed, Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield.



Photo 28. The Mending Room, Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield.



Photo 29. The Laboratory, Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield.



Photo 30. The Weaving Shed, Broadfield Mills Huddersfield.



Photo 31. The Bobbin Sorters, Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield.



iv. Two Newspapers and Two Photographers: How the Press Photographed Working People.

This section examines the ways in which the national press photographed working people. It looks at two newspapers, *The Daily Herald* and *The Daily Mirror*, and two of the photographers who worked there. And it argues that, together, they presented an imagery that was virtually indistinguishable from that seen in the previous sections of this chapter. Of course, if the professional photographers presenting a middle-class vision of the working class and their lives, there would appear to be little likelihood that the Establishment press, *The Times* and *The Telegraph*, with their middle- and upper-class readers would be any different. But *The Daily Herald*, owned by the Labour Party and the T.U.C., and *The Daily Mirror*, which increasingly saw itself as a newspaper for the working class, may have offered a photography which was more representative of the lives of their readership. By 1939 their combined readership had reached 3,500,000 and this gives their photography a significance that is worth exploring.¹¹⁵

It was this mass-market that drove the editorial direction of both *The Daily Herald* and *The Daily Mirror*. During this period *The Daily Herald* can be seen to be moving to the Right, or at least to the Centre of British politics, while *The Daily Mirror* was moving to a similar position from the Right. Commercial imperatives were behind these changes which impacted on the kinds of photography that emerged, and which were not without problems for the newspapers and their photographers. For example, in the late 1920's Egon Wertheimer, the London correspondent of *Vorwärts* - the German Social Democratic Party's (SDP) newspaper, discussed the problems *The Daily Herald* was experiencing. He contrasted the ways in which the SDP had established a counter culture among its membership: a culture that gave members an alternative perspective of everyday experience. In Germany membership of the SDP implied significant personal commitment and admission to a network of leisure, cultural and sporting bodies linked to the Party. He noted the absence of any such 'extra-political' culture in England and considered that

Separated by no class barriers from the mental and spiritual concepts of capitalism, which would otherwise have given birth to an exclusively proletarian way of life and morality, and deep rooted in a natural religious tradition, the Labour Party has never been able to make a clean break away from the capitalist culture.¹¹⁶

Wertheimer felt that this inability to establish a distinctive and popular interpretation of the 'everyday' lay at the heart of the problems that parties of the Left and their associates such as the *Daily Herald*, experienced during this period. Huw Richards in his chronicle of the *Daily Herald - The Bloody Circus* - supports this belief, noting its inexorable move to the Right during the inter-war years. In the first phase of its existence, up to 1921, he felt that the paper was 'consistently counter-cultural, militant and determinedly anti-capitalist'¹¹⁷. After its take-over by the TUC in 1922 it remained a high-brow publication appealing to the 'serious minded, well informed political activist with more interest in the latest news from the Genoa Conference or a strike than in the most lurid murder or court case'¹¹⁸. At this time it adopted the stance of 'critical friend' to the Labour leadership, often attempting to accommodate the views of all parts of the Left, reflecting the wider tension between its differing wings as debates raged over 'the respectability of Labour ministers, the importance of official union action, the presence of communists in the Party, the progress of the Russian Revolution'¹¹⁹ Then, as it grew more dependent upon Labour Party funds, it became much

more a loyal supporter of the Party's leadership. By 1930 it had fallen into private ownership and was engaged in a full blooded effort to be a financially viable and commercially orientated paper capable of capturing a mass audience and the advertising revenue that went with this. The motors driving this journey, from hard-Left opposition to devoted support for a very moderate leadership of both Party and unions, were two conundrums that *The Daily Herald* had to address. First, how could it be a paper for the labour movement's activist elite and at the same time generate the income needed to survive by securing a mass circulation with all the commercial compromises this could entail? Secondly, how could it attract the support of, and accommodate, the deeply-divided wings of the labour movement as they sought effective ways of dealing with the deep economic and political crises of the period? Huw Richards argues that the *Herald* tried to be all things to all men and ended up with the worst possible outcome - with no clear identity and satisfying no-one. In his conclusion Richards is clear as to the reasons for this failure; it was because the *Herald* 'reflected the movement it served. It is a shame that British politics is so weak on culture. In almost every other European country politics and culture are interwoven'¹²⁰. And it was in the context of this culture and these conundrums that the photographers of the *Herald* worked.

Within *The Daily Herald* archive, at the National Media Museum in Bradford, there are six Day Books in which its photographers recorded their daily work. These lists of content and location provide some insight into the ways in which they responded to the pressures to secure and increase circulation figures. They cover the years 1933-1939 and contain about 10,000 individual entries.¹²¹ Only a sample has been taken of these in order to capture something of their nature. This consists of the detail of five months - 558 entries - spread across both the calendar year and the period covered, and it provides an interesting analysis. Fashion, entertainment, celebrities (at this time often royalty) and celebrity weddings, and sport together make up 40 per cent of the total. No other category comes close to this. During a period of intense domestic and international political tension, political photos make up only 14 per cent of the total in the sample, a category almost matched by landscapes and farming pictures at 12 per cent. During April 1933 ten entries are made describing tulip beds, sunshine scenes, daffodil studies and landscapes, while there are just

four of factory interiors, and it seems that working people were more likely to be depicted within a very strong seasonal framework than in an industrial setting. For example, in the same month there are entries describing working people making hot cross buns, on holiday, working as porters in a fish market or basket making - pre-industrial activities that are mostly associated with Easter. In August 1939 there are pictures of harvesting in East Sussex, of the start of the herring fishing season at Great Yarmouth in October 1934, and in December 1922 there are 41 entries connected with Christmas. In March 1938, George Roper took a series of pictures of Amberley in Sussex, noting in the Day Book that it was 'a real old English village which hasn't had a brick changed for 50 years'¹²² (Photos 31-32). And there is a sense that there was a fixed annual routine for the photographers that followed a very traditional calendar - ploughing in autumn, snowy scenes in the winter, spring flowers, harvesting and holiday making in the summer.

Photos 31-32. Amberley, Sussex. George Roper, *The Daily Herald*, 1938.





The Day Books also record work done, usually by the paper's leading photographer - James Jarcho - on behalf of the author, H. V. Morton. These entries are interesting: stone masons at work (December 1933); two bargees straining at the oar, bargee gazing at the river, bargee at the wheel, charlady (December 1933); placing dough in the oven, taking loaves from the oven (December 1933); the maid-of-all-work cleaning the gas fire and polishing the table (January 1934). Scenes that fall straight into pre-industrial, hierarchical modes of representation. Once again pastoral modes of photography appear. These pictures were for Morton's travelogue, *In Search of England*, which concludes with a lyrical evocation of this mode.

I went out into the churchyard where the green stones nodded together and I took up a handful of earth and felt it crumble and run through my fingers, thinking that as long as one English field lies against another there is something left in the world for a man to love. 'Well' smiled the vicar, as he walked towards me between the yew trees 'that, I am afraid is all we have'. 'You have England' I said.¹²³

These were feelings widely shared at the time, repeated, for example, by Stanley Baldwin as he tried to encapsulate what England meant to him: 'The sounds of England, the tinkle of hammer on an anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of a scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a ploughman coming over the hill....'¹²⁴ And in Henry Williamson's view of Norfolk there was: 'the silky green wind-wave on midsummer barley, the rustle of yellowing oats, the stiffer sway of wheat, lark singing in the sky and the kestrel's shadow moving down the grass of the windy hill'¹²⁵. Stanley Baldwin, of course, held high office as a Conservative minister and Prime Minister during this period, Henry Williamson was closely associated with Oswald Mosley, while H. V. Morton had explicit Nazi sympathies.¹²⁶ And yet the deeply conservative perspectives that underlay these visions of the country can be seen deeply embedded within the heart of the photography for a newspaper that aspired to change the world for the working-class. These were perspectives which were not unique features of *The Daily Herald*, but were widely shared by, and deeply embedded in, the work of a whole range of photographers.

Three series of photographs have been selected to illustrate the nature of much of the newspaper's photography of working people. The first was taken in August 1938 when Reg Sayers was dispatched by *The Daily Herald* to Comber in Sussex to take photos of the fishermen who worked from the beach there. (Photos 33-37). The result was a sequence of stunning pictures of these men. But this may be a problematic or beguiling beauty, in which the viewer is distracted from a consideration of the subject and its social significance and instead seeks to understand the form, analysing the beauty, the skill of the photographer and the magic of the creative process. The quality of this sequence from the beach at Comber is not at all unusual in this archive. As with the rural images there is no sign of conflict, exploitation or alienation in the workplace, mechanization has not impacted on the working practices, the workers seem to be enjoying their skills and are at one with the world around them, and the mechanisms of the market seem to be benign - they worked together to catch the fish, sold them to local people and shared the proceeds. Rather than presenting images of working people that may have encouraged the sorts of social change *The Daily Herald* was interested in, here was a series of images that seemed to suggest that all was well with the world and its workings. It was this 'aestheticism' of images of working people,

as *The Daily Herald* photographers tapped into older, lyrical, pastoral traditions to frame their work, may well have further reduced the value of their work as agents of social change, simply because it obscured or distracted from any serious consideration of the conditions within which their subjects worked and lived.

Photos 33-37. Comber Beach, Sussex. Reg Sayers, *The Daily Herald*.







Photo 38. Man blowing Scientific Instruments. James Jarche, *The Daily Herald*, 1933.



39. The National Physical Laboratory. James Jarche, *The Daily Herald*, 1932.



Photo 40. Manufacture of Neon Signs. James Jarche, *The Daily Herald*, 1933



In contrast, however, there was a form of representation that appears to have thrown off the shackles of the past and to celebrate the modern, particularly the new industries that were emerging in the 1930's. The photographers seemed to have relished the task, working people were often included in these images and the results were often very attractive (Photos 38-40). But, rather than seeing this as a form of representation that put working people at the centre of radical social change, it has been thought of as more of the same. David Mellor, for example, has argued that this sort of imagery was 'adapted by the British visual imagination to form part of a sentimental landscape from which emerged a genre of the techno-picturesque'¹²⁷. He believes that images of modern industry from this period were part of an 'optimistic techno-utopianism [which] was in fact working to glamourize industry'¹²⁸, and it is possible to see these images of developing, modern industries as simply promoting the belief that technological innovation would provide the solution to society's ills, obviating the need for any redistribution of wealth or political power. From this perspective this mode is just another conservative element in the photography of this newspaper. And they contain exactly the same perspectives that can be seen in the work of other professional photographers such as John Maltby.

A final series of photos may serve to underline the formal political consequences of the conservative forms and subjects of *The Daily Herald's* photography. Photos 41- 44 were taken by the Saidman brothers in June 1939 as part of a campaign to secure an increase in the old age pension. The complete set show Mr and Mrs Bob Upcroft, both pensioners, in their local park, receiving their ten shillings a week pension from the Post Office, Mrs Upcroft carefully buying food from the market, Bob supplementing their income by working on his allotment, the couple at home at tea-time, and the couple participating in a petition to parliament for an increase in the pension. These are not pictures of workers asserting their rights, and they are not photos of a militant, class-conscious working people who were actively involved in the class struggle. Rather their tone is non-threatening; these are decent, deserving, respectable, hardworking people who are asking, not demanding; they are petitioning others, far more powerful than themselves, for the redress of a modest request. These pictures fit into a rhetoric of amelioration within the existing systems of parliamentary democracy, and they provide images which those in power could feel comfortable responding to, without in any way fearing for their own positions and privileges. In its attempt to accommodate the commercial pressure outlined earlier, *The Daily Herald* turned to those aesthetic forms that were familiar and acceptable to potential audiences, simply because they were so well-established in professional and amateur photography. But in doing so, it can be argued that the newspaper presented its audience with some very hierarchical and conservative values that did little to advance its own concerns for social change.

Photos 41-44. Old Age Pensions Campaign. Reuben Saidman, *The Daily Herald*, 1939.





These same values, already seen in the work of a wide range of amateur and professional contexts, can be seen also in the approach of a more overtly middle-class newspaper, *The Daily Mirror*. Launched in 1903, initially as a publication aimed at middle class, female readers, it quickly developed a mass readership. For the first thirty years or more of its life it maintained a staunchly right-wing stance, supporting the Conservative Party in every pre-war General Election; indeed in 1934 there were editorials supporting Oswald Mosley. In 1935, however, the proprietor, Lord Rothermere, sold his shares to his nephew, Cecil King, following a dramatic drop in circulation. At the time of King's purchase it was described as 'a prematurely middle aged, middle-class dullard'¹²⁹. King set about revitalizing the paper with energy, employing a new editor and a new manager with experience of the tabloids published along the east coast of the U.S.A. Together they introduced sledgehammer headlines, 'jolly jack-the-lad, sensible but cheeky editorials'¹³⁰, campaigns on social issues, strip cartoons, women columnists, comprehensive sports coverage, giant give-aways and prominent photography. Very slowly the paper also began to abandon its pro-establishment editorial positions - supporting Edward VII in the abdication crisis, concerned to push re-armament and taking an interest in issues of social justice. As the Thirties came to an end *The Daily Mirror's* acutely market-sensitive management seemed to be aware that British society was changing and positioned their paper accordingly; nonetheless, for over three-quarters of the inter-war period it was very much a supporter of the political and social establishment, and its photography reflected this.

The Daily Mirror's photographic archive is currently held at its print works in Watford; it consists of 56 boxes of glass negatives that have survived from the inter-war period. These are all that remain after bomb damage sustained in the Second World War; the archivist estimates that these boxes represent about 3 per cent of the original total of up to 2000 boxes, which of course makes any representative statistical analysis unreliable. Nonetheless, eight boxes were analysed for their content in detail; these contained 779 envelopes of negatives, with one to six images in each.¹³¹ The breakdown of the content of these images was:

Sport -	27%	Crime -	8%
Scenic -	23%	Flight -	4%
Celebrities -	21%	Miscellaneous -	7%
Royalty -	10%		

Clearly images of working people were limited, but it would be wrong to assume that they never appeared in the paper; rather their infrequent appearances appear to have operated within a tightly circumscribed framework. This consisted of a focus on rural, older craft industries (Photos 45-46), so the thatcher, the shepherd, the woodsman, the rush-gatherer, the haymaker and the lamplighter were photographed, while there was very little acknowledgement that there had been an industrial revolution. Working people were often presented within a decidedly hierarchical framework (Photo 47). And major issues of the time required delicate handling; Photo 48 is *The Daily Mirror's* depiction of men tramping or looking for work, revealing the unexpectedly romantic and attractive aspects of the unemployment that was so common during this period. The General Strike was another issue that it was difficult to ignore, Box 13 contains most of *The Daily Mirror's* photos of this event. They are all of volunteers engaged in breaking the strike, often accompanied by tanks or armoured cars. The Box contains just one image of a striker (Photo 49); significantly, it shows him being arrested and it has been taken from a considerable, and safe, distance from its subject. This would seem to be the photography of a newspaper concerned to shield its readers from any unpleasant intrusions of reality, happy to immerse them in the fantasies of sport, celebrity and royalty and in the dream world of a nostalgic, stable and rural past, while carefully proscribing the manner in which working people, strikes and unemployment were presented. The newspaper utilised the same ubiquitous pastoral and hierarchical imagery, with the same underlying, deeply conservative values, that were to be found within many contemporary depictions of working people.

Photo 45. Parchment maker. *The Daily Mirror*.



Photo 46. Fishing Boat Repairs. *The Daily Mirror*.



Photo 47. Knife Grinding Scene. *The Daily Mirror*.



Photo 48. Looking for Work, *The Daily Mirror*.



Photo 49. General Strike, man arrested at Hammersmith Broadway. *The Daily Mirror*.



It was within this context that two photographers, Tom Grant and Humphrey Spender, worked. Both appear to have had sympathies with working people, but both struggled to express these in their work for *The Daily Mirror*.

In the National Media Museum at Bradford, some of the papers of Tom Grant have been preserved, the highlight of these is the advanced draft of a book that was never eventually published. It contains the typed-up story of his life as a photographer, full page mock-ups of the pages that were to display his photographs and the photos themselves. They reveal a highly skilled photographer, particularly with action shots, and a man of great compassion for the ordinary people caught up in the maelstrom of early twentieth century history.¹³² Perhaps his most famous escapade came on his return from Salonica in 1917 aboard the SS Sontay when it was torpedoed off the coast of Greece. He abandoned all of his personal effects, apart from his bulky camera and a number of glass plates and, climbing down from the sinking ship and securing his place in a lifeboat, he took a remarkable series of pictures of the mayhem around him (Photo 50). Despite the problems of his bulky equipment he was always capable of capturing the most interesting and dramatic images, but he also

preserved an eye for the life of working people (Photo 51 shows the coal-hold on the doomed SS Sontay). However, his domestic work for the paper fell into the nostalgic, rural and hierarchical mould that has already been noted (Photos 52 and 53). It is only in his more personal preparations for his intended publication that his wider interests can be detected: the book was to be full of the sufferings of soldiers of all nationalities, the labour of peasants, the misery of refugees and the executions of rebels. Grant has left a moving account of his visit to Messina in the aftermath of the 1909 earthquake which was to be included in the proposed book, and his photographs of the misery, disease and starvation he witnessed there match his words (Photo 54). The contrast between his images of working people in this country produced for *The Daily Mirror*, and those of the same groups of people abroad, are striking. It appears that his proposed book was an outlet for his best photography, away from the constraints of his employer. If it was, it was unsuccessful as it was never published. Instead his brother Bernard used much of Tom's material in his own book, *To The Four Corners* (1933)¹³³ in which he completely altered Tom's proposed format and, instead, described the adventures of the Grant brothers. The chapter headings of the book give a flavour of its nature:

Crime- 8 chapters	Trips abroad- 3 chapters
War- 6 chapters	Sport- 3 chapters
Flight- 5 chapters	Celebrities- 1 chapter
Royalty- 5 chapters	

These contents are remarkably similar to the contents of the *Mirror's* photographic archive: in Bernard's hands Tom's compassionate, humane photography seems to have metamorphosed into the entertainment industry providing fantasies of adventures in foreign lands among strange and exotic people. Tom Grant seems to have experienced the same issues as did J. Allan Cash and John Maltby in the world of commercial photography, he was an intelligent and skilled senior operator who found it impossible, at an establishment newspaper, to reflect his own social concerns in his work published by his employers.

Photo 50. The sinking of the SS Sontay. 1917. Tom Grant.



Photo 51. Coal hold of the SS Sontay, 1917. Tom Grant.



Photo 52. Shepherd. Tom Grant.



Photo 53. Queen Mary on a colliery visit in Wales. Tom Grant.



Photo 54. Messina - starvation. 1908. Tom Grant.



Humphrey Spender was another *Daily Mirror* photographer who found it difficult to reconcile his social concerns with his employer's requirements.¹³⁴ In 1935 he obtained a post at *The Daily Mirror* when 'one of the directors, Guy Bartholomew, wished to inject into the newsy and girlie type photography an element of Art'¹³⁵. His early photos display an acute awareness of the modes of the continental avant-garde but this was not required at *The Daily Mirror*. Known as 'Lensman,' his brief was to cruise the country, in his words, 'on a lonely search for the Arts Editor's dream pictures - the old mill wheel, the village green with a smithy or a game of cricket, pretty girl on a galloping horse on windswept downs, hair blowing against a background of scudding clouds'¹³⁶. Of course, this matches the earlier, more general survey of *The Daily Mirror's* inter-war photography and Spender was very good at it. His grounding in the avant-garde was abandoned and he adopted the established forms of pictorialism, while his content centred on working people living contentedly, in idyllic, pre-industrial environments. It remained uninterested in the personal histories of its subjects or in any issues that they might have, containing the same conservative and hierarchical values that were so current during this period (Photos 55-56). The tension between Spenders' photographic directions and his own cultural interests were exacerbated by his social conscience, 'Guilt about my privileged status; together with rather woolly

motives 'to make the world a better place' induced me to work unpaid in my spare time'¹³⁷. This part-time work for a number of Left-leaning organisations became useful in 1938 as Spender was sacked by *The Daily Mirror*. He had refused to go and take a 'comic' photo of Edith Sitwell wearing a fruit-laden hat, which is interesting in that it seems to underline the issues faced by a range of serious-minded photographers with a sympathy for working people, and, in this case, a background in the avant-garde photography of the Continent, who may have wished to develop a photography that reflected this sort of personal background.

This was, of course, precisely the problem that Tom Grant had faced, but it would be wrong to feel that it was a characteristic of *The Mirror* alone, these modes of representing working people can be found replicated at *The Daily Herald*. The two mass circulation newspapers with the closest affinities to the working class adopted very similar approaches to their depiction. It may well have been the drive for commercial success that drove editors to utilize forms that were in common usage by amateur and professional photographers across the country. The popularity of these modes made them instantly accessible. It was also perfectly natural in a time of serious economic and political crisis to look to a time when the fractures in society did not exist. Some looked forward towards a fairer and better society would be created, but this was not necessarily a comfortable perspective for everyone. For these it may have been easier to look back to a previous 'utopia'. And in making this backward glance it engaged with earlier modes of English visual representation, and particularly with a very powerful and well established pastoral tradition. It may also have owed something to the resistance in Britain to the changes in photography made by the cultural avant-garde on the Continent. James Jarcho, the leading Fleet Street photographer who worked for *The Herald*, wrote his autobiography *People I have Shot* in 1934.¹³⁸ Here Jarcho makes it clear that 'Politics were, and are not, of any interest to me'¹³⁹ and his account of his work is an inconsequential narrative of knockabout escapades leading to scoops, narrowly missing them or producing them from nothing. He discussed at length the importance of 'luck' and 'personality' in the capture of good photos.¹⁴⁰ Its principal ambition is to entertain, and it is full of stories such as when, on a slow afternoon, he placed a tortoise on the pavement to take pictures of the faces of surprised passers-by, but it,

perhaps, also indicates a narrowness of cultural exposure among these photographers which led them to adopt the most easily available photographic modes. John Roberts puts at least part of the 'blame' for this on 'the absence of a Modernist avant-garde in any coherent sense'¹⁴¹. There was no British equivalent of Moholy-Nagy or Walter Benjamin for example. Instead there was a Left whose cultural thinking was 'a stodgy mix of crude ideology-critique, proletarian expressionism and positivism'¹⁴². He argues that there was not a cultural elite in this country that could have developed the practices of photographers in ways that would have better served the interests of working people. The result was a photography that was flawed both in terms of authorship and content: this severely limited its impact at precisely the time when there was a serious economic crisis and when there was an explosion of images as popular culture rapidly expanded. This is a critique that makes it clear that the newspaper photography of this period seems, at first sight at least, not to have been a transformational photography. Rather, the end product of these commercial, social and cultural pressures was a photography that worked within a framework that excluded the possibility of significant social change, reinforcing the conservative and hierarchical values that were in such common usage in much of British photography at this time. The major subjects of the photography at both papers - the various manifestations of the new entertainment industries - did not represent working people at all, providing instead a distraction from political considerations. The careful and skilled aestheticisation of images of them, distracted from any consideration of the social contexts within which they were produced. The dominant pastoral modes that can be seen misplaced them into an older, rural context with a strictly-limited relevance to the issues facing working people at the time. It highlighted the unchanging rhythms of the agricultural calendar and the hierarchical organization of a pre-industrial society. Even when modern industry and its workers were the subjects this was contained within a techno-utopianism which, again, suggested that social change was unnecessary. Those photographers who searched for a different approach, such as Tom Grant and Humphrey Spender, were excluded. When political change became a subject of photography, it was conducted within an old, hierarchical tradition of the deserving poor petitioning their betters for help. It would appear that the photography of these two papers far from being transformational, may, indeed, be considered to have been the exact opposite. Newspaper photography would appear, alongside that of amateur and professional photographers, to be another

deeply conservative site of knowledge production, like them, generating images that marginalized the real-life experiences of working people and reinforced existing power structures.

Photos 55-56. Humphrey Spender, 1935-38. *The Daily Mirror*.



v. Conclusions

The photography discussed here never performed, or was never intended to perform, the function of a mirror, reflecting a reality back to its subjects. Rather it was a carefully contrived imagery, deeply imbued with long-established artistic traditions and conservative political attitudes. It was a photography which embodied middle-class perspectives of working people. One in which the mass of society, and their daily struggles were ignored or were substituted for a mirage of pretty pictures. In this photography working people were put in specific places - fixed in the shadows, or at the rear or the sides of images. Or they were located in sunny fantasies about a rural past, or into beautiful images of a contented present. Or they were carefully posed within tight hierarchical structures, or trapped in the unchanging rhythms of irrelevant agricultural calendars. And this was all done within the most common form of photographic representation during this period. It is not necessary to see pictorialism as either homogeneous or exclusive, rather it is important to note that within this dominant mode, used by the amateurs of the HNPAS, by professionals such as John Maltby and Edward Chambre Hardman, and by the journalists of leading national newspapers, the representations of working people contained ubiquitous and all pervasive commonalities or typicalities. Densities of representational types appear which have a real significance. In her study of the Survey Movement, Elizabeth Edwards felt that

Photographs become hegemonic, not through their individual readings, or the intentions of their makers, but through the sheer interconnectedness of many symbols and narratives of identity...reinforcing each other because of their ubiquitousness, ordinariness and everydayness¹⁴³

This web of interconnectedness can be seen in the archives studied here, and Edwards felt that these entities were enormously important: 'There is a 'selective' tradition in any culture which...preserves aspects of culture that accord with the dominant values and interests of an historical moment'¹⁴⁴. The sample of sources presented in this chapter represent a wide range of photographic endeavours, ambitions and motivations which, at first sight, may inhibit attempts to draw generic conclusions. But the empirical evidence, remarkably, shows that a consistent 'selective tradition' was deployed across this range of sources. The fact that this tradition existed across such a wide sample serves to indicate the power of the

tradition. This consistent tradition arose from the common social identity of the audiences for all the photographs seen in this chapter. It was the same social groups who bought *The Daily Mirror* and E. O. Hoppe's books, and who attended the lectures of J. Allen Cash or the meetings of amateur photographic societies. Common representations of working people circulated across a wide variety of sites of photographic production and consumption because they sold to a common audience. As they circulated and were constantly repeated in a whole range of contexts they acquired authority and began to constitute a 'truth' about working people, at least for some social groups.¹⁴⁵ At one level this can be seen as a simple function of the market in which the buying power of the middle class promoted a photography that matched their tastes and interests. And this may have been compounded by middle-class domination of entry into the photographic profession. John Roberts believes that the social origins of many photographers meant that 'they were part of, and contributed to, a culture of public service, in which the memory of national images of class cohesion figured strongly as a shared middle-class culture'¹⁴⁶. It is in this middle-class dominance of the cultural life of the nation that the origins of this photography are to be found.

The representations of working people that were dominant at this time, the institutions and locations within which this activity took place, and the audiences that received these images have been mapped in this chapter. It has plotted the network of links between these locations, audiences and representations, suggesting that here 'strategic formations' of shared meanings can be found which were firmly situated in middle-class cultural perceptions of the world. While this approach can demonstrate the dominance of these perceptions, it does not explain the significance of the ways this photography chose to organize and present the bodies of working people. It is Michel Foucault who provides this. His ideas about the centrality of the ways in which the human body is presented to itself and others within systems of social discipline, and about the links between knowledge production and power, underline the significance of the development of this imagery during this period. Foucault's own work was based, often, on studies of state institutions, places in which the exercise of power may have been facilitated by the enclosure of their populations. This chapter, however, has looked at a range of locations away from these

institutions - clubs, books, businesses, studios, and newspapers. But here, too, a similar exercise of power may be detected. Photos of the workplace present working people as mere elements in the production processes, their bodies carefully inserted into the machinery of production. Hierarchical arrangements are persistently presented. Working people are isolated, either as individuals, or, where there is a gathering, they are not in concert or conversation - they are divided from each other, without horizontal conjunctions. Their absence, marginalization, isolation or hierarchization is normalised so that they are consistently represented as relatively insignificant. Above all, in terms of their self-formation, working people are divided from themselves and their lives, unable to recognize anything of their own lives and times in this photography. They were left without a narrative of the importance of their lives, their work and their place in the society in which they lived. It would appear that here, indeed, is an empirical manifestation of Foucault's ideas about political anatomy, and in wider social contexts than his own favoured state institutions. Indeed, any value this chapter may have may lay in its utilization of a range of sources, reflecting a spectrum of photographic functions, which were separate and different from these institutions. These, perhaps, add some weight to his ideas about the universality of those forces of discipline, power and knowledge which he describes. Of course, this was often a photography largely produced by and for the middle classes and so may have had only a limited impact on the self-formation of working people. But these were all-pervasive modes of representation, penetrating even to the newspapers they read. This sort of imagery may not have been part of the everyday experience of working people, but when they did choose to look at any form of photography there was every possibility that they would be presented with these modes at this time.

Nonetheless, while Foucauldian forces can be clearly identified in the photography discussed in this chapter, it is important to note that the processes of classification - the partitioning and verticalities, the solid separations, the individualising pyramids which constantly defined and refined 'correct' behaviours - do not seem to be as comprehensively delineated as those he was able to observe in the institutions of the state. While the invisibility and marginalization, which can be found consistently in this photography, are clearly very significant dynamics they remain relatively crude instruments of classification. It

may well be that outside of the tight controls of the prison, asylum or school it was more difficult to establish the fine and complex gradations that Foucault was able to see. This could be important, as it is the all-embracing nature of Foucault's discourse that has drawn criticism. If power was an all-pervasive, ever-regenerating and all-victorious entity then there was little point in any form of political activity that was concerned to alter the nature of society. So, for example, whenever a new function for photography emerged, it quickly became impregnated with the semiotics of power. Such a diffuse generation, location, extension and development of power would seem to render political action at state level ultimately futile and political quietism is felt by some to be the logical consequence of Foucault's full-blown description of the carceral state.¹⁴⁷ But at the centre of Foucault's perception of knowledge formation is the concept of utility, knowledge is formed because of its usefulness to power. What this does not preclude is the formation of other knowledge, useful to other groups. If it is evident that not all groups within any society will share the same interests, and that knowledge is a social construct, then it may be anticipated that other, maybe oppositional, forms of knowledge could well develop within that society. Indeed Foucault is very clear about this and does not share the pessimism that some of his critics have expressed, repeatedly insisting that 'No matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remains the possibilities of resistance, disobedience and oppositional groupings'¹⁴⁸. Similarly, if knowledge is a function of power relations, inevitably it will change as the structure of a society changes. And if there are no universal objective truths, then the prospects increase that a variety of more subjective truths could emerge. This is not to deny the emergence of dominant forms of knowledge that support power, simply to suggest that there is a structural instability to this process of production that could allow other kinds of knowledge to appear. According to Foucault, knowledge is based on the shifting sands of the interplay of truth and falsehood, and upon the individual's acceptance or rejection of these. This is a fragile, uncertain base upon which to build all-encompassing, ever-victorious forms of knowledge and Foucault urged studies of resistance that targeted those other micro-centres of knowledge production which 'opposed secrecy, deformation and mystifying representations imposed upon people'¹⁴⁹. There 'one should take as its model a perpetual battle'¹⁵⁰, and in these sites 'we must hear the distant roar of battle'¹⁵¹. The problem is that, while much of the empirical evidence presented in this chapter supports Foucauldian ideas about how the presentation of the human body is central to

understanding the nature of the formation of power and knowledge, what is missing is any sight or sound of this 'battle'. Indeed, across a wide range of photographs a remarkable uniformity of representations has been evident, while there has been precious little sign of any kind of resistance to these dominant forms.

Chapter Two. Immigrations: the impact of the German- speaking exiles on the photography of working people in Britain.

One of the most remarkable things to leap out of the Pandora's Box, that was the Russian Revolution of 1917, was an explosion of creative energy, as artists there sought to support the political and social changes by developing radically modern ways of looking at the world. Across Europe many found this creative revolution of as much interest as the political one. As the ideas embodied in this artistic modernism spread westwards across the continent they were seized upon by artists and photographers, so that a potent combination of severe economic depression, political radicalism and cultural experimentation could be found in many European countries.¹⁵² Britain was not immune to any of these movements, and it may be anticipated that it was these that stimulated a photography of, and by, working people in this country. Returning to Britain from Germany in 1932, however, bedazzled by the experimentation and radically new techniques and technology of the 'New Photography' he had seen there, Paul Nash, the British artist, glumly compared it with the stodgily conservative approach to art that he felt severely restricted similar developments here:

Alas! Our own realm is somewhat confined - a field of buttercups and daisies with Union Jacks at all four corners, where our painters must play the traditional game, encouraged or admonished by hearty journalists and sentimental pedagogues with megaphones.¹⁵³

More in hope than expectation, he continued:

I should like to urge such photographers as we possess, within or without the film industry, to extend the limits of their experiments. Stunt arrangements and chic portraiture is not enough.¹⁵⁴

He believed that British photography was a pale imitation of what he had seen, and it is true that there was a great deal to be impressed by. While much of the creative ferment visible in German photography at this time had itself been stimulated by the cultural upheavals in the Soviet Union, it is rather the German developments that may provide an appropriate place from which to begin a search for a British photography that was more sympathetic to working people and their lives that was seen in Chapter One. Much of German photography

was not quite as overtly associated with those political causes that may have provided obstacles to its reception in this country. Germany itself was much more accessible to British photographers than the Soviet Union, and, despite dreadful economic problems, it retained significantly more resources to finance the publications and exhibitions that advertised its photography. Above all, after 1933, German and German- influenced photographers fled the Nazi's to settle and work in this country. Indeed, there are a number of historians who see the arrival of these emigres as the essential stimulus which transformed British social photography from 'a field full of daisies and buttercups' into a significant cultural force. This thesis is concerned to identify the range of ways in which photography was used to portray working people in this country, and Chapters Two and Three examine the nature and significance of two photographs that some historians have felt were more concerned to positively portray them and their lives. The motivations of the photographers involved, their audiences, their relationships with their subjects and the content of their images are all felt to be completely different from what has already been seen. In this chapter the nature of German photography at this time is examined in order to establish what the range of possible influences were, and, then, at what knowledge there was of these in Britain. Next it surveys the extent and character of the migration to this country following the Nazi takeover of power, and finally it analyses the impact of the exiled photographers on the photography of working people here, suggesting that it may not have had quite the positive influence that some have believed.

i. Germany.

At the heart of the work of Soviet artists such as El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin was the belief that revolutionary new ways of seeing the world needed to be secured in peoples' minds if the revolution itself was to be secured for the long term. This required the complete disruption of current conventions of representation and the emergence of modernist art forms. These would reject the emotionalism, the individualism and the subjectivity to be found in much contemporary art. Rather these were to be replaced with extraordinary angles, new viewpoints and flattened perspectives; the subject of the piece of work was to be moved from a fixed position out into space, broken

down into its material parts and, at times, as with Malevich's 'Squares', reduced to the point of invisibility.¹⁵⁵ While this may have been intended as an art for the working class, it was not necessarily concerned to portray them, rather the world was to be seen differently, and it was this that became so attractive to a wide range of photographers throughout Europe.

Paul Nash's comments on British art were made in his review of *Art Forms in Nature*, a photographic collection put together by the German photographer Karl Blossfeldt in 1929. Blossfeldt had seized the opportunities opened up by the new technology, and by the Russian drive to see things anew, to take extreme close-ups, not of working people but, of plants, which revelled in the beauty of newly revealed forms and patterns. Albert Renger-Patzsch had done much the same, with a range of plants and inanimate objects, the previous year in his own collection *The World is Beautiful*. Both publications caused a tremendous stir in photographic circles; it was felt that photography had moved beyond the prevailing expressionist modes of contemporary German art and was now able to reveal the real 'essence of things' or 'the inner world' that all objects carry within them. Often called *Der Neue Sachlichkeit* or the New Objectivity, these, and many other photographers, were felt to celebrate a vision of the world seen objectively, the hard facts of a world to be freshly enjoyed thanks to the power of the camera, without the self-obsessed and emotional involvement of the artist.¹⁵⁶ Clearly this approach owed much to the ground-breaking work of the Russians, but there was a great rush of excitement and creativity in German photography at this time. Werner Graff, introducing his own book of photographs, *Is kommt, der neue Fotograf*, emphasised the joy of this new creativity:

Photography is a free, independent art. It must not be subjected to alien, antiquated laws, nor should it be enslaved to Nature.....one can try to be too close to Nature. Yet one can make objects speak in any number of ways by extracting fresh values from their forms'¹⁵⁷.

Lazlo Moholy Nagy, one of the directors at the Bauhaus School of design in Germany, shared Graff's delight in the new forms that photography was now able to explore, 'The enemy of photography is the convention, the fixed set of rules of 'how to'. The salvation of photography comes from the experiment'¹⁵⁸.

And the photographers of the New Vision proceeded to do exactly that, using unexpected framings, high and low camera angles, contrasting forms and light, photomontage, collage and the photogram in a wave of creative energy. It was Moholy Nagy who selected the exhibitors for the first great exhibition of the New Photography, the Film und Foto Exhibition of 1929, held in Stuttgart, Berlin and other German cities. Interestingly, while it displayed the work of 191 photographers from all over the world there was only one British representative - Cecil Beaton, with his portraits of the rich and famous.¹⁵⁹ Its focus was on showcasing the work of those photographers from across the globe who had been exploring the potential of the new photographic technology. Moholy Nagy claimed that:

A new optic has developed. We see things differently now, without painterly intent in the impressionistic sense. Today things are important that earlier were hardly noticed; for example shoe lasts, gutters, spools of threads, fabrics, machines, etc. They interest us for their material substance, for the simple quality of the thing itself; they interest us as the means of creating space forms on surfaces, as the bearers of the darkness and the light'¹⁶⁰.

Benjamin Buchloh has argued that while much of this photography may well have been revolutionary in theory, form and intent, the end product was an art form that was often difficult to access. It aspired to alter the consciousness of the masses, but in reality it was totally ignored by them and this produced a 'crisis of representation [which] could not be resolved without at the same time addressing questions of distribution and audience'.¹⁶¹ Buchloh suggests that the search for ways to address a mass audience produced a subtle but significant shift in the nature of the images produced by revolutionary photographers. Instead of the confusions that could be produced by 'a simultaneity of opposing views...rapidly changing angles...unmediated transition from part to whole'¹⁶², a unified spatial perspective emerged and it was this that made the new photography of interest to a whole range of people with absolutely no interest in revolutionary politics. A photography that could make everyday objects speak of their inner worlds in ways that made people look at them freshly, with wonder and curiosity was extremely valuable, for example, to commercial advertisers. Indeed, Buchloh believes that the New Photography was an essential catalyst for 'the acceleration of capitalist development through consumption'.¹⁶³

He goes further, arguing that the unified spatial perspective '(often the bird's eye view), that travels over uninterrupted spaces (land, fields, water, masses) naturalises the perspective of governance and control, of the surveillance of the rulers all seeing eye'¹⁶⁴. So that by the early 1930's modernism had 'rapidly transformed into an instrument for prescribing the silence of conformity and obedience'¹⁶⁵.

Indeed British interest originated in the financial potential of the New Photography. David Mellor has unpicked the commercial links between British and German photographers in some detail.¹⁶⁶ He points out that three exhibitions of German photography were held in London at this time: one of Karl Blossfeldt's work in 1929; an exhibition of German advertising photographs in 1930; and 'Works by 27 Photographers' in 1932 which included works by Renger-Patsch and Moholy Nagy. Publications such as *Modern Photography, Close Up* and Oswell Blakeston's *Selling Machinery through Photography* (1931, with an introduction by Moholy Nagy) all provided channels for the transmission of the new German photography. And many individual photographers spent time in Germany before returning to commercial work in this country. Mellor mentions, in this context, Humphrey Spender, Barbara Ker-Seymer, Maurice Beck, John Havinden, Edward McKnight-Kauffer, E.O. Hoppe, Noel Griggs, Douglas Glass, Peggy Delius, Shaw Wildman, and Gilbert Cousland. Employing many of these photographers was the advertising agency of Sir William Crawford, who had offices in Berlin and London. Mellor himself claims that 'the impact of German photography has been ignored within British art history dealing with this period'¹⁶⁷. While the nature of this 'impact' may be subject to discussion, Mellor makes it clear that, at least in commercial circles, there was a fairly widespread knowledge of the new and exciting developments in Germany. And it seems that, whatever influence the New Photography was to make on the way working people were portrayed in this country, at least some of these images would be created within the context of a commercial concern to encourage consumerism.

Indeed, in Germany itself, not everyone was convinced by the products of the New Objectivity and the New Vision. It seemed to carry with it an implicit belief in the beneficial effects of technology on social progress; to cultivate the value of photographic seeing

without any attempt to evaluate what was worth seeing; its images focussed on details, deliberately taking objects out of context and avoiding consideration of any totalities; its love of objects did not seem to extend to human beings, and indeed there is a dearth of people as subjects in the works of these photographers. Contemporary thinkers began to wonder if the claims of the New Photography to be extending human powers of perception were well-founded, and to suspect that it may actually be fragmenting the way the world was perceived. Writing in 1931, Walter Benjamin the German philosopher and cultural critic, wrote:

The world is beautiful - that is the watch word. Therein is unmasked the posture of a photography that can endow any soup can with cosmic significance, but cannot grasp a single one of the human connexions in which it exists.¹⁶⁸

He developed this further in 1934, writing about the New Photography:

It becomes more and more modern and the result is that it can no longer photograph a run-down apartment house or a pile of manure without transfiguring it. Not to speak of the fact that it would be impossible to say anything about a dam or a cable car except this: the world is beautiful.....It has even succeeded in making misery itself an object of pleasure by treating it stylishly and with technical perfection.¹⁶⁹

In his discussion of the social function of photography Benjamin was implicitly asking where was the consideration of the human being, and of the social, political and economic context of the photographed object. And suggesting that perhaps for some the world was not beautiful and, indeed, should the new photography not be considering this? Of course, there were those German photographers who responded to this challenge, who embraced the methodologies of the New Photography without the belief that everything was beautiful. For example, in 1929 August Sander published *Face of Our Time*, a series of sixty portraits, a small part of a massive collection of similar pictures which Sander entitled *People of the Twentieth Century*. He set out, in this collection, to create a comprehensive cross section of German society by taking portraits of almost anyone who would give him permission. This could have resulted in a fairly dry, objective, sociological, typological catalogue; in Sander's hands it became something quite different. It was organized into

seven sections - the Farmer, the Skilled Tradesman, the Woman, the Artists, the City, the Last People - in a way that a social scientist may have approached the task of classification; but it was also, subtly, pointing out the differences and contrasts between the different social groupings and classes. The portraits were also very sensitive to their subjects and, by attention to the details of expression, gesture, costume and symbol, there emerged an enormous respect for all of his subjects regardless of rank or origin. It was a project that may well have originated in the cold light of the New Objectivity but developed into a profound study of social interactions and of universal human qualities. Sander placed the particular back into its wider context in a way that Walter Benjamin would surely have approved. Helmar Lerski adopted a similar approach when he published *Everyday Faces* in 1931; he had taken ordinary people from the streets - beggars, the unemployed, hawkers, street sweepers, washer women and housemaids - and sat them in his studio for a couple of hours. With the careful use of dramatic lighting, extended exposures and extreme close-ups (all techniques developed by the New Photography) he produced extraordinary images. He transformed ordinary people in ways that emphasised their nobility, images that were classical, almost timeless, images that were not primarily concerned with individual appearances but with the inner life of his fellow beings. One Berlin critic complained that Lerski had made 'a washerwoman look like an aristocrat'.¹⁷⁰ He took this further in 1936 in his *Transformations of Light*. Here he produced several images of the same individual, each radically altered by a sophisticated use of mirrors and lighting, dwelling upon the mutability of, and the different faces and personalities within, one person. Lerski shared with other New Objectivity photographers an ability to find beauty in strange places, but for him these places were not 'soup cans' but human beings. Between them Sander and Lerski had embarked on a powerful photographic exploration of what it is to be human - in all their social and psychological complexities and in all areas of society. (Photos 1 and 2). This was an approach to photography which had a completely different intent to the commercial utilization of the New Photography. It created a new way of looking at working people, and one that contained an obvious political significance. If this approach was transferred to this country, perhaps through the work of those photographers exiled here, a significant way of photographing working people would have been established.

Photo 1. August Sander, Farm Worker.



Photos 2. Herman Lerski, from *Everyday Faces*.



In Germany there were many who quickly recognised the political potential of photography. The savagely satirical attacks on the right-wing of German politics in the photomontages of John Heartfield and Hannah Hoch are renowned, producing images that were a long way from the objective presentation of a beautiful world by photographers such as Renger-Patzsch and Blossfeldt and which emphasize the strong links between the cultural avant-garde and radical politics in Germany. They were not alone and there were those in German society who very much wanted to develop a more didactic and subjective documentation of the world, and an art form that could produce dramatic, stylish, challenging images and which could be relatively cheaply reproduced became of increasing interest to the German publishing industry. Tim Gidal, a leading contemporary German photographer, has described these years as photo-journalism rapidly developed, in his memoir *Modern Photojournalism*.¹⁷¹ He portrays the commercial photographers of the time as being in a ferment of experimentation, taking the new technology and the new styles of presentation and trying to find new ways of presenting images to the public through the press - using full page photos, text and photos, the hidden or candid camera and the photo essay. He makes the point that the main theme of photo-reportage was the everyday life of all kinds of people, from all levels of society, and this certainly seems to have been of interest to the German public. Gidal estimated that by 1930 five million people in Germany were buying photo journals, and there were 'at least twenty million actual readers - about half of the German population over ten years of age'.¹⁷² Among these journals was the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ)*, the newspaper of the German Communist Party, which used all of the new techniques of this photo-journalism in its campaigns. But by 1926 the AIZ was frustrated by the quality of the images of working class life that it could obtain from the professional photographic agencies. At the same time it was inspired by the success of some of the early illustrated magazines in the Soviet Union such as *The Flame*, *The Searchlight* and *The Red Field*, and by the attempts to create a genuinely proletarian voice by encouraging and combining the photographic work of the Soviet Workers' clubs with that of the wall newspapers that appeared in many Soviet factories.¹⁷³ These factors combined to persuade AIZ to launch a famous competition asking readers to submit their own photographs. The rubric of the competition asked for pictures of the revolutionary movements of workers, their social conditions, their everyday lives, their workplaces, and new industrial and technological environments. Above all the readers were asked to send pictures of 'the

beauty of labour and the horrors of social misery'.¹⁷⁴ Writing years later, one of the editors, Lily Becker, said:

The magazine's very purpose was to make visible both a world and the people within it, who were deliberately ignored by the cameras of professional photographers and bourgeois photo reporters. For them only the glittering façade of our planet had any interest, and they failed utterly to take note of the mysterious shadows, silhouettes and signs that awaited photographic discovery in factories and tenements and in the faces of proletarian men and women.¹⁷⁵

The success of this competition led to the formation of the Association of German Worker Photographers with its own magazine, *Der Arbeiter Fotograf* which developed branches all over Germany and encouraged emulation across Europe, so that active worker photographer movements developed in the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, France, Czechoslovakia and, of course, in the Spain of the Civil War. In Britain the Workers' Film and Photo League was set up in 1934 and a manifesto was published which was clearly in full accord with developments on the continent:

There are thousands of workers in this country who own a camera but only use them for taking an occasional snap shot. If even a number of them were to photograph the conditions around them - in the factories, workshops and dockyards, railways and countryside, in their own streets.....It will thus become a weapon in the struggle of the whole working class.¹⁷⁶

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that this European Workers' Photography Movement was without problems. The sheer expense of photography was beyond the grasp of the vast majority of working people living through the economic travails of this period. Generally it was felt that the very best depictions of working people did not come from themselves but from those professional photographers who observed them, as the quality of what the workers produced often horrified the politically minded. Writing in 1930, Otto Ruhle, an anarcho-syndicalist, said:

The proletarian worker photographer produced pictures that were in no way different from those of his bourgeois colleagues - idyllic landscapes, birds, trees, children, pointless still lifes.

Dwelling on this he considered that:

One who has the opportunity to observe the proletarian in all its expressions cannot be but astonished and shocked by the depth to which it is mired in a petty bourgeois atmosphere, how well this petty bourgeois lifestyle accords with workers' needs and wishes, and what comfort they feel when able to merge with it unimpeded.¹⁷⁷

Within the creative ferment that was German photography in the late 1920's and early 1930's there was, therefore, a tremendous range of powerful cultural and political energies, but one not without its own internal problems as different groups found that they could use the new perspectives for widely differing ends. The rise of consumerist advertising, the links between the cultural avant-garde and radical politics, the development of a worker photography also linked to the Left, the utility of photography as an instrument for totalitarian propaganda, and the emergence of an experimental art photography were all quite distinct tropes. Even for those photographers who wished to focus on working people, it may well be unwise, therefore, to anticipate a single impact from this spectrum upon their work here. And strongly radical influences may well have been weakened as, at least one of, the major conduits through which this photography reached Britain was commercial advertising. But, if this photography had no unique influence, there was certainly a unique event - the Nazi rise to power in 1933 - which had the potential to significantly affect British cultural life in general, and photography in particular, as a flood of German and German-speaking exiles attempted to find safety and employment here.

ii. Britain.

Lazlo Moholy Nagy, the multi-talented and internationally renowned former director of the Bauhaus, was one of these exiles. He arrived in England in 1935 hoping, as many of those fleeing the Nazis, for both safety and employment. His friend, John Betjeman, took him to a party in London and when introduced to the hostess he said, in his uncertain English, 'Thank you for your hostilities'. His comment was not completely misplaced, his reception in this country was not entirely warm and, indeed, he left for the U.S.A. after twelve months. When he could find work, producing posters for the London Underground for example, it

was not always well received; his boss on the Underground, Frank Pick, thought Moholy Nagy was:

A gentleman with a modernistic tendency who produces pastiches of photographs of a surrealistic type, and I am not at all clear why we should fall for this. It is international, or at least continental. Let us leave the continent to pursue its own tricks.¹⁷⁸

This frostiness fits awkwardly with the commonly held view among those historians who have commented on the documentary photography of this period and who feel that the arrival of, particularly German and Austrian, refugees from 1933 onwards was the essential catalyst that transformed British social photography, particularly the photography of working people; a transformation that 'was substantially the achievement of exile photographers and publishers'¹⁷⁹. This section sets out to examine this perspective, looking at the context in which this wave of immigration occurred, at the lives and work of the individual exiles, particularly during the time they were in this country. It will seek to argue that their impact was more limited than has been previously thought and to establish a more nuanced view in which continental photography did impact on British social photography, but from an earlier date and in a different way from that outlined by several commentators on inter-war photography in Britain.

There is a sustained discourse which believes that the arrival of exiled European photographers fundamentally shaped British social photography for the better. In his study of Bert Hardy, Boyd Tonkin felt that 'the sense of the photographer's mission [in Britain] comes from the intellectual diaspora of the Weimar Republic'¹⁸⁰. While Duncan Forbes thought that the 'mounting exodus of German speaking artists and intellectuals.....the contribution of hundreds of émigré Austrians and Germans....[had] a long-term impact on the culture of the countries that offered them refuge'¹⁸¹ and considered that, 'Two areas of British cultural life profoundly affected by the arrival of the German speaking emigrants were those of photography and publishing'¹⁸². Mike Seabourne in his introduction to the work of the photographer Cyril Arapoff, thought that the English interest in documentary photography

became established in the mid-1930's with the rise of popular picture magazines modelled on the successful German illustrated press of the 1920's. Many of the best photographers in this field were either German or....had been working in Germany prior to the rise to power of Hitler in 1933.¹⁸³

The life and work of Edith Tudor Hart, an Austrian émigré photographer, has been examined by Duncan Forbes who believed that, 'In Britain, her grounding in the realist dynamic of continental photography, lent her work a special charge. British photographers of the 30's appear rather dilettantish by comparison'¹⁸⁴. David Mellor agreed feeling that British portraits of working people were dominated by 'a sentimental verism'¹⁸⁵, while Jorge Ribalta also saw here, 'a specific rhetoric of victimisation in the depiction of the underclass designed to legitimise a specific counter revolutionary state ideology'¹⁸⁶. The quality of the work of British documentary photographers suffered from the lack of opportunities and experiences open to their continental counterparts where

the ideal of a new kind of reporter, the worker correspondent, had been mobilized in order to promote a revolutionary culture of worker representation, overturning the image world of imperial reaction... training [Communist] party members in the techniques of dialectical photography - techniques that aimed to inform the self-understanding of the proletariat as a class and to foster a recognition of its exploitation within a broader conception of society.¹⁸⁷

So that the photography of someone like Edith Tudor Hart was concerned with the 'processes of personal and social transformation [which] is striking and was far richer than anything available in Britain'¹⁸⁸. Consequently the impact of Tudor Hart and others was considerable, 'For the first time, and in a hostile climate, photography in Britain began to develop a rendition of class relations, both nuanced and combative'¹⁸⁹. This is a perspective that sees a rather insipid, reformist British documentary photography saved from itself by the arrival of continental practitioners, steeped in the experiences of a cultural and political avant-garde, capable of constructing images that could contribute positively to the political development of the working class.

Ideally, it should be possible to locate this discourse within the patterns of the European exodus in the 1930's. At the time there seems to have been two broad waves of emigration. As the Nazis took power in 1933 their first target was their political opponents on the left. This prompted an immediate flood of refugees and about 154,000 left Germany at this time. Most of those settled in neighbouring countries such as France, the Netherlands or Czechoslovakia, anticipating that the crisis would pass and they would shortly be able to return home. Of these only around 5500 had arrived in Britain before 1937.¹⁹⁰ It was the events of 1938 that sparked off the second great wave of emigration: the Anschluss, the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Kristallnacht convinced many of the aggressive intentions of the Nazis, both towards the countries that bordered Germany and to the Jews inside the new Greater Germany. The period from 1938 to the fall of France in 1940 saw a further 250,000 flee the continent, of which around 70,000 came to Britain.¹⁹¹ Broadly then, the period before 1938 was one in which the driving force for emigration was political persecution, this did not disappear as the period developed, but increasingly, especially after Kristallnacht, it was racial persecution that prompted people to go into exile.

Historians of this exodus agree that these exiles predominantly 'stemmed from the educated, liberal and conservative middle classes'¹⁹², indeed it was their relative wealth and its accompanying 'striking level of educational achievement'¹⁹³ that had made possible their escape. Malet and Grenville argue that:

Those who were well educated had more mobility in an emergency, greater aptitude at coping with the requirements of the Nazi bureaucracy, more openness of culture and more confidence in their ability to cope with foreign countries.¹⁹⁴

While wealth and education were clearly very helpful as the exiles sought to establish themselves in Britain, there were also formidable challenges. The exiles were like any other body of refugees in that their major preoccupations were to find safety and an income, and to overcome the trauma of their flight. This was not an inconsiderable task; Arthur Koestler, himself part of the exodus from the continent, wrote about the psychological trauma that arose from political defeat and the loss of home, friends and security in his novel, *Arrival and Departure*. He described his fellow refugees.

They were all escaping from the past and striving for some safe shore of the future; the present in which they lived was a no-man's-land between the two. It was perhaps this that gave them their ghost-like, unreal appearance. They had travelled through a dozen countries of Europe and never looked out of the window. Their eyes were turned inward, it was like a holiday excursion of the blind. They were uncanny, not because they had been driven out of their past but because they carried it with them. Huddled against each other in the eternal queues or in cafes on the Square, they reminded one of those dusty plants for window boxes on the market which lay about with their naked roots exposed and lumps of native earth sticking to them, waiting to be transplanted.¹⁹⁵

Sheer survival took an enormous amount of energy: learning to live in a very different society and one that was not flourishing economically; operating in a different language; often having to accept a much lower standard of living than they were used to and work that was far below their previous social status. This was not helped by British immigration policy.

Normally refugees were not allowed to work, except in domestic or agricultural occupations. This was in line with British immigration policy over the previous 100 years, which tried to confine the mass of migrants to low paid jobs...There was scope for relaxing the rules in individual cases but in general the situation only changed with the outbreak of war.¹⁹⁶

On an intellectual level the exiles were often focussed, not so much on integration with the culture of the host nation, as on trying to understand the trauma they had just been through, and attempting to alert the British to the developing threat on the continent. This was far from straightforward and many of the exiles were dumbfounded by the lack of comprehension about what was happening in mainland Europe: a Jewish exile, Margarete Hinrickson, thought 'The ignorance was incredible. Absolutely. Quite incredible', an opinion shared by another Jewish exile, Hilde Ainger, who thought that even the well-educated were 'ignorant, they really knew very little', while Christel Marsh, an exiled member of the Confessional Church agreed that while people were 'nice' they were not 'very well informed'¹⁹⁷.

It was against this background that any cultural activities among the exiles took place. For writers there were obvious problems: if they wanted to access an audience wider than the émigré community and make a living they had to write in a different language and re-learn all the subtleties of style that they had developed in their native tongue. Moreover, they often found themselves cut off from the sources of their creativity - those people, places and incidents that had previously provided their inspiration. The experiences of the exiled German dramatists are interesting. These had been used to grandiose, simultaneous premieres across Germany, in Britain they had to make do with a few performances, in a rented hall and with amateur actors. In fact only eleven Germans had plays performed, published or broadcast between 1933-45.¹⁹⁸ It was the very political nature of their work, which caused much of the problem; during the time of appeasement the British government was concerned about flagrant anti-Nazi sentiment appearing on the stage. The Lord Chamberlain felt it was his duty 'to prevent the stage from becoming any sort of forum for the discussion of serious domestic issues; andto smooth the ruffled sensibilities of foreign governments'¹⁹⁹. When banning one openly anti-Nazi drama he explained, 'If we are to adhere to the rule that if authors want to write anti-Nazi plays they must cast them in a Ruritarian form. I cannot possibly recommend this play'²⁰⁰. The impact of censorship was compounded by the very limited repertoire of the British theatre tradition which was, especially in the West End, largely restricted to comedies and musicals. Lotte Berke, an exiled German modern dancer, said, 'At school we learnt that the English only talked about the weather and were very backward art-wise'²⁰¹. Faced with an insular and conservative theatre scene and with a Lord Chamberlain anxious not to upset the German government, the exiled dramatists found the only plays that did well were the sort of innocuous fare that could fit into the English repertoire, at the very time they were burning with a desire to tell stories about persecution at home and the threat to Britain. For many among this cultural grouping the grim reality was either silence or another move to a country where the environment was more welcoming.

The exiled photographers, of course, had an advantage over groups such as the dramatists in that their work had no language barrier to overcome. In his introduction to the work of the émigré photographer Wolfgang Suschitsky, Duncan Forbes states that, in the areas of

photography and publishing, 'One recent account suggests that there may have been as many as forty emigres from Germany and Austria working in these fields in London'²⁰². Unfortunately this is not referenced and this study has found a small group of just fifteen exiled photographers.²⁰³ Of these Cyril Arapoff, Bill Brandt, John Gay, Edith Tudor Hart, Gerty Simon, Grete Stern, and Walter Nurnberg came straight to Britain in 1933. Others left for different countries in the same year but eventually ended up here: so Ellen Auerbach stopped first in Palestine, arriving here in 1936; Wolfgang Suschitsky and Lazlo Moholy Nagy went initially to Holland before moving to Britain in 1934 and 1935 respectively; John Heartfield moved first to Czechoslovakia, only leaving for here when that country was invaded in 1938; Karl Hutton and Felix Man arrived in 1934; Trude Fleischmann was Austrian and fled after the Anschluss in 1938; while Tim Gidal left Germany for Palestine in 1935 before he too came here in 1938. The early departure date for most of these refugees suggests that they were largely fleeing from the wave of political persecution that followed the Nazis' rise to power. And they came to Britain in their prime. Their average age on arrival was 33 and many were experienced professionals, often closely associated with the cutting edge of German photography. Cyril Arapoff had spent six months training in the studio of Annelise Kretschmer in Dortmund; she was one of the first German women to own her own studio, steeped in the methodology of the New Objectivity and a leading German portrait photographer. Similarly Bill Brandt had spent an important formative period working with Man Ray in Paris during 1930. Lazlo Moholy Nagy had been a director of the Bauhaus, teaching, among other things, photography and pushing the boundaries of what was possible with a camera in his own work. Grete Stern and Ellen Auerbach had both been taught by Walter Peterhans, the lead teacher of photography at the Bauhaus; together they had set up the Ringl+Pit studio in Berlin which specialized in innovative advertising and portraiture. Gerty Simon was another portrait photographer, who was famous for her pictures of the leading members of the Social Democratic Party. This, and her Jewish background, explain her departure from Berlin in 1933. Edith Tudor Hart had received her photographic training at the Bauhaus and had experienced both commercial and political success in Vienna. There was also a group of photographers who had worked for Stefan Lorant when he was editor of *Munchner Illustrierte Presse*, one of the leading German illustrated magazines. Tim Gidal, Karl Hutton and Felix Man had years of experience producing photo-stories for Lorant, and continued to do so when they followed him to

Britain. Of the rest Wolfgang Suschitsky, the brother of Edith Tudor Hart, and Trude Fleischmann both had formal photographic training in Vienna, while John Gay had attended Art College in his home town of Karlsruhe and Walter Nurnberg had studied photography in Berlin. While this group may have been small in number it had sound theoretical underpinnings, lots of practical experience and, in many cases, a strong political motivation. Here was a formidable cadre of photographers, potentially capable of influencing British social photography.²⁰⁴

Predictably, however, the transition from the continent to Britain was far from smooth. Some of the émigré photographers left quickly after their arrival because they were refused a work permit, or could not find suitable work, or because they struggled to fit into a different cultural environment. Ellen Auerbach came to London in 1936, failed to secure a work permit and moved on to the U.S.A. Her old partner in the Ringl+Pit studio, Grete Stern, had arrived earlier in 1933, and while she made friends among, and portraits of, some of the leading German exiles by 1935 she too left, for Argentina where she developed a popular surrealist photography. Trude Fleischman, another very successful portraitist, left for the U.S.A. in 1939 having only arrived the previous year. Gerty Simon settled in Chelsea and held successful exhibitions of her work in 1934 and in 1935, however, she seems to have abandoned photographic work altogether by the end of the decade. Lazlo Moholy Nagy had been hoping to find work and support for re-establishing the Bauhaus in London. He was to be disappointed in both respects. While he did get some commissions that enabled him to survive - for example, designing posters for Imperial Airways and the London Underground, and organising shop window displays - these were slim pickings for a man of his stature. This was compounded when the Royal College of Art turned him down for a teaching job and, when he realised that he would never find backing for a new Bauhaus in London, he too went to the U.S.A. after just two years here. Tim Gidal was a Zionist and his principal interests lay in Palestine; while he did provide picture stories for his old boss, Stefan Lorant, these were often about the Middle East. Some got caught up in activities other than documentary photography. So Walter Nurnberg carved out a career as an industrial photographer, and John Gay became a successful commercial photographer, working in advertising in particular. Perhaps the most tragic story was that of John Heartfield, whose

savage anti-Nazi photomontages had put him at number five in the Gestapo's most wanted list. Upon his arrival in Britain he was commissioned to produce a cover for *Picture Post* and enjoyed celebrations of his work in Germany in a London exhibition and in an edition of *Lilliput*. Thereafter he had to scrape a living from designing book covers for the publishers Lindsay Drummond and Penguin Books. Even after war was declared the potentially powerful contribution he might have made to Allied propaganda with his vitriolic satire was unacceptable to the British authorities. This is not to suggest that these photographers lost all social consciousness when they landed here. Ellen Auerbach, for example, wandered the slums of London taking photographs and John Gay occasionally captured pictures of the poor on his travels. Moholy Nagy received three commissions to provide photos for books. In *An Oxford Chest* and *Eton Portrait* his fascination with the manifestations of the English class system are apparent, while his work for *The Street Markets of London* reveal his affection for the everyday and his respect for working people.²⁰⁵ Rather it is to suggest that for many of these refugees their focus on these issues, while they were in this country, was so transient, because of the pressing needs that faced them, that it is difficult to see how these could have any significant impact on British photographic culture. Indeed, if the cultural life of a society can be seen as one of the ways in which that society forms a knowledge about itself, and that knowledge is deeply entwined with the material conditions and power relations of that society, as some discourses argue,²⁰⁶ then it would be quite remarkable if a handful of individuals, however talented, could produce significant cultural change in these circumstances. This is particularly the case if there are major differences between the culture of the host nation and that of these migrant photographers. Dick Geary, in his comparison of the working-class cultures of Britain and Germany before 1914, suggests some of these differences. He notes that British workers enjoyed higher wage levels and lower food, fuel and rent prices than their German counterparts which led to the growth of a culture of domesticity, which in turn encouraged an engagement with consumerism and with the growing entertainment industry. The principal political involvement of British workers was through their unions which had been relatively successful in improving living standards, at least for the labour aristocracy. They had something of a share in the fruits of capitalism and were relatively happy with the liberal democracy that was unfolding at the start of the Twentieth Century. German workers, however, were faced with a more aggressive ruling elite that was unwilling to allow

concessions to the unions and who kept wages 25% lower than in Britain. The results were weaker unions, greater poverty and gross overcrowding in the cities. Rather than an involvement with a growing culture of consumerism, many Germans turned to the Social Democratic Party, which had 1 million fee paying members by 1914. They were seeking redress of their grievances at state level, but also seeking an outlet from their dreadfully overcrowded living conditions - turning to the SDP for leisure, social and cultural activities. These differences in material conditions produced a German worker whose political horizons focussed around change at state level, around a distinct and very popular workers' party, and whose social and cultural activities centred on the party. During the inter-war years they were also faced with periodic, and drastic, falls in their standard of living and with, at times, a violently aggressive elite. For many, revolution at state level looked like the only viable way forward. In Britain this may not have been quite the case and, for at least some of the working-class, amelioration was felt to be possible within the existing system.²⁰⁷ The nature of German economic, social and political relationships can help to explain the emergence there of a photography sharply focussed on politics, but things were not quite the same in Britain and it would be sensible to anticipate the development of differing photographic forms here, which, in turn, would make it more difficult for the newly arrived, German speaking, photographers to make an immediate impact on the way British photographers addressed working people, as some historians have suggested. There were, however, six of the exiled photographers who stayed in this country to remain very interested in social documentation and it is clearly of interest to trace their careers.

Photos 3 and 4. Wolfgang Suschitsky, from the Charing Cross Road series, 1936.



Wolfgang Suschitsky had arrived in 1934 from Vienna, his family background was both Jewish and socialist. In Vienna he had trained for three years in photography at one of the capital's technical colleges where his tutor was Rudolf Koppitz. Until his death in 1936 Koppitz was a very successful and internationally renowned photographer, who lived and worked among the Austrian avant-garde. While much of his career centred on nudes and portraits, noted for their graphic strength and compositional clarity, he also had a great interest in the life of working people - in 1936 for example, he held a vast exhibition of 500 photos focussed on peasant life in the Tyrol. In Britain Suschitsky found work in advertising and medical photography, becoming a documentary film maker in the 1940's, but he never lost his interest in still photography and it is here that perhaps the influence of his tutor may be seen. Perhaps his most important series from the inter-war years was on the Charing Cross Road in London (Photos 3 and 4) in which an almost Pictorialist exploration of light and dark mingle with both a love of the everyday and a fascination with the juxtapositions thrown up by the English class system. In his introduction to Suschitsky's work, Duncan Forbes thought that this series 'shows a very complete assimilation of the values of the British documentary movement[which] wanted to elevate the aesthetic status of the ordinary and everyday'²⁰⁸ and this can be seen in the way he monumentalises his subjects, a very British characteristic. But it is, perhaps, in Suschitsky's careful highlighting of social grades and distinctions where something different is introduced into the local photographic culture. His work may well demonstrate a modernist sensibility and a concern for working people, engaging with British documentary photography to produce both powerful and attractive images of social contrasts. But, unfortunately, Suschitsky's documentation remained largely hidden from view; his work on the Charing Cross Road was intended for publication, with a text by Peter Mendelssohn, another émigré. This came to nothing because of the high pre-war paper costs. Only in 1942, when he was enrolled as a film maker for the Ministry of Information was he able to work again in documentary photography. Suschitsky's work may well have brought a new approach to Britain, but in reality his actual impact during this inter-war period was very limited.

Wolfgang's older sister, Edith Tudor Hart, had arrived in England a year earlier. Her background was very much of the cultural and political avant-garde; she trained at the Bauhaus and then returned to Vienna where her work showed:

A frugal and technically adroit photographer exploring subjects of working-class deprivation in an attempt to construct a narrative of reality grounded in the antagonisms of class.²⁰⁹

In Britain she quickly established a successful studio, making a living from portraiture and advertising. But her documentary work continued and she was published in *Lilliput*, *The Listener*, *The Geographical Magazine* and she produced illustrations for books about the living conditions of the working-class, such as *Working-Class Wives: their Health and Conditions* by Margery Spring Rice.²¹⁰ Her work was well known and she moved freely among the journalistic and artistic groupings of the Left; encouraging and supporting other émigré photographers such as Grete Stern and English photographers such as Helen Muspratt and Margaret Monck. Forbes has an interesting ambivalence about her work, thinking that 'it soon succumbed to a very British aesthetic - naturalism or the allure of surface appearances'²¹¹ a photography that promoted the visibility of the working class without reference to the social relations they were enduring (Photos 5 and 6). But his conclusions are much more positive:

In the context of British photography in the 1930's Tudor Hart's practice is highly significant. Its quality of exchange with its subjects, its interest in the analytical power of the dialectical photograph and its effort to articulate the social whole all mark a qualitative break with the bourgeois tourist gaze that informed the photographic imagery of the British working class throughout much of this period.²¹²

There is much in these comments. Just how exclusive was the 'quality of exchange' to these exiled photographers will be debated in further chapters, but the idea of a 'dialectical photograph' illuminating a 'social whole' and its internal conflicts is very interesting and is very much a distinct characteristic not just of Tudor Hart and her brother but can be found in the work of many of the photographers who chose to stay and work in this country.

Photo 5. Edith Tudor Hart, Looking in the Bakery Shop, 1935.



Photo 6. Edith Tudor Hart, In Total Darkness, 1936.

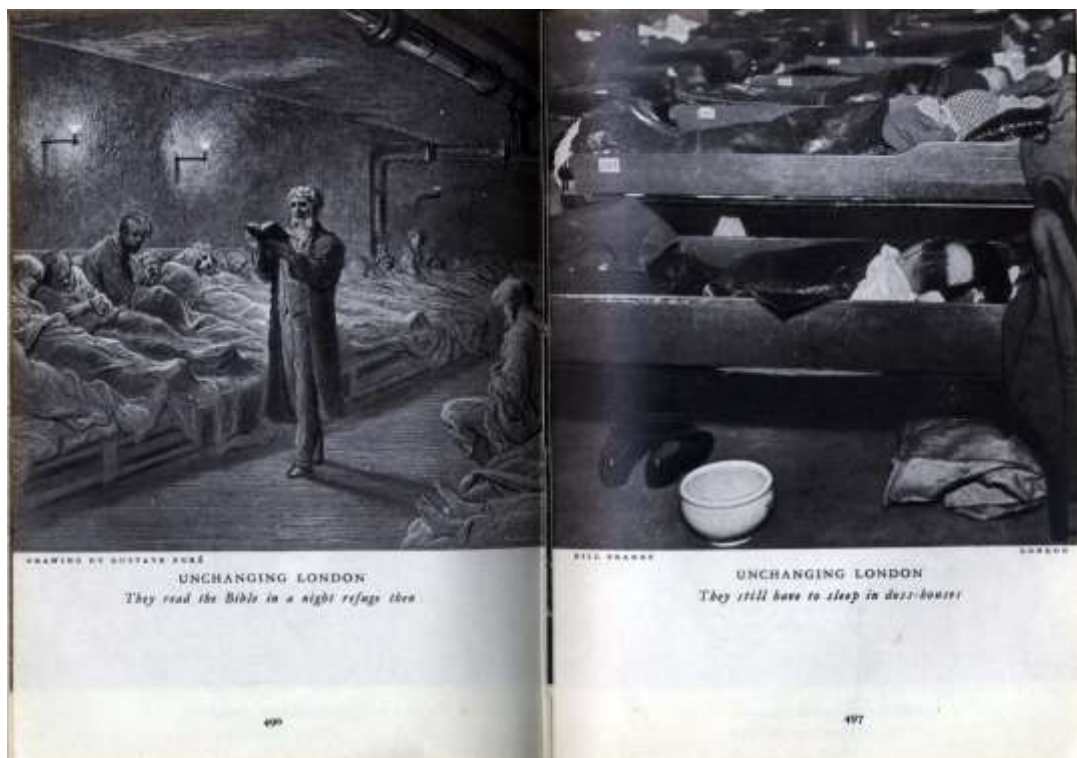


Bill Brandt, for example, had a photographic education that was as avant-garde as that of Tudor Hart. In 1939 he had worked at the studio of Man Ray, the surrealist artist and experimental photographer and film maker. He was there at the time his tutor was developing photograms and solarisation as new photographic techniques. And he was there at the time when Man Ray, along with another American photographer, Bernice Abbot, was discovering the nostalgic street photography of Eugene Atget, a man who had delighted in portraying Paris, but all parts of the city, including those inhabited by the poor and homeless. Brandt had arrived in Britain in 1933 and found occasional work contributing photographs to *The Weekly Illustrated*, *News Chronicle* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Before 1939 he also published two books of his photos, *The English at Home* in 1936 and *A Night in London* in 1938. They were both 'a modest success'²¹³. They contained exactly that interest in the social whole that can be detected in the work of Suschitsky and Tudor Hart where juxtapositions of photographs move them beyond a representation of society towards an exploration of that society and its internal conflicts, perhaps towards a 'dialectical photography' (Photo 7). On the continent this was a well-established technique. For example *AIZ*, the newspaper of the German Communist Party had regularly used these simple contrasts to highlight divisions in German society. While *A Night in London* appears to be directly derived from *Paris De Nuit* published earlier in 1933, in which Brassai had captured the beauty and glamour of the French capital alongside its more seedy areas and activities. But it was not until 1939, however, that Brandt got access to a wider audience when Stefan Lorant commissioned a photo-story for *Lilliput* titled 'Unchanging London' (Photo 8). Here he presented Dore's engravings of London alongside his own contemporary photos of similar scenes. This again was more than simple representation, but a photography that pushed its viewers towards a consideration of 'why' - and, now, for the first time, to a mass audience. But this was a mass audience that only developed at the very end of the inter-war period, obviously limiting his impact on the photography of working people during this time.

Photo 7. Bill Brandt, *A Night in London*, 1938.



Photo 8. Bill Brandt, *Unchanging London*, *Picture Post*, 1939.



It was, of course, another refugee, Stefan Lorant, who tapped into this mass audience. In Germany he had been both a film maker and the editor of *Munchner Illustrierte Presse*, one of the country's most successful photo-magazines. It was also strongly anti-Nazi which had caused Lorant's imprisonment in 1933. On his release he made his way to England where he founded *The Weekly Illustrated* in 1934, *Lilliput* in 1937 and co-founded *Picture Post* in 1938. The first two publications struggled to find a market; *Lilliput* was a pocket-sized magazine with a largely light-hearted, knockabout journalistic style, and which never made Lorant a profit - he sold it a year after its launch. But *Picture Post* was different, establishing a circulation of 1.7 million shortly after its first edition. Initially Lorant turned to the photographers he had used in Munich, Felix Man, Karl Hutton and, to a lesser extent, Tim Gidal. Photographers who were thoroughly familiar with the revolution in layout, design, typography and photography that had been pioneered in Germany. Felix Man took all the photographs for the first edition and was the chief photographer up to 1945, contributing over 100 photo-stories during this period. He brought from Germany an appreciation of the aesthetic potential of photography and a concern for the plight of working people. Karl Hutton had similar interests; he had run his own studio in Berlin and had produced photo-stories for the left wing press in both Berlin and Munich. Talking about his own street photography he said:

A street is never of great interest to me if it does not show the people who live in it. They are the essential thing...to me the point seems to be that the street has been built, not for its own use but for the sake of the human beings that inhabit it.²¹⁴

People were at the centre of his concerns and when he photographed working people he adopted modes of frontality and centrality, but with a slight edge. So, for example, there is something of a challenge in the way the homeless man returns the viewer's gaze. (Photo 9).

This is an edge that can also be seen in the work of Cyril Arapoff. He was trained in a studio that was at the heart of fashionable Weimar Germany, and after settling here in 1933 he established a very successful studio in Oxford, becoming the city's leading portraitist. This living was supplemented by fashion shoots for *Vogue* and photography for the ballet and theatre, but, characteristically of the exiles, he retained an interest in the everyday and in

working people. During the inter-war period he took pictures of the East End of London, the hop pickers in Kent and, in 1939, of a rent strike in the Hanbury Buildings in Poplar, London (Photo 10). This final series captured the conditions that sparked the strike, the informal organisation that propelled the strike forward and the conflict surrounding it. Here again the photography moves beyond a celebratory representation to become a more of an exploration of social conflict. And it is this that seems to have convinced some historians that the methods used in continental documentation brought something different into Britain. This may well be true, but the chronologies of their arrivals and of their work indicate that whatever impact they made was limited to the very end of the inter-war period, and particularly linked to the opening of *Picture Post*.

Photo 9. Kurt Hutton, Homeless Man, Admiralty Arch, Midnight.

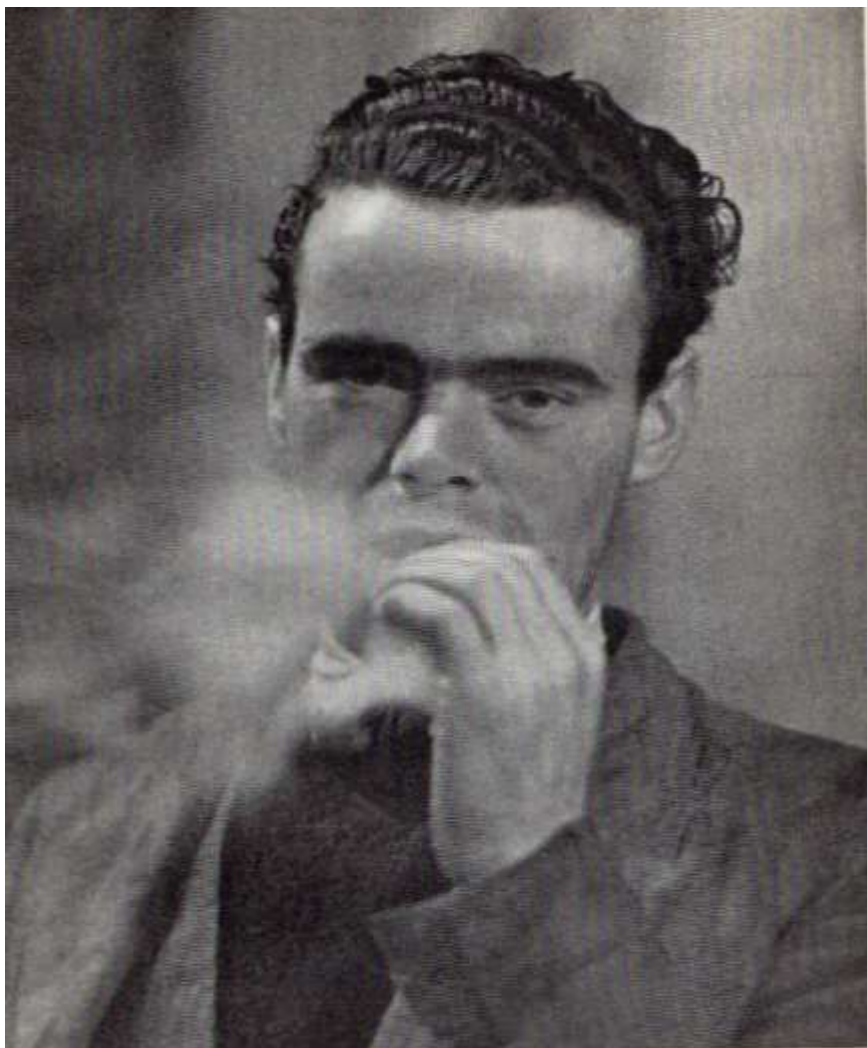


Photo 10. Cyril Arapoff, The Hanbury Rent Strike, 1939.



It is important to note as well that these connexions, between the New Photography in Germany and the import of a sharper political approach by the exiled photographers into British documentary photography, was not consistently the case. It has already been seen that the New Photography could develop in diverse ways with completely differing political consequences and the career of one of the lesser known emigres - Walter Nurnberg - can usefully illustrate this. He was born in 1907 to a Berlin banking family and his early career supported the family business. But when he began work on the finances of the Reiman College of Art at Nurnberg he fell under the spell of Werner Graf, one of the photography teachers there. Graf had just published the highly influential book *Es Komm Der Neue Fotograf* and he introduced Nurnberg to the work of Albert Renger-Patzsch and Helmar

Lerski, who were both at the centre of the new developments. Nurnberg talked later of this experience:

I was fired by the realisation that through photography one sees some aspects of life which one missed previously. New significance of ordinary things which normally one takes for granted is revealed through photography - this excited me.²¹⁵

It was enough to convince him to change careers and he enrolled at the college to begin his photographic apprenticeship. In 1933, however, he left Germany for Britain and set up a studio in London which was largely concerned with advertising photography. Nurnberg's archive survives in the National Media Museum and his early work in this country was the humdrum photography of everyday objects - suitcases, dental chairs, fishing rods, pencil cases, biscuits, radios and the like.²¹⁶ But he was also, like many of the other exiles, occasionally and incidentally, concerned to capture pictures of working people (Photo 11). Overwhelmingly in this pre-war period he was using his training to make everyday objects beautiful - and saleable. Interestingly it was not until 1937 that he was able to break even and, of course, this ties in with the more general picture of the exiles in which it took time for them to secure a foothold in this country.²¹⁷

During the war Nurnberg spent four and a half years in the Pioneer Corps, when he left in 1945 he was determined to redirect his career:

I made my mind up not to go back to advertising photography because I felt personally that I could not go back to a world of make believe which advertising photography is. They are phony and for the rest of my life I cannot live for this. I must do something that has some reality. I looked around and found that nobody did really meaningful exciting pictures of industry...[it was a time when] people still produced with their bare hands and when workers' wives were still proud of their Jims, Joes and Bills, who did marvellous things...It was the last flutter of a time when achievement in work was rewarded by a tremendous amount of self-respect within people.²¹⁸

Photo 11. Nurnberg's early incidental photography of working people found among his commercial work.



His resolution paid off and Nurnberg went on to carve out an outstanding post-war career as the country's leading industrial photographer; writing books and articles on the subject, lecturing and, above all, securing commissions from leading companies such as I.C.I., United Steel, Thos. Ward and Distillers.²¹⁹ A selection from his work for Distillers is typical (Photos 12 and 13) in which the celebration of everyday objects and careful lighting of his original inspirations, Renger-Patzsch and Lerski, can be seen alongside a dramatic illustration of the industrial process and portraits of individual workers. It is a complex mix, and it can be seen, perhaps, as a celebration of the centrality of the worker in the industrial process and an affirmation of their social value. Nurnberg's intentions, however, appear to be subtly different from this: writing about his post-war work at British Acheson Electrical Ltd. And explaining why he had included workers in his images of the foundry, he said, 'It was important, apart from illustrating a furnace, to convey the size of a plant, the heat generated and also that we are concerned here not with the handling of a product, but with

a harnessed technology'²²⁰. This was a theme he frequently returned to, 'Our visual approach must be backed by true insight and imagination. Only then shall we be able to portray industry at its best and truly convey Man's genius'²²¹. There is in his work a strand of positivist and technological utopianism in which the genius of Man harnesses Nature for the benefit of all. This utopianism envisages the current economic system improving things for everyone without any alteration to the existing social system and it is a discourse which is a long way from the concept of a 'dialectical photography'. Moreover this distance is further enhanced by Nurnberg's comments on the significance of his work for his employers, 'Perhaps the biggest field of all, however, is the selling of a business or its products both to the outside world and to its own employees'²²². His was a career that was important for,

First, in a series of photos for enlightened companies...and second in a series of pamphlets, articles and lectures to management on industrial photography as a means of communication in marketing and industrial relations. Nurnberg must be the only photographer to have doubled as a management consultant.²²³

His was a photography concerned with harmonising industrial relations, via a technological utopianism that was not interested in exploring the social relationships upon which the industrial activity was based. In another interview, Nurnberg

demonstrates that beauty can be found everywhere, even in the most unlikely places - one has only to see it. He loves to quote the words of a factory worker in Yorkshire who told him 'I have been doing this job for 15 years and I never knew what beautiful work I made'²²⁴.

There are distinct echoes here of Walter Benjamin's contemporary concerns about the New Photography- that it could make a pile of manure look beautiful and that it could create a shiny surface without ever exploring the social realities beneath. Indeed Nurnberg's work casts further doubt on the suggestions of those historians who saw the exiled German photographers as a cadre of radical practitioners who brought a photography which contributed to the political development of the British working class. He was a photographer whose work, if anything, served to secure and consolidate existing social structures.

Photos 12 and 13. Walter Nurnberg, The Distillers Company.



iii. Conclusions.

The career of Walter Nurnberg illustrates that while there is no doubt that the New Photography was influential in this country, and some of the exiles carved out careers that helped to embed its principles in Britain, there is no reason to suppose that either of these would automatically stimulate a radical photography here or influence the ways in which British photographers created images of working people. The camera's new ability to highlight the beauty of the everyday could be, and was, used for purposes that were deeply conservative and a key question is whether the half dozen or so exiled photographers who displayed an interest in working people as subjects were capable of effecting a transformation of British photography in the ways some historians have believed. When the lives of the exiled photographers are examined in detail it would seem that the numbers who stayed and continued to work on social documentation are low. And even among these it is some time after their arrival that they begin to make an impact. *Picture Post* only began in 1938; Bill Brandt does his first work for it in 1939; Wolfgang Suschitsky fails to get his photography published in the inter-war period; and documentary work was only ever a small part of Cyril Arapoff's work. John Gay and Walter Nurnberg seem to have lost their initial concern for working people in their commercial work. Only Edith Tudor Hart seems to have devoted significant amounts of time and energy to this area of work.

Alongside the timeline of emigration is another, the appearance of documentary photography in the British national press and it is relevant that a very lively tradition was developing here before the exiles had really had a chance to establish themselves. For example, *The Daily Herald* had been taken over by Odhams in 1929 and a much more commercial venture was launched, featuring large format photos often of working people. The most famous press photographer of the period, James Jarche, had been appointed and he took a whole series of photos of working people for the paper - by 1934 he was writing his memoir, *People I have Shot*. The Labour Party/T.U.C. monthly *Labour*, which featured striking photos of working people on every cover, started publication in September 1933. While *The Daily Mirror* was taken over by Cecil King in 1935 and, as part of its drive to increase circulation, it moved slowly Left-wards and introduced large format photography,

increasingly of working people. When this timeline, of a home-grown photo-journalism that was interested in social issues, is set against the timeline of the exiles' experiences it would seem to be one that emerged without a tremendous amount of input from them. Indeed given the fact that there was a home-grown tradition of social photography developing as the exiles arrived, the disparate nature of the uses they had made of photography in Germany, the issues they faced on arrival and the small numbers who successfully overcame these, it would not be unreasonable to anticipate that, in fact, it was they that were absorbed by the photographic culture of the host nation. It is noticeable, for example, that the most artistically radical of the exiles were either reduced to silence or moved abroad; John Heartfield was side-lined in Britain, Grete Stern went to Argentina to pursue her surrealist photography and Lazlo Moholy Nagy went to the U.S.A. to set up his new Bauhaus. In many ways the difficulties these had in bringing their art to the British public was similar to the experiences of the German dramatists, as they attempted entry into a very different cultural environment. Two examples can serve to illustrate these issues. The Workers' Film and Photography League had been set up in 1934 by the Communist Party of Great Britain, following the lead of AIZ in Germany, and with a very specific political goal - to counter the monopoly of the visual world by the ruling elite. Its manifesto asked:

What have they done with this monopoly? They have used it to give us a capitalist view of life: to show us life from a distorted angle. They have used it to glorify and justify their own parasitic existence. Above all, they have used it to make us forget our own lives.²²⁵

Despite the successful example of the AIZ, similar ambitions and the presence here of German photographers who were fully aware of the magazine's style, the historian of the League believes that it was hopelessly inadequate for the task it had set itself, failing to provide 'a significant counter hegemonic force'²²⁶. Rather, he found in its work a depoliticised photography, which rejected the Soviet and German aesthetics and distanced itself from the modernist avant-garde, preferring instead to assimilate 'modes of social democratic paternalism and bourgeois humanism'²²⁷. *Picture Post* was, of course, far more successful commercially as it took up a central position in British photojournalism. Stuart Hall attempted to define the characteristics of what he called its 'social eye'. He identified a photography which he felt had a 'fidelity to representative English faces' with a clarity of

detail that raises 'unnoticed subjects to a sort of equality of station, photographically, with heroic subjects....the beginning of the democratisation of the subject' and a passion 'to present people to themselves in wholly recognizable terms, terms which acknowledge their commonness, their variety, their individuality, their representativeness.' Hall felt that *Picture Post*'s photography, 'lends the dimension of significance and intensity to the commonplace. This is not yet a revolutionary use of the still photograph, but it is profoundly human'²²⁸. These are, however, very much characteristics of the honorific and celebratory work produced by a whole range of contemporary British photographers, discussed in later chapters, many of them completely unconnected to the *Picture Post* and well established before its first publication - James Jarcho, Edward Maladine, Alf Tulip, Jack Hulme for instance. Hall's analysis does not suggest that the continental influences at the *Picture Post* produced a photography that transformed British social documentation rather than that it retained the main features of a pre-existing home-grown tradition, hardly moving towards a more revolutionary 'dialectical', or German, photography. Indeed it could be argued that *Picture Post* was so successful precisely because it tapped into these pre-existing modes of representation. The story of the exiles could be read, then, as, not one of transformation, but as a story of absorption.

This is, of course, not quite the same as previously held views about the importance of these photographers, and it is reasonable to ask how this variance has arisen. Walter Nurnberg's photography (Photos 12-13) is very interesting in this respect. If it is considered purely in terms of content, it is possible to perceive a variety of possible interpretations of its character, ranging from a modernist celebration of industrial capitalism, to a technological utopianism, and even a celebration of labour. It is only when his intentions as a photographer and the nature and reactions of his audience - his practices and purposes, as well as his product - that the significance of his images, as a support for corporate management, stabilize and become clearer. Indeed, it may be that it was the 'art history' methodology of previous historians of the exiled photographers that has led to an over-estimation of their impact on British culture. This methodology can focus on the importance of the content of a visual object; and in the case of this photography it is undeniably true that it was well-intentioned, well-crafted and of great interest. But it can be an approach

that is almost ahistorical, in the sense that it can remove the content from the context of its production and reception. When the context of this photography is examined - numbers of exiles, arrival and departure dates, publication dates, circulation figures, audience access, and so on - it appears to suggest that, for this period at least, it did not have the significance that some have suggested, a suggestion that may have methodological origins.

It is important, however, not to be completely dismissive, and the New Photography in Germany forged links with this country which can be seen to influence British social photography as one of many competing influences. The discovery in Germany that new camera technologies and techniques could unlock insights into the beauty of the world was central to this. The stunning portraiture that was such a feature of Weimar German life and the wonderful explorations of the everyday were not brought to Britain by the exiles but earlier by the commercial links between the two countries. The potential of the beauty of the everyday and of people, for the advertisement and sale of goods, was quickly realised and produced a subsequent interchange of personnel, publications and exhibitions - these were the conduits through which the brilliance of German photography reached these shores. It is true that in Germany this photography had a much wider range of uses than mere commercialism, and a consequent diversity of political implications. It is also true that many of the exiles brought a range of these uses and implications with them to Britain. But this chapter has argued that the small numbers of émigré photographers who stayed here to work, the enormous difficulties they experienced when they arrived, the time taken to establish themselves and the pre-existence of a British social photography meant that their impact, before 1939, was extremely limited, and there is no reason to suppose that their arrival automatically stimulated a radical photography here. They may well have been aesthetically radical and politically revolutionary, their work may well have been 'dialectical' in ways that were new to this country, but their influence on the stolid, conservative culture of Britain, described by Paul Nash at the start of this chapter, was marginal during this period - even in the documentation of working people- and it largely failed to develop or influence new ways of looking at them. The New Photography brought here the camera's ability to highlight the beauty of the everyday and gave photographers a wonderful methodological tool. Not surprisingly, this tool was seized upon here, just as in Germany, for

a wide range of purposes, with an equally wide range of motivations, some deeply conservative and some genuinely progressive. It is the character and significance of this range of, domestically produced, modes of representing working people that concern the remaining chapters.

Chapter Three. Explorations. Photographic journeys among the working classes.

Photo 1. Graham Bell and William Coldstream in Bolton. 1938.



In 1938 the artists Graham Bell and William Coldstream (Photo 1) went north to Bolton, to join friends and colleagues in the Mass Observation project. Coldstream's objectives were clear,

I was disturbed at the time that so much avant-garde painting appeared to be inaccessible to a great number of people and at the same time I was trying to practice a straightforward painting from nature.²²⁹

The opportunity offered to these Left-leaning artists to be involved in an investigation into the condition of the working class and in the production of an art that reflected these conditions was too good to miss. Coldstream described how they worked:

We each painted a picture sitting on the roof of Bolton Art Gallery [Photo 1], back to back, with a chimney in between. We stayed in Bolton for exactly three weeks. We

did call on Tom Harrison once or twice but we did not take much part. We spent the whole three weeks painting and then went home.²³⁰

The Mass Observation team then took photos of these paintings, showed them to people in the streets of the town and asked for their opinions. These were not altogether favourable: the lack of people in the streets was a particular objection, 'one respondent concluded that the picture must represent the two minute silence on Armistice Day'²³¹, while another commented 'There's something about it I don't like. We're all dead, we are! Our people are dead!'²³² There is an intriguing paradox in this story, in that these artists with political sympathies for working people seemed incapable, despite their best intentions, of producing an aesthetic that had any resonance among their working-class subjects. Bell and Coldstream were not alone in this endeavour, a whole stream of 'explorers' set out to produce written accounts of working-class life at this time. George Orwell and J. B. Priestley are probably the most obvious examples, but a glance, for instance, at the output of the Left Book Club reveals a plethora of authors with similar political intentions and aesthetic ambitions.²³³ Photography was not immune from this, and this chapter investigates a number of photographers, with, first, an interest in and, secondly, a sympathy for the working class, who journeyed into their communities. These attitudes to their subjects, in theory at least, increased the likelihood that a photography would emerge that portrayed them in a more positive light than the imagery that was seen in Chapter One. Indeed, it is this potential for a more affirmative photography that links this chapter with the Chapter Two. But it is argued here that this potential was never realised and that, again, a Foucauldian narrative about knowledge production may be useful in assessing the significance of this photography. The first section looks at three of the photographers who shared an interest in, or curiosity about the working class. While the second section examines those photographers who had a sympathy for them. Together, the photographers presented here - Samuel Coulthurst, Amy Flagg, James Cleet, Humphrey Spender, Helen Muspratt and Margaret Monck- may appear to be a rather eclectic, esoteric or even random collection. Rather, this is a sample across another wide range of sources, and when they are examined, remarkably, persistent and significant commonalities emerge again. While those photographers presented here, for example, may have utilised a spread of methodologies - from the organised, regimented surveys of Cleet to the surreptitious, hidden camera of

Spender - they reflect a developing middle-class consciousness of the working class, and a growing interest in documenting them. It is true that these photographers state a whole range of reasons for their expeditions: some were commissioned, some were politically-motivated, some were nostalgic for a world that appeared to be crumbling beneath the impact of the economic upheavals of the time, some were on a personal voyage of discovery, while others were just curious about what was going on in their own towns and cities. But, if there was a disparity of ambition there was the same shared audience and, as these photographs circulated, they seldom broke away from these middle-class groups. They also shared common modes of presenting working people. In particular, this was a documentation characterised by a physical and social distance between subject and photographer. These commonalities form a conjunction of social, political and cultural factors so that here the particular micro-social relationships that can be seen to exist between the camera and the subject severely restricted the kinds of photography that could emerge. Using the ideas of Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula and John Tagg, it may well be that the political orientations of these photographers, identifiable from their work, further limited the nature of their photography. While the inability of the artistic avant-garde in this country to effectively link with the political vanguard, deprived these, often well intentioned, photographers of an aesthetic methodology which could be used to alter the dynamic of the social relationships between photographer and subjects. Despite their noble motivations they failed to develop a visual language that had significance for their subjects. Indeed, so serious were these deficiencies that ultimately a photography was produced by these explorers that was as hierarchical in its practices, content and underlying ambitions as many of the photographs seen in Chapter One. Once again working people were confined to the fringes and shadows of this imagery, once again they were marginalised.

i. Three Expeditionaries and their Photography of Working People.

This section looks at the work of three photographers - Samuel Coulthurst, Amy Flagg, and James Cleet – who consistently chose to photograph working people. It argues that, despite this interest, their photography remained trapped within the hierarchical imagery that was such a feature of this period. And it examines the social and methodological reasons for this, asserting that these photographers never had the personal or aesthetic resources at their disposal that may have enabled them to develop beyond these sort of hierarchical representations.

Photo 2. *As They Come To Us*, Nora Smyth. 1915.



Photo 3. Mother at work, infant sleeping, Nora Smyth. 1915.



There was never a single, uniform, formalised way of representing working people. Some of the early attempts to document their lives produced a powerful photography (Photos 2 and 3). Nora Smyth, for example, was keen to use photography to document her work in the East End of London during the First World War. She was a leading suffragette, active at the start of the twentieth century, particularly in the East London Federation of Suffragettes. As an administrator, financial organizer and a militant activist, she organised the creative contributions to the *Women's Dreadnought*, the newspaper of the Federation, and it was in this role that she took photographs to record the situation of women and children in East London. Val Williams, in her study *Women Photographers*, rates her very highly; Smyth was not

a secret, candid photographer.....rather a familiar co-worker known to women and children alike stood behind the camera.....And the gazes which are returned are complicit, mutually recognizing. Those who had been characterised as slum dwellers, presented as spectacle to an amazed public by the believers in the phantasmagoria,

emerge as individual women and children..... her knowledge of the people among whom she worked, the mutual respect which she and they shared, led her away from received documentary reportage forms.....if indeed she was aware of such forms in any significant way. Smyth's East End was an East End without cockneys and coshers, without dens or urchins. Undramatised, uncharacterised by her camera, the face of poverty was demystified and rid of the ghosts and goblins of the Victorian imagination.²³⁴

Williams believes that it was Smyth's closeness to her subjects and the resulting 'complicity' which enabled her to abandon stereotypes and to produce the highest quality images of the working people around her. It was a photography based on 'mutual recognition,' familiarity and, even, an affection for her subjects. But this was not necessarily the most common form of documenting working-class life. At much the same time as Nora Smyth was working in London, Samuel Coulthurst was pioneering a different approach on the streets of Salford.

Photos 4-7 are very representative of his work. These are from before the Great War but Coulthurst himself worked well into the inter-war period and the methodology and modes of representation that he developed in Salford can be traced in the work of photographers active during these years. Indeed, it is his innovative approach to his photography that makes him a worthwhile study. Born in 1867 into a fairly affluent middle-class Manchester family, Coulthurst worked at W. H. Smith in the city for the whole of his working life, eventually rising to be the head of the fancy goods department. His passion, however, was photography and he was a member of the Manchester Amateur Photographic Society, acting as president in 1906, and he was an award winning member of the Royal Photographic Society.²³⁵ During the 1890's the Manchester Amateur Photographic Society became involved in the Survey Movement, with a characteristic ambition:

To obtain a photographic record of the buildings, streets, characters, etc. of Manchester as they now exist, and to secure as memorials of the past a representation of the few historic buildings and features that remain in and about the city.²³⁶

Unusually, however, the Society was also interested in 'How the poor lived'²³⁷ and it seems that Samuel Coulthurst was the driving force behind this: of the 232 prints that the Society contributed to the Survey, 66 came from him and 'most of his photographs illustrate the appearance of the poorer members of society'²³⁸. Nonetheless, these were images produced within the well-defined context of the Survey Movement and which circulated within the members of the local amateur photographic society. But if his interest in the poor was unusual within the Survey Movement, his methods were equally novel - he dressed as a rag and bone man, with a hand cart on which he hid his heavy quarter plate camera.²³⁹ Some of the results can be seen in Photos 4-6, but, interestingly, he also wrote about his activities and the efficacy of his methodology:

The slums, fairground, street trades, outdoor markets all provide scope for the wide awake photographer who is alive to the pictorial possibilities of such subjects.²⁴⁰

These studies are easily to be secured by standing on the kerb stones and waiting for them to come along, either singly or in file. Coming, as they do, rather slowly and almost dead to the camera.²⁴¹

When working in the street and the object in view is figure studies rather than general street views, it is as well little attention as possible is attracted. It is a good plan to decide beforehand from what distance the pictures shall be taken....and so not to attract attention by many movements, walk up to the street naturally, as it were, to within the distance of the focus that is set. All that is now required at the critical moment is to raise the camera, fire the shot, and drop the camera at your side again, and if these are quickly carried out, studies that are quite unconscious of the camera will be the result.²⁴²

Coulthurst was acutely aware of the environment, its social context and the dynamics of the situations he had entered into. He clearly believed that his approach was an effective way of successfully taking pictures of working people even if his advice could equally read as that for a hunter stalking his prey or an agent in enemy territory. If this is unnecessarily melodramatic, his methods certainly exuded a wariness about the situation the photographer found himself in. He was aware of the necessity to disguise both the camera and the cameraman if his subjects were to remain 'quite unconscious' before they were

'shot'. But he also had a sensitivity to leaving his subjects undisturbed which may have arisen from the possible anthropological ambitions of his photography, from his desire to reveal what working people were 'really like'. Equally, it may have arisen from a concern about a negative reaction among his subjects that may have been provoked by the sight of a gentleman-photographer in their midst. Whatever the motivation, Coulthurst realised that there was a social distance between himself and his subjects which he attempted to overcome by elaborate disguise and which resulted in a photography that contained none of the complicity and mutual recognition that can be seen in the work of Nora Smyth. Indeed he presented a study of working people that is largely of their backs.

Photos 4- 6. Salford. Samuel Coulthurst.



Photo 5.



Photo 6.



Unsurprisingly the teeming streets of South Shields, at this time, were very similar to those that Coulthurst found in Salford. They were densely populated with working people, and they too attracted photographers. Two, Amy Flagg and James Cleet, dominate the archive of the South Tyneside Libraries, but there are also a few scattered, but striking, images of working-class life in the archive: of house moving (Photo 7), of the end of a colliery shift (Photo 8), of a strike at a fish curers (Photo 9).²⁴³ These vibrant pictures, full of human interest, were achieved by the simple technique of a physical proximity between photographer and subject, and perhaps also by the sort of complicity and understanding that Nora Smyth might have understood. Amy Flagg, however, preferred the techniques pioneered by Coulthurst. She shared a similar middle-class background in that she lived in a grand villa with well-appointed gardens and she pursued photography as a hobby rather than a profession. This was a hobby fuelled by an interest in her own area and its history, which led her to develop a body of photography, largely for her own interest, that provided a comprehensive record of South Shields, particularly the town centre and its poorer districts, during the inter-war period. There is no evidence that she had any connexions with the Survey Movement but she appears to have had a similar concern to capture on camera a fast disappearing world.²⁴⁴ A comparison of Coulthurst's pictures of Salford market (Photos 5 and 6) and Flagg's photo of the market at South Shields (Photo 10) show a marked similarity. She was as willing as him to include working people in her images, but she too keeps them at a distance, or, if closer, they are almost always taken from the rear (Photos 11-13). There is no surviving record of her working practices beyond the actual photographs themselves, but their content suggests some kind of hidden-camera approach, certainly the subjects appear to be unaware of the fact that they were being photographed. Consequently, her photography contains the same physical and social distances that were visible in Coulthurst's work, and it has the same absence of any intimacy between photographer and subject. Her images lack the vigour and energy that can be seen in the working-class subjects of Photos 7-9. Flagg's inability to break down these physical and social spaces between her and her working-class subjects produced a photography that reduces working people to almost incidental features within these images of their own communities. It was a photography which again seems incapable of engendering the 'mutual recognition' that could be seen in that of Nora Smyth. And, again, an imagery is produced which minimises the significance of working people.

Photos 7-10. South Shields between the Wars. (Photographers unknown).

Photo 7. Moving House.



Photo 8. End of the Shift.



Photo 9. Lockout at a Fish Processing Factory.



Photo 10. South Shields market. Amy Flagg.



Photos 11-13. South Shields. Amy Flag, 1930s.



Photo 14



Photo 15



While Amy Flagg's photography arose from her own curiosity about the town she lived in, others had more professional reasons for visiting the working-class areas of the nation's cities. Across the country photographers were commissioned to capture slum districts that had been scheduled for demolition. Between 1930 and 1938, James Cleet was hired by South Shields Corporation for one month each year to catalogue these areas in the town. John Tagg has written a very Foucauldian account of similar photographs taken in Leeds in the late nineteenth century of a slum clearance programme. He felt that the images of the areas about to be demolished, far from being a marker of social progress, were actually 'no longer a mark of celebration but now a mark of subjection'²⁴⁵. He points to the motivations of those driving the clearance programmes - their fear of contagion, the growth of industrial unrest, the threat to the Liberal grip on local politics posed by new working-class voters supporting Tory candidates, and the emergence of a new breed of medical officers who dreamed of 'a semi-rural arcadia.....regularise, cleansed and supervised'²⁴⁶. And he describes a number of compositional techniques in the photography of slum clearance which ensured that 'alleys are under-exposed, dark and dingy; the spaces foreshortened, compressed and

cramped: the compositions are repetitious, bare and brutal....the locals are posed only for scale or extra detail'²⁴⁷. So that:

The very clutteredness and obscurity of the images argues for another space, a clear space, a space of unobstructed lines of sight, open to vision and supervision. It is a space that will appeal to the police as much as Medical Officers of Health....a desirable space in which people will be changed - changed into disease free, orderly, docile and disciplined subjects.²⁴⁸

Tagg was describing the photography surrounding a nineteenth-century slum clearance programme in Leeds, but a similar photography can be found in the Liverpool City Engineers' images of areas due for demolition in that city during the inter-war period. For example, in Photo 14, taken of Number 3 Court, Clayton Street. The chosen perspective is looking from the claustrophobia of the crumbling yard, towards the light visible beyond the entrance, promising relief from the gloom and tension of the yard. The tension comes from the inclusion of the three figures by the door. Both the rather pathetic desire of the male figure to include his bird in the picture, and the two females, who give every sign of being ground down, bewildered and defeated by a life of poverty, transmit a sense that there is little worth saving here; that this is an outmoded, outdated scene and that it is time for change. The relationship between the photographer and the subjects adds to the tension - there is no intimacy or shared confidence, only a distance and a clear mistrust. These are people having things done to them, and they show little sign of sharing the joy of urban renewal. In many ways Photo 15 of Byram Terrace, taken in 1933, is similar. There is the same 'closed in' feeling, created here by the lines of the balconies leading the eye back and up towards the light, which is blocked off by the houses at the top of the street. There is also the same crumbling brickwork and the same dull light. The working people, their numerous children and their washing give the sense of many crowded into little, and a powerful feeling that more room, more air and more light were urgently needed. While there are plenty of people in the picture these are not individualised personalities, they are included instead for their numbers. And there is the same distance between photographer and subjects; these people nervously cling to the security of walls, doorways, balconies at the edge of the composition. The only exception to this are the most naïve - the very youngest - and even these appear to be hesitant. There is no sense of any familiarity or

shared sense of purpose; these are people about to have something done to them, 'for their own good', by others.²⁴⁹ If the provision of new housing was indeed basically intended to produce an environment which developed disease free, orderly, docile, supervised and disciplined subjects then both of these images would encourage support for this. And, perhaps just as importantly, the organization of space, bodies, faces and gestures would have done absolutely nothing to convince any viewer that these subjects were intelligent individuals, capable of independently improving their own lives; rather that these were the flotsam and jetsam at the bottom of society that needed the intervention of those above them. Tagg is very clear that: 'The documentary practices of the 1930's..... were addressed not only to experts but also to specific sectors of a broader lay audience, in a concerted effort to recruit them to the discourse of paternalistic, state directed reform'²⁵⁰. At one level this may be true. At another, many of these slum clearance photos simply look as though the wolf has just leapt into the pen. If Samuel Coulthurst and Amy Flagg's images revealed middle-class photographers approaching their working-class subjects with caution, then these images show these subjects staring back at the camera with, at least, the same levels of apprehension.

Photo 14. Number 3 Court, Clayton Street, Liverpool. 1930's.



Photo 15. Byram Terrace, Liverpool. Liverpool City Engineers. 1933



James Cleet was employed to do a similar documentation of South Shields, but he developed a remarkable, and revealing, technique for this work.²⁵¹ Between 1930 and 1938 he was commissioned by the Corporation for one month each year to produce a comprehensive record of the poorest parts of South Shields.²⁵² These photographs of the poor, overcrowded, insanitary, crumbling areas of the town are extraordinary. Cleet presents nothing of the imagery of the Liverpool City Engineers or of the perspectives that Tagg identifies, and there is no sense that here are a people requiring the salvation offered by the liberal, paternalistic state. Rather his photos are of houses that look sturdy, tidy, well-kept, respectable and certainly inhabitable. There is absolutely no feeling of chaotic or dangerous overcrowding. Of course the house interiors may look completely different, but it is noticeable that Cleet never ventures inside one of these homes. What is even more remarkable is the human presence - or lack of it. Open doors, bicycles, curtains, ornaments, shop window displays indicate that these are not houses from which the population has already been removed immediately prior to demolition. But the inhabitants of these houses appear to have been cleared out for the photography and Cleet presents eerily deserted

streets, in which their working-class population appears to be invisible (Photos 16-18). A closer look, however, does reveal some human presence: people can be found peering from doorways (Photo 19), lurking in the shadows (Photo 20), behind a twitching curtain (Photo 21). The caution that the subjects of the Liverpool City Engineers' photographs displayed towards their photographers seems here to be rather more extreme in these South Shields subjects, who, when they are not invisible, nervously cling to the shadows at the edges of these images of a ghost town. Here was another traveller through working-class communities, James Cleet, who produced a photography in which the social distance between middle-class 'explorer' and working-class subject was enormous, resulting in a distinctive imagery, devoid of any sense of mutual recognition or complicity, and one in which the significance of working people was severely diminished.

This is a photography that, initially, seems incapable of supporting the Foucauldian perspectives that Tagg identifies, and that seemed to be apparent in the work of the Liverpool City Engineers. In the cases of Coulthard, Cleet and Flagg the nature of the classification processes, the presentation of evidence about the human body that reinforces existing power relations, appears very limited as the viewer is provided only with images of working people at a distance, hiding in the shadows and margins, or even completely absent. This is an almost pre-anthropological documentation: the natives have been sighted, their location is known, but no significant contact has been possible. These journeys among working people could not provide the levels of information required to establish the sorts of careful classification which Foucault would recognize. If the photography of these explorers of working-class communities is indeed generating new knowledge about society, then this knowledge is severely impaired. But the significance of this kind of photography may lay exactly in these failings, which arose from the mutual incomprehension, social awkwardness, embarrassment, even fear, which can be discerned in the spaces between these explorers and their subjects. This prevented contact of any familiarity or intimacy, and it constrained and determined the kinds of photography- the new knowledge - it was possible for them to produce. If the knowledge they returned with from their photographic expeditions was circumscribed, then this reflected and confirmed the enormous gulf between the classes - the limitations of this photography clearly demarcated the limitations

in the relations between the classes. Consequently, a photography developed which could not see working people as individual human beings, reflect any sense of a working-class culture, or demonstrate any understanding of the economic and social forces which impacted on working people at this time. It was not a photography in which working people could see much of their own lives. The significance of the photography of Coulthurst, Cleet and Flagg is in these awkward, and telling, social distances producing an imagery, for a predominantly middle-class audience, in which working people were seen as 'other' and marginalized in the photographic frame - they were there, but only just. As a result the viewer was presented with another mode of representing them which was, at least implicitly, hierarchical in the sense that working people were again relegated in importance to the edges of the images. This social distance produced yet another narrative or form of knowledge, another way of presenting working-class bodies, which reinforced the existing hierarchies and power relations.

Photos 16-21. James Cleet. South Shields, 1930-38.



Photo 17.



Photo 18.



Photo 19.



Photo 20.



Photo 21.



This social gap between middle-class explorer and working-class subject was, at times, explicitly articulated. When Graham Bell completed his painting for the Mass Observation project in Bolton, he returned to London and wrote, in horror about his experiences there: 'Bolton is more undistinguished than words can describe. What with the smell and the thought of possible lodgings and the difficulty of doing any painting and the poverty of the people.... We remained pretty depressed'²⁵³. In 1935 the Left-leaning novelist, Christopher Isherwood, who had a similar background to Bell and similar political concerns, described in a semi-autobiographical passage a visit to a political meeting of working men.

The hall was very full. The audience sat in their soiled everyday clothes...At intervals they applauded, 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. At present I just sat there, a half-hearted renegade from my own class, my feelings muddled by an anarchism talked at Cambridge, by slogans from the confirmation service, by the tunes played by the band when my father's regiment marched to the railway station seventeen years ago.²⁵⁴

Humphrey Spender, who knew Isherwood well, was yet another middle-class explorer of working-class communities. After being sacked from *The Daily Mirror* in 1937 he began to take pictures of social issues for *The Listener*, *The Left Review*, and for Clemence Paine, a probation officer in Stepney who was trying to show that poor living conditions contributed to child crime. Here he developed his own methods for taking photos of working people which he famously utilised in his work for Mass Observation (M-O). M-O saw itself as an anthropological investigation into the working class of England. This investigation was to be an independent, fact finding enquiry that was 'concerned only with ascertaining facts as accurately as possible'.²⁵⁵ Scientific methodology was to be applied to the working class, the facts were to be gathered and then made known in the belief that, once known, change would occur. It was a project that attracted Spender and he brought to it a particular approach.

I was persuaded to work for M-O by one of its founders, Tom Harrisson. He believed, as I did, that press photography was largely falsifying and irrelevant. M-O was committed to study real life and for this purpose the concealed, prying camera was essential. Every aspect of a public which had until then been so wrongly assessed by the press would be truthfully revealed.²⁵⁶

This truth would be an objective truth produced by the 'unexpected photograph when people were taken without their knowing'²⁵⁷. It was not new, the candid camera was a well-established practice in German photo-journalism, and, of course, in this country it had been adopted by other documentary photographers such as Amy Flagg and Samuel Coulthurst. In later life Spender spoke about the difficulties he felt while engaged in his work with a hidden camera.

Away from headquarters I was very much on my own, sometimes frightened, embarrassed, bored and depressed. To the working people of this town my manner of speaking was 'la-de-fuckin-da!' To me their language and accent were foreign...We were called spies, priers, mass eavesdroppers, nosey parkers, peeping toms, lopers, snoopers, envelope steamers, key hole artists, sex maniacs, sissies, society play boys.²⁵⁸

My work for M-O in Bolton had warned me to expect boredom, embarrassment, fear, guilt and occasional hostility when working in the big towns.²⁵⁹

[I was] slightly frightened, I felt very much a foreigner...quite often if I asked for directions it was difficult to understand what people were saying. And the whole landscape, the townscape, was severe and made me apprehensive. There was a particular dark green to the grass from the pollution; and the height of the factory chimneys with smoke billowing from this was alarming and depressing.²⁶⁰

There are a number of reasons for not wanting to take photographs.... More importantly there are other things I am glad to escape, like the familiar feeling of being thought a spy...apart from the hostility - and perhaps, occasionally, physical violence - that you're courting, with all the attendant embarrassments, there's a sense of intruding on people's privacy, and sometimes their suffering - of exploiting them.²⁶¹

Spender's comments are revealing. They articulate that social awkwardness that can be seen in much of the documentary photography of this period and a total bewilderment about how this could be overcome socially, politically and aesthetically. These three photographers, however, did not operate in a cultural vacuum and the issues they faced were characteristic of the wider cultural activities of the period, particularly those that sought to harness these activities to political change. Much more has been written about the literature of this time than about photography, but the analysis of this has a resonance when considering the photography. For example, Samuel Hynes' survey of this literature presents a cultural form that totally failed to make effective responses to the crises of its time; the desire for a social impact was at the centre of its initial ambitions and in this it was utterly thwarted. When he discusses, for instance, the failings of the writers of the M-O he is clear about the reasons for these.

It was to be a movement in which artist and scientist would find common ground and would join in with the masses to create documents which would transform society. But in fact it was from the start a mixture of such contradictory elements as would seem to guarantee its failure. It was at once literary and scientific, political and psychological, Marxist and Freudian, objective and salvationist. In its confusion

of methods and goals it is a complex example of the confusions of young intellectuals of the time.²⁶²

Writing in 1937 Christopher Caldwell, the poet and literary critic, was aware of this confusion and suggested reasons for it:

They have no constructive theory - I mean as artists....They know 'something is to come' after the giant firework display of the Revolution, but they do not feel with the clarity of an artist the specific beauty of this new concrete living, for they are by definition cut off from the organisation [the working class] which is to realise it, and which alone holds in its bosom the nascent outline of the future. They must put 'something' there in the future and they tend to put their own vague aspirations for bourgeois freedom and bourgeois equality²⁶³.

While the Left-wing novelist, Storm Jameson, writing in the same year, echoed these sentiments almost exactly:

In a time of revolutionary change a socialist literature must exist to record and interpret that change, but no such literature did exist in the Thirties in England, because the actual lives of men and women, which should provide the materials of that literature, had not been sufficiently observed.²⁶⁴

Spender himself confirms that a similar failing existed in his own work, in that he also felt he did not have the means or methods to 'sufficiently observe,' or to get close to, his subjects. 'Worst of all, when you're photographing people without them knowing - which is the form of photography that interests me the most - you eliminate all relationships.'²⁶⁵ This poverty of, and confusion about, establishing commonly-held methodologies which could bind artistic efforts into providing effective political support for the working-class also seems to have been characteristic of the visual aesthetics of the Left during this period. In their study of the Artists International Association (A.I.A.) Lynda Morris and Robert Radford found a group of Left-leaning artists who came together in 1933 to mobilize 'the international unity of artists against Imperialist War on the Soviet Union, Fascism and Colonial Oppression.'²⁶⁶ They concluded that 'The A.I.A. was a social rather than a stylistic group of artists which managed to accommodate most of the styles of the period' and that 'We did not find a lost tradition of British Socialist Realism'²⁶⁷. The public exhibitions of the A.I.A. continually

reflected this confused mish-mash: in 1935 a major show was put together, *Artists Against Fascism and War*, which attracted 6000 visitors and which its reviewer thought was 'a show which combined a range of work of great diversity which it is difficult to imagine being brought together in other circumstances.'²⁶⁸ In its 1937 exhibition there was a Surrealist Room, an Abstract Room and a room for everything else. Nan Youngman, one of the founders of the A.I.A., commented on the nature of the membership. 'I suppose the majority of us were intellectual middle-class people really, there were not a great many working class artists. George Downs was, but not in an aggressive way, at least not to me'²⁶⁹. Herbert Read, the prominent contemporary art critic, was rather blunter in his description of the A.I.A. members; he thought they were 'the effete and bastard offspring of the Bloomsbury school of needlework'²⁷⁰. Some observers at the time felt that the nature of the membership - in effect the artistic elite of the Left - had an effect on any social or political impact that their work could make. When Tom Wintringham reviewed a 1934 exhibition he believed that:

These artists have come fairly recently to realise that politics are of dominating importance to them in their work. Fairly recently they have decided to put their abilities at the service of the working class movement. Their work, therefore, naturally shows more real acquaintance, more real feeling for the working class movement than for the working class itself.²⁷¹

While the art critic Anthony Blount thought that their works had 'up until now not gained the approval of the proletariat, which did not produce them and which cannot find in them what it demands - namely the expression of its own aspirations and ideas'²⁷². Blount's description of the distance between artistic intentions and actual results could possibly also apply to a wide range of writers and artists of this period, it certainly is pertinent to much of the photography covered in this chapter. Historians such as Sekula, Rosler and Tagg would argue that this is because they were severely limited by the liberal discourse within which they were located. But the photography of people such as Coulthurst, Flagg, Cleet and Spender suggests that this was also exacerbated by the sheer, everyday, difficulty of bridging the enormous social gap that many photographers experienced when they approached their working-class subjects. And crossing this gap was not helped by the fact that the artistic elite of the Left could not find a commonly-held aesthetic methodology

which may have assisted them. There never seems to have been a genuine unity between the artistic avant-garde and the political vanguard in this country which may have enabled this methodology to emerge. And, in this country, there never seems to have been the resources applied to addressing these issues that were available, for example, in the New Deal in the U.S.A or that some of the continental Social Democratic or Communist parties were able to deploy. Consequently, this failure of the artists of the time, including the photographers discussed here, to bridge the gap to the working class - to establish the kinds of familiarity, complicity or mutual recognition that could be seen in the work of Nora Smyth, for example - and their failure to establish an aesthetic that allowed them to do this, ultimately led to the failure of their art as an engine of social change, or even as a reasonably accurate reflection of working-class lives. It was this that considerably reduced its significance.

Much of the responsibility for this failure seems to lay with the cultural avant-garde of the time. Their attitudes and practices have been documented most clearly in the field of literature. John Carey's book *The Intellectuals and the Masses*²⁷³ details the fear, loathing and repulsion many among the cultural elite felt about the working classes. He argues that the development of 'modernism' was a reaction to the rapid growth of an urban, literate populace, which produced a cultural form that deliberately avoided realism and human interest in favour of modes that were as unintelligible as possible. These were modes that could only be understood by a cultural aristocracy (themselves) who were separate from, and superior to, the masses. Riddled with snobbery, modernists actively detested the symptoms of the modern - commercialism, consumerism, suburbia, popular tourism, newspapers and magazines, advertising, mass literacy - and embraced Neitzschean solutions to social issues. Solutions which were designed to reduce the position of the masses in society - abandoning mass education and democratic institutions, and adopting eugenic measures such as euthanasia, sterilization, mass birth control, and even programmes of extermination. Modernism emerged as a profoundly anti-egalitarian culture which was completely disinterested in, and incapable of, familiarity or mutual recognition with any member of the working-class. If Carey's account of the artistic elite as any validity it was very little wonder that photographers such as Coulthurst, Flagg, Cleet and Spender were

unable to find anything within modernism, the dominant creed of the avant-garde, that could assist them in developing a methodology that would bring them closer to their working-class subjects. A combination of personal and class-based awkwardness, seemingly immutable aesthetic modes and a detached, or even hostile, avant-garde prevented photographers, often despite their best intentions, from developing ways of representing working people which were in anyway significantly different from those seen in Chapter One.

ii. A Victim Photography?

The photography seen so far, in these first three chapters, appears to suggest that whatever the intentions of individual photographers their end products were fundamentally the same. This is a process that seems to confirm the Foucauldian concept that new knowledge, in this case the photography of working people, can only emerge, or be expressed, within paradigms created from the existing matrixes of power. The consequence of this has been a very negative perception among some historians about the ability of photography to act as an agent of social change. And there is much in the historiography that sees these photographers as so tightly confined by these paradigms that the very best they can offer are portraits of 'victims'. Martha Rosler, for example, sees in the development of an aesthetic approach to their work among, especially professional, photographers, the 'gigantic weight of classical beauty which presses on us that in the search for transcendental form the world is merely the stepping off point into aesthetic eternity'²⁷⁴. She sees in the aestheticisation of imagery 'the denial of content, the denial of the existence of the political dimension'.²⁷⁵ Rosler believes the photographic documentation of this time to be a liberal documentary, which can portray poverty and oppression, but in ways in which 'causality is vague, blame is not assigned, and fate cannot be overcome. Liberal documentary blames neither the victims nor their wilful oppressors'²⁷⁶. Alan Sekula shares the belief that documentary photography produced images that lead towards a suspension of real meaning as they serve to encourage 'nostalgia, horror and an overriding sense of the exoticism of the past' within which 'the underlying currents of power are hard to detect' as pictures are 'atomised, isolated from the original context within which they were taken'²⁷⁷. John Roberts is equally scathing about the messages carried by documentary photography. He detects the

English tradition of romanticism and pastoralism in the social photography of this period within which there is 'a sense of moving among the low and fallen'²⁷⁸ and an appeal to the powerful in society to remedy ills that actually serves to consolidate an existing social structure which had generated these ills in the first place.²⁷⁹ In this critique documentary photography, with its depiction of working people as a passive body upon which nasty things have been done and nicer things should be done by others, can never be considered to be politically radical, or capable of encouraging significant change. Indeed, in the implicit hierarchy it contains, could have contributed to consolidating existing power relations.

David Green argues that the results are a form of photography that offers a

cultural phenomena only as characteristics, curiosities or things, never as active or living processes... Ultimately, they cannot, nor do they attempt to deal with the complexities of those cultural processes....they provide no means for envisaging a culture in terms of the values borne by that culture, any more than they can conceive of the possibility of social and political conflict.²⁸⁰

This section continues the survey of those photographers of the period who journeyed among the working class. In particular, it looks at the work of Humphrey Spender, Helen Muspratt and Margaret Monck, and it argues that, while a Foucauldian analysis of their photography provides a powerful insight into their significance, it perhaps does not tell the full story. For example, there was a well-established sea-side tradition of photographing the Scottish migrant women who worked in the fish docks of Scarborough and elsewhere (Photos 22-23). From the mid nineteenth century until the 1950's, when the fish stocks finally collapsed, there was a thriving East Coast herring fishery. At its zenith it produced two and a half million barrels of fish a year, mainly for export to Europe. Herring, being a fatty fish, required speedy preservation, usually in salt, if they are to be sold in distant markets. The job of gutting, cleaning, salting and packing the fish fell to gangs of Scottish women who followed the fishing fleet, as it in turn followed the herring as they migrated up and down the East Coast. Up to three and a half thousand migrant women were involved in the industry each year. This herring boom coincided with the rise of popular holiday making to the coastal towns where the herring were landed, and with the increasing availability of the camera. Inevitably from the late nineteenth century visitors were attracted to the spectacle as the herring were landed and processed. The result was very much a

photography that fits into Green's analysis: these women were seen as curiosities, the images offer absolutely no social or political context beyond sea-side attractions, and there is a very definite sense of hierarchy as the working women are stared at by the onlookers. And yet, clearly staring back from these images are strong, confident workers with little obvious sense of supplication. While this may be a tourist photography, it was not completely a 'victim' photography in the sense that these women do not appear helpless dupes who required the intervention of their 'betters' for any improvement in their position. Indeed, the archival evidence for this sort of 'victim' photography seems to be limited. While there are occasional glimpses in the regional press of a 'documentation of misery' (Photos 24-25) these appear to be very much the exception. And while it is true that there are, in the archives, intermittent depictions of poor housing conditions, there are far more of the new council estates of the period, for example. This may be only a minor point, but it is interesting that in the archives studied, both those with overtly political sympathies for working people - The Communist Party, The Labour Party, *The Daily Herald*, for example - and in the work of professional and amateur photographers, there is relatively little concentration on victims or on the most obvious manifestations of the impact of the economic upheavals of the time on working people. There is never a particularly strong interest in recording the very worst effects of the economic crisis of this period. The sorts of 'victim' photography that attracted the critiques of historians such as Martha Rosler and Allan Sekula never appears to have fully emerged in this country. Rather than a careful documentation of misery, it is the photography of people such as Humphrey Spender, Helen Muspratt and Margaret Monck that seems to be far more characteristic. And it is striking that there was no equivalent in these British archives of the campaigning photography of individuals such as Jacob Riis, Lewis Hines, James Agee or Dorothea Lange, which exposed the excesses of American capitalism. There is much in the work of these three photographers that does support the perspectives of Rosler and Sekula, about how these forms of liberal or 'outsider' documentation of working people served to reinforce power. But the absence here of a coherent tradition of 'victim' photography comparable with that to be found in other countries is interesting. It is possible that, in this country a photography which completely supported power, in the way Foucault envisaged, never fully emerged.

Photos 22-23. The Herring Girls in Scarborough. (Woodend Museum, Scarborough, Box PH5-P1).



Photo 24. Coal Carrier. *Manchester Evening News*. (www.mirrorpix.com).



Photo 25. Young Mother. *Liverpool Echo*. (www.mirrorpix.com)



Humphrey Spender's photography of Bolton, however, which he produced for the Mass-Observation project, perhaps could be placed neatly into a Foucauldian analysis. For example, he adopted the same hidden camera techniques as Samuel Coulthurst and Amy Flagg, and consequently his images lacked any sense of familiarity or complicity with his working-class subjects (Photos 26-27). This was always a photography of strangers or 'others'. His ambitions for his images also fall within that critique of a liberal documentation of working people. It was not a photography to be shared with his subjects, it was not designed to inform them about their lives. These were images for another, middle-class, audience. It was meant to improve their understanding of these alien 'others' and to encourage reform from above. And it was never concerned to explore the nature of power or the causes of poverty. This was not an imagery which sought to undermine the existing structures of power. But it was significantly different from much of the photography considered so far. It did, for instance, bring working people into the centre of the image. And it completely rejected the physical marginalisation and the caricatures of their lives that were so common in contemporary depictions of their lives. Spender made images of real working people, doing real things. These were pictures of intelligent, energetic human beings, engaged in rational activities. Of course, it can be argued that while this may have been different it made no difference, simply because it was never seen outside of a very small audience. A new knowledge may have been produced but, as it was of no use to power, it perished. But the very fact that individuals were attempting to produce this different knowledge suggests that, possibly, power was not as all-embracing, as all-victorious as some historians have suggested. This possibility gathers some strength when other photographers seem to be engaged in similar efforts.

Photos 26-27. Worktown. Humphrey Spender.



The photography of Helen Muspratt seems to contain the same, paradoxical, mixture of an obvious concern about working people alongside forms of content which seem to constrain any significance this photography could have. But, like Spender's work, it also appears to hint that, while power was well entrenched, it was not necessarily completely unassailable. Helen Muspratt was born in 1907 into a family of senior Indian Army and Indian Civil Service people, and she was raised in India and then England in privileged circumstances. Her mother was a strong influence upon her, guiding her towards an independent career and encouraging an interest in Renaissance art. When Muspratt set up her own photographic studio in Swanage in 1928 this influence remained in the way she set up her portraits. Throughout her life she acknowledged the impact that Renaissance painters had on her own photography.

When it came to posing people I used that knowledge of how those painters posed their madonnas and if you look they never painted them full face and they never smile and they usually turn their heads.....away and you get the line of their neck. And I used this very early in my photography without realising where the influence came from.²⁸¹

Her studio flourished and she went on to set up branches in Cambridge and Oxford. There an introduction to the lively Left community in Cambridge, the impact of the Spanish Civil War and her marriage to Jack Dunman, a Communist Party organizer, all served to politicise her to the point where she too joined the Communist Party. But while Jack became a full time activist for the Party, Helen remained running her business and earning the money to support their family. This had an impact on the nature of her work as in general she concentrated on commercial portraiture for obvious reasons, 'as regards Documentary, I never saw how one could make a living from this'²⁸². Although this was not without regrets, 'If I had my time over again I might have chosen to leave the money and do what I really felt drawn to'²⁸³. Nonetheless she did occasionally dabble in non-commercial work and she undertook two formal excursions for the single purpose of documentation; one to the Soviet Union in 1936 and one to the mining areas of South Wales in 1937. Her photographs are therefore potentially very interesting. She was an experienced and capable professional, very clearly brought up within the culture of the ruling elite, but with a strong political

commitment to the working class. One of her first subjects was a Welsh miner (Photo 28):
Photo 28. Busking miner, Helen Muspratt.



She remembered the exact circumstances of this picture:

That was one of the first I took. That was a Welsh miner playing his violin on the jetty [at Swanage] and I asked him into the studio to photograph him. Whether I did it because I thought he might be a bit embarrassed to be photographed out there I don't know.....but the photograph came out rather well, he had a wonderful face, and this violin he played for pennies, and that hit me very much.²⁸⁴

The subject was part of an exodus of Welsh miners who had left their homes and travelled along the south coast looking for work. None of this is represented and the subject is entirely removed from this context. This is compounded by the strong romantic references, and the Renaissance modes of her training, in which the miner is lost in his own personal reverie, separated from the collective of which he was a part. The subject is individualised and isolated and, as a consequence, any social meaning is drained from the image. Muspratt also explained the context in which she took other photographs of miners on a photographic expedition to the South Wales coalfield, organized by the Left Book Club.

We worked mainly around the Pontypridd area. It was just after the Prince of Wales had been to the Pontypridd area and had promised to do something about it and had failed. And I took photographs, I think it was April, there was some snow on the ground, it was very beautiful, I remember thinking how beautiful the Welsh valleys were.²⁸⁵

Photo 29 is one she took there, and again an isolated individual is pictured, mirroring the contemplative romantic image of the busking miner and it is the contemplation, perhaps of the beautiful spring weather, which grabs the viewer rather than any social context.

Muspratt's adoption of Renaissance practices, which favoured a gaze away from the camera, into a contemplative distance, rather than presenting a frontality, made any familiarity or mutual recognition unlikely. When she does engage in a more face-on approach she does so from a considerable distance (Photo 37). This photo appears to be an exercise in contrasting the advertised benefits of consumerism with the lot of the unemployed miners and Muspratt's daughter, Jessica Sutcliffe, recalls her mother remembering a response from the subjects in this picture as this photo was taken - 'we're unemployed loafers was called humorously across the street'²⁸⁶. There is a knowingness in

Photo 29. Welsh miner. Helen Muspratt.



this response about the stereotypes that were being created around working people and one which Muspratt's photo was completely unable to break down. This social distance, and her adoption of long-established, classical modes of representation, tightly constrained the images of working people that she could create. In this context it was very difficult for her to develop the sorts of intimate or complicit imagery – the sort of imagery that Nora Smyth, at the start of this chapter, was able to create - that may have informed her subjects about their lives and the issues they faced.

Photo 30. Unemployed miners, Helen Muspratt.



Another photographer, with a similar interest in photographing working people was Margaret Monck. If anything, she was from an even more privileged background. She was born in 1911 and her father was governor of New South Wales before becoming the Viceroy of India. She moved in high society and in her youth she was a bit of a socialite, but 'when I thought I had enough of dancing and parties I decided to join a picture gallery called Lefevre St. James which showed Picassos, where I took in more than I realised'²⁸⁷ Her subsequent discovery of photography was transformational for her on a personal level.

One spent an awful lot of time wondering what to do next because one hadn't got a centre to one's life, that's why when I came to photography I was so enormously thrilledThe pleasure of finding something which I could do and I liked doing was the most tremendous liberation. It's the only time in my life when I have tried to settle down and do something.²⁸⁸

Despite this rather dilettante entry into photography Monck was of the Left, even if she was somewhat vaguer than Muspratt. Speaking about herself and her husband's political views she thought 'we thought Left but.....neither of us took actual part in political life but a great many of our friends were in the Party'²⁸⁹. And 'We had no particular settled convictions except that the world had to change'²⁹⁰. This was combined with reservations about many of the cultural elite she rubbed shoulders with, 'I was very anti-intellectual you know'.²⁹¹ Monck describes her method of photography in the same almost dismissive way:

Well you see I wanted to get out of Belgravia.....I was just exploring London and when you explore you see something quite different from what you had seen before.....I just went. I might go to the East India dock, I might go to Limehouse you know.....I generally walked.....and then you would see something down an alley and you would go and look. I'm afraid I'm totally unpremeditated.....on the whole it was a spontaneous voyage of discovery.²⁹²

The photographs she took on these voyages were often of working people which may almost be a form of 'poverty tourism', but, given her own background and her political sympathies they are of interest. Photo 31 is of an East End woman who had stopped her to ask about her photography. The look of bemusement on the woman's face carries the familiar traces of hierarchical, rather patronising modes of representation in which it is the human comedy, the curiosity of the moment, which is central to the image and which underlines a distance between camera and subject. This was a distance which Monck herself was aware of, 'I think really what I felt about the people of the East End was that they had their own lives, and that was their own business.....I felt that their life was more real than anything I'd met'.²⁹³ And she was careful not to intrude too much, never going into people's houses for example, 'I never wanted to, I felt that it was their business not mine.....I mean

Photo 31. Woman with camera, East End of London. Margaret Monck.



people were so friendly, but I did not want to intrude on their privacy'.²⁹⁴ Despite this, Monck had an interesting method of juxtaposing differing classes of people in her photographs (Photos 32-33) which give them, at least, the potential to make powerful political points. Val Williams, her biographer, believes that she was very much motivated 'by her political sympathies and her wish to examine pictorially the vagaries of class and economics in Thirties Britain'.²⁹⁵ But this examination was 'not so much an agent of change as a journey into political and social awareness and self-discovery'²⁹⁶, an odyssey which led her away from the social and political world of her own background. Williams believes this had a significant impact on her work: 'Although her political concerns are reflected in her choice of subject matter, her romantic imagination transcends pure documentary to concentrate on symbolic and emotive imagery'²⁹⁷. And: 'Margaret Monck saw photography as an identifier of social contrasts.....her documentary photography is essentially a manifestation of the romantic English imagination'²⁹⁸. Thus her journeys into the mysterious world of East London are part of 'a mystical and romantic concept of photojournalism.....Its power depended on the ability of the photograph to make an emotive point, directly and

quickly, without relying on the political or intellectual views of its audience'²⁹⁹. According to Williams, in her search for personal development Margaret Monck was attracted to the 'emotive point' and this led her away from engaging with the cultural and political perspectives of her viewers. Instead they refer back to romantic images that separate their subject from their social context, are vague about causality, invite facile generalisations about the human condition and favour appearance over interpretation. As the viewer looks at one woman smiling at the camera while paying her rent or another cheerfully selling her cauliflowers, it is possible that they also see any potential social meaning draining from the picture as the focus becomes the 'human comedy'. And possibly, as with Helen Muspratt, here is a photographer producing ostensibly interesting and attractive images of working people, but because of Margaret Monck's social background, her journey from the perceived sterility of that background, her search for a personal fulfilment through her photography, particularly through capturing the emotional impact of social contrasts, this photography loses any of its intended political and social meaning. As with so much of the photography in this chapter, despite the best of intentions, Monck seems to have produced an imagery that did absolutely nothing to disturb the dominant ideology and may have actually reinforced it. And it is possible that photographers such as Monck, Muspratt and Spender can be interpreted in a very Foucauldian manner – they produced a knowledge of working people that ultimately served power, or, at the very least, did nothing to undermine it. But there appear to be limits to this sort of analysis. These photographers did not create any of the obvious forms of 'victim' photography which have been identified elsewhere. It is also interesting to see that, from the heart of those classes who benefitted most from the existing power structures, there emerged numbers of individuals who were concerned about those others who did not benefit quite as much from those structures. And maybe this suggests there were fault-lines in the apparently seamless production of knowledge that served power.

Photo 32. The rent collection. Margaret Monck.



Photo 33. Stall holder at Brixton market. Margaret Monck.



Photo 34. Coal Picking, South Wales. Helen Muspratt.



Photo 35. Children at Shadwell, East London. Margaret Monck.



Conclusions.

Rather than a comprehensive review, this chapter has presented a variety of photographic expeditions among the working class that were driven by a range of purposes and approaches. A developing middle-class consciousness of working people is reflected in these attempts to document their lives. As such it was a documentation for them which, perhaps inevitably, which was conducted almost entirely within a framework made from their own social, cultural and political preoccupations. It is these preoccupations that produce the commonalities that can be seen throughout this sample. In particular, ways of representing working people repeatedly appear in which they are frequently marginalized, and, almost invariably, placed within implicit hierarchical frameworks. The end product was often a contorted, at times painful, imagery in which they were to be seen at a distance, or from the rear, or, most remarkably in the case of James Cleet, almost not at all. Consequently, it was a photography that could never effectively capture the nature or values of the people pictured. It could only envisage working people as passive objects upon which external forces operated. It could never define their separate interests, it could never conceive of political or social conflict. These photographers found themselves locked into this perspective because of the enormous social distance between the classes that can be seen in much of their work. There was an awkward, stifling, almost fearful gaze, from both sides, across this divide which severely constrained the aesthetic methodologies they could employ. In these circumstances a different, more intimate photography, perhaps involving forms of mutual recognition, was very difficult. They were not alone in struggling with these issues: there seems to have been a widespread and catastrophic, in terms of their political ambitions, failure among the artists of the Left to develop techniques to cross this social distance. Part of the reason for this was the cultural context in which they worked. The artistic avant-garde at this time, the modernists, were profoundly elitist and fundamentally disinterested in developing those methodologies of intimacy, recognition and familiarity which may have enabled these photographers to find common ground with their working class subjects. Historians such as Rosler, Sekula and Tagg have argued that this perspective also had political origins arising from the liberal, paternalist and reformist framework within which many of these middle-class photographers operated. While it is striking that there does not seem to have been the same well-developed 'victim' photography that can be seen

in the U.S.A., for example, there remains a strong sense that, in this country, these subjects were 'other', remote and different from their photographers. And the resulting imagery was not that of a capable and vigorous people, rather of a distant, strange and passive working-class requiring the assistance of others for their amelioration. As such it was not an empowering photography in which working people could recognise either themselves or anything of their lives. Indeed it was the opposite of this.

It may be facile, however, to completely dismiss the work of photographers such as Coulthurst, Spender, Muspratt and Monck. While the ever-present semiotics of power can be detected in their work, it is possible that other elements were present, struggling for meaning, maybe even contradicting them. In the 1930's Walker Evans took his famous pictures of sharecroppers in the southern U.S.A.; less well known is the blistering commentary written by James Agee. Looking at Evans' photographs of one of the sharecropping families Agee saw in their faces 'the eyes of a furious angel nailed to the ground by his wings'³⁰⁰. It may be possible to see just this in the eyes of the miners, pictured by Helen Muspratt, as they picked coal on a bitter April day (Photo 34), or in the eyes of the children staring from the basement in Margaret Monck's photograph (Photo 35). And these are images produced by people, like Spender and Coulthurst, who came from the very heart of middle-class England. If the sentiment of these photos is one of pity, an appeal to others for help on behalf of the helpless, then this fits neatly into the prevailing hierarchical modes. If the sentiment is empathy, then it has a different significance. An absence of empathy can be the start of brutality. The presence of empathy may well be the start of the opposite, a recognition that the current situation is unjust and needs to change. This photography could well suggest that the continuous, all-embracing reproduction of knowledge, which confirms and reinforces existing power structures, may not at all times and in all circumstances work seamlessly.

Interesting as this may be, it is not quite the 'roar of battle', signalling a resistance to power, that Foucault encouraged historians to search for.³⁰¹ If the question of audience is considered, the potential impact of this photography was considerably diminished as it was

the product of a very limited number of middle-class photographers, in conversation with a limited number of middle-class viewers, about issues of concern to this middle-class audience. Indeed, the first three chapters of this study have been looking at how 'others' perceived working people and this has created a very 'top-down' perspective of the significance of the social documentation of the period. The huge gap in this chapter, in the previous chapters, and in the historiography in general, is to what uses, and with what significance, did working people themselves put the opportunities created by the development of cheaper and more accessible photographic technology.

Chapter Four. Exaltations. A Counter Narrative.

Photo 1. Weaving women with shuttles, Dewsbury. Fred Hartley. c.1910.



When Fred Hartley was commissioned to take his photograph of the weavers in a Dewsbury mill he produced an image which appears to be securely framed within the conventions of the time (Photo 1). They were presented as being ready for work, sat amidst their looms, sleeves rolled up, shuttles on their knees, neat and tidy, sober and orderly, uniform in body gesture and appearance. There is little sign of animation, or of a shared spirit, and it seems to firmly support Foucauldian interpretations of the documentary photography of the period. Here was a mode of representation in which the subjects could only recognize themselves as compliant and efficient units of production. But this reading is not entirely stable: above the shoulder of the girl on the right of the top row another face intrudes, cheekily peering through the loom for unofficial inclusion in the picture. Perhaps the

discipline evident in this image was not, in fact, all-embracing. The documentation of Broadfield Mills in Huddersfield has already been discussed in Chapter One and seems to contain a similar carefully disciplined ordering of machines, spaces and bodies. Again the hierarchical classifications and vertical divisions appear to present working people as well embedded in the production processes and, primarily, as integral elements of these processes. But if the same images are subject to a 'zooming in' process there is the same instability in the initial impression. Something else appears (Photos 2-4). Staring back at the viewer are these units of production, apparently confidently smiling, comfortable in each other's company, gathered in small groups that seem to have fairly obvious horizontal connexions. They appear to be far from the cowed, docile and disciplined victims of oppression. Even here, among the strong semiotics of industrial discipline, something else is at play. Mingled into these carefully ordered presentations of working people are glimpses of something other than dull obedience. In the context of this factory photography, these may be faint and uncertain glimmers, but this chapter argues that there was another photography, produced by working people themselves, in which this was commonplace and constituted a distinct, recognizable and significant entity. While Chapter One examined a photography that placed working people in marginal and hierarchical contexts, and Chapters Two and Three looked at photographs which attempted, but failed, to create a more sympathetic imagery, this chapter surveys an altogether different way of representing working people – one produced by themselves. It does not offer a new reading of this photography, rather it uses a rather standard approach and applies this to a largely neglected content to arrive at new conclusions. Once again the methodology used here is to sample across a range of archives, searching for commonalities and significance in the presentation of working people, attempting to understand how these could constitute a different set of attitudes and values, and from this extrapolating its significance. In the case of working-class photography this approach is essential as preservation has been haphazard and this often obscures its real nature. But this sampling across the archives uncovers a familial photography, and only when this is recognised is it possible to understand its significance. Once this photography is reconstituted around its original forms, audiences, circulations and purposes it immediately becomes clear that entirely different modes of representing working people existed to those seen in earlier chapters. These differences are, in themselves, important, partly in the sense that they diverge so much from what has

been seen in earlier chapters. But also because their values and perspectives seem to so closely resemble those identified by historians who have described other vigorous, flourishing and independent manifestations of working-class culture at this time. Similarly, historians of the anthropological photography of the British Empire have identified forms and content, signifying the resistance of colonial peoples, which have a strong resemblance to those found in the images produced by working people in this country.

By contrasting this photography with that seen in earlier chapters, and by comparing it to similar cultural developments, for example in the cinema-going or reading habits of working people, they can be seen to have produced a photography in which they celebrate and honour each other. This is of central importance. Foucault believed that social formations arose primarily from the self-formation of the individuals who made up a society. This was a self-formation based around the way individuals utilized accepted norms of behaviour to establish and continually reaffirm their sense of self. He argued that these norms, this knowledge of correct social behaviours, are produced in response to power, because they are useful and acceptable to power. This resulted in a self-formation which inevitably conformed to the requirements of power and so supported existing power structures. If, however, alternative norms were, or alternative knowledge was, produced this can open up the possibility that self- and social formations developed that were not so well aligned to the interests of power. This chapter argues that this is exactly what can be seen in the photography produced by working people at this time. Modes of representing working people can be seen to be developed, selected and shared across a wide range of locations and industries. They were starkly different from those being created elsewhere in society. And it is this difference that represents a cultural resistance to power. The significance of this resistance was considerably enhanced when these modes of representing working people were further taken up by elements of the press, by the Labour Party and elements of the Communist Party, and, eventually, by the wartime government. Each of these recognized their efficacy in attracting and developing popular support. As this process unfolds a neo-Gramscian model of change may be discerned wherein a combination of working-class intellectuals and middle-class dissidents, or photographers, combined to challenge those modes of representation seen in earlier chapters and to publicly offer

alternatives. These are alternatives which, in their challenge to pre-existing modes, have a real political significance. Of course, photography was just one element of the cultural life of the working-class and it would be foolish to overstate the importance of these developments. But when it is placed alongside factors, such as the economic upheavals of the period, the impact of war, and of similar cultural changes, it becomes clear that the photography of working people both reflected and contributed to their growing confidence about their place, as both individuals and as a class, in the national discourse and in society. This was a confidence that contributed greatly to the extraordinary political settlement of 1945. It is true that this is a narrative that rejects the somewhat negative conclusions of previous chapters, which described a photography infused with the ideology of power. But this is not to argue that they were mistaken, rather to suggest that any cultural field is not so much an arena in which the dominant class parade their power unopposed, but it is more of a site of struggle and conflict. In these sites competing kinds of representation are visible, presenting differing views of the value and worth of working people, existing alongside each other, inter-mingling and inter-penetrating, fighting for dominance. The study of working-class photography may have been neglected in the historiography, but it is nevertheless important because it provides a position from which Foucault's 'roar of battle' can be heard.

Photos 2-4. Broadfield Mills, Huddersfield. Photographer unknown. c.1914.





i.A Family Photography.

This section begins by examining the nature of inter-war working-class photography. It then seeks to use some of Michel Foucault's ideas to explore how this photography may have developed and to suggest that it represented a cultural resistance to power. Finally, it argues that this interpretation is enhanced if this photography is placed into the wider context of other cultural activities developed by working people.

It is not surprising that this photography has been a cultural form which has been overlooked as it is hard to find. The demands on space in working-class houses, the upheavals in employment patterns during this period which often enforced movement in search of work, the pressures on family stability, the scarcity of resources to take, have taken and preserve large numbers of photographs all conspired to make their survival perilous. Yet they did survive, if in forms that obscure their origins. For example, the Yorkshire Museum of Farming has a collection of photographs stored, uncatalogued, in several filing cabinets. These have been donated entirely at random, from the unsaleable remnants at the end of farm auctions. Alf Tulip's and Jack Hulme's photography of mining communities are presented biographically, as the work of remarkable individuals. Photos of the East Coast fishing industries have been collected by individual enthusiasts with a general interest in the industry (Hull) or by the local library in an appeal for community contributions to a general display on the town's past (Grimsby). In Scarborough the photographic archive has been carefully organized into topics such as 'Harbour and Boats' or 'Tunny Collection'. The consequences of this displacement and haphazard preservation are that the original purposes of this photography have been lost. This is an archival process that has been critiqued by, for example, Allan Sekula, who felt that once photographs entered an archive they became atomised or isolated from their original context, meaning is lost and 'the underlying currents of power are hard to detect' ³⁰². There exists, however, a key to recover these purposes in the archives of the Manchester Central Library, where an extensive collection of, mostly intact, twentieth century working-class family albums has survived. And within which modes of representation can be identified which match those that can be found across many other archives. It is this discovery of commonalities that

facilitates the reconstitution of a scattered and fragmented, battered and sometimes almost unrecognisable, family photography, taken by, or for, working-class families for themselves, and to preserve family identities and memories.

The mere discovery of a working-class family photography is in itself insufficient to prove that any form of cultural resistance existed. Indeed there is a historical discourse that suggests precisely the opposite and urges caution about the significance of family photography regardless of its class origins. Val Williams, for example, believes that it can be a grossly distorting form of representation because of

the selection processes which snapshot photographers consistently employ of recording good moments and rejecting the bad ones in order to reconstruct their histories in terms of domestic contentment and family achievement.³⁰³

This distortion, the celebration of the family and the domestic at the expense of everything else, is felt to be of concern as family photography becomes an integral 'part of the lifestyle based on house, garden and car which models the aspirations of the suburban nations of the West'³⁰⁴. The new industries surrounding photography actively encouraged this development and Don Slater felt

From the very start Kodak advertising and publicity stressed particular subjects and, above all, holidays and the young family and especially children. What holds these subjects together is the theme of domestic leisure; the modern family at play....Idealisations of these new familial situations - both holidays and children - were and still are the stock in trade of photographic advertising and publicity, and must be recognised as celebrations of a consuming family rather than a family as such - or to put it another way, of the family in its specialness, its extraordinary moments rather than its ordinariness.³⁰⁵

Slater believed that family photography encouraged the evolution of domesticity into a key site for the rise of a consumerism that was based on the family unit. And this photography became focussed on particular subjects that were central to the marketing of this consumerism, to the exclusion of other human activity so that

The domestic camera was from the start blind to the everyday....not mum in the kitchen, but the family at its special Christmas meal or birthday parties; not Dad going to work (let alone at work) but Dad with his new car or being silly on a picnic.³⁰⁶

While Patricia Holland felt that

Family moments.... are only part of lives made up of school, work, interests, political action, and institutional obligations. Those other networks are not made visible in the conventional family album. The worlds of production, politics, economic activity and the institutional settings of modern life - school, hospital, baby clinic- are only tangentially present.³⁰⁷

These twin forces- of celebrating the marketable and ignoring the rest - can reveal, not the separate, distinct, voice of working people, but the imposition of 'codes of gender, class power - codes of normality'³⁰⁸. And when working people visit a studio to have their picture taken 'the very poses of working-class people are borrowed from their social superiors'³⁰⁹. Far from working people developing an independent voice through their own family photography, they appear to be simply adopting the voice of others. Together these historians present a profoundly Foucauldian discourse about family photography, in which a society, experiencing the shift towards a more consumer-based economy, saw the development of individuals into consumer units through the careful selection and promotion of images of the family. Here, in the form of photography closest to the lives and hearts of working people, appear to be Foucauldian forces working, as ever, to ensure their compliance and complicity in their own oppression.

It is, however, difficult to square this interpretation with the evidence of the photography itself, which appears to present a completely different perspective. In 1975 a remarkable group of historians from Manchester Polytechnic set up the Archive Retrieval Project which aimed to seek out and preserve evidence of working-class life in Manchester, particularly in those areas of the city that had been earmarked for clearance, areas such as Ordsall, Miles Platting, Trafford Park and Eccles. They had a straightforward methodology of knocking on doors and asking for any old records that the inhabitants of these areas might be willing to

share. In response they received rent books, insurance books, wireless licences, school reports, wage slips, National Insurance contribution cards, dance tickets, memorial cards, and sports programmes - all the paper that a working-class family could accumulate. Above all they received photographs. These were copied and the owners interviewed about them; these interviews were catalogued, some on tape, all in written form. (See Appendix 1)

Together, the photographs, tapes and notes were gathered into the Manchester Studies Photographic Archive which is now kept in the Central Library in Manchester.³¹⁰ It is an enormous collection of 3178 separate donations, each containing between one and eighty photographs. Many of these are from the inter-war period, but often contain pictures from earlier periods, of elderly relatives in their youth or of Great War soldiers for example, and dating can be vague - Mrs Davies' list of her donations are a typical mixture of precision, approximation and ignorance. (See Appendix 2). And, of course there is a strong element of chance in what has survived and what has perished. Nonetheless it is an archive of relevance to the Foucauldian discourse outlined earlier. In truth the size of this archive warrants a separate study but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt a comprehensive analysis. Rather, a small sample of six family donations from this period has been taken, which consists of one hundred and sixty-seven photographs and their accompanying notes. Given the size of the sample any conclusions can only be suggestive. But these suggestions are interesting: 64 per cent of the photographs are of family members; 28 per cent are of friends; while 8 per cent include the donor themselves, where individuals have been identified. Of these 30 per cent are of children - often alongside adults. Where the context has been given 40 per cent of the images are of leisure activities (holidays, carnivals, picnics, pubs, sports teams, amateur theatricals and Whit Monday walks), 24 per cent are taken in the workplace and 14 per cent are school photos. Initially, these figures may seem to support the idea that the main focus is indeed the family, and the family at play, with an emphasis on the 'good moments'. But if the images are carefully scrutinized, there is 'mum in the kitchen' (Photo 5) and there is even 'mum at work' (Photo 6); there is certainly 'dad at work' (Photos 7 and 8) and the processes of production are strongly represented. The young are not substantially represented and if the formal school photos were absent they would be very much under-represented. Also there are not the displays of materialism that might be anticipated from an emerging consumerist culture. The poses adopted are not particularly a blind imitation of their social superiors - there is

only one studio photo in this sample - and the pictures of children taken by the itinerant street photographers are a long way from the rather stiff and formal studio portraits of middle-class children, possessing a distinct energy of their own (Photo 9). Throughout there are strong horizontal conjunctions in both the photos and the accompanying notes (Photos 10 & 11). Indeed, while the content of the empirical evidence offered here may not be conclusive, it hardly supports a classical Foucauldian interpretation of family photography in this period.

This is equally true of the purposes of this photography. Mrs Taylor, one of the donors to the Manchester Archive, explained why she had contributed her photos:

I wanted to show I could survive. Those pictures are proof that I did it. I don't want them to fall into the hands of strangers, people who'd just think it was a pile of rubbish and throw it out with the rest of my bits and pieces. My life is in that box.³¹¹

Her photos defined Mrs Taylor's life and if personal photographs can provide this definition of 'who I am' then the photographs in the Manchester Archive provide a definition that is far wider than a mere reflection of consumerism. Bessie Goodwin, for example, lived in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester, and made a living between the Wars from working in the local mill and taking in boarders. She donated thirty-three photographs to the Manchester Archive: of these twenty-one are of her family and eight of friends. Of her family, seven are of May, her sister, who met a 'Miss Vincent' who helped her to train as a nurse at Leicester Royal Infirmary, and from there May moved around sending photos of herself from Abergele, Loch Lomond (where she was nursing Lady Londonderry's nanny) and from 'somewhere abroad'. There is a photo of Milly, another sister who had also left the locality to work at 'Gaddum, the J.P.'s private house'. And another of her uncle who worked as a gamekeeper in Derbyshire. Her husband's uncle was also absent, killed in the Great War, and he too has a photo in the collection. There is a photo of her husband, at work at 'Ardwick Heath Goods Station in the 1930's where he was the first articulated lorry driver'. Bessie had just one photo of herself, alongside May her sister, and one photo of her mother, her father, and her son. There are two of Big Charlie, the son of Lily Goodwin, her sister in law, 'Bessie looked after him from the age of two. Taken in 1921'. While her friends from

the mill, specifically from 'No.2 doubling room' - Annie O'Hare, Katie and Lizzie Mooney, Anne Moreson and Emily O'Neill - who all lodged nearby are represented by a photograph each. Mrs Hughes, a neighbour, has a photo; she died young, leaving three children to be brought up by Bessie's mother.³¹² Together these photographs do not really seem to represent 'the theme of domestic leisure, the modern family at play'. Rather, they appear to be the skeletal remains of a working-class life: a life dislocated by early deaths and the search for employment and advancement, but also a life concerned to celebrate family success and to preserve those human bonds, those horizontal conjunctions, which made survival possible. These images do not represent a focus on young children, on consumerism, materialism or leisure. And they do not focus on the good moments alone, if anything the viewer perceives echoes of the stresses placed on working-class lives. They are a deeply serious, adult reflection of what Bessie thought were the important elements of her life, a life that was profoundly different from that of other classes in contemporary society and one that was a long way from enjoying the fruits of a modern consumerist society. It may well be possible to read into this photography the birth of a modern, domestic consumerism, and this sort of imagery may have been relatively easy to co-opt into this development. But it is at least of equal importance to see these collections as assertions of value and worth, in often difficult circumstances, by working people.

Photo 5. Mrs Whitham in her kitchen, Stretford, Manchester 1937



Photo 6. Works outing from Dagnalls, Manchester, 1924.



Photo 7. Joseph Kelly, decorator, 1936



Photo 8. William Blackburn (centre) at Walkers Tannery, Bolton, 1930s



Photo 9. Group of children taken by a street photographer, Bolton, 1930s



Photo 10. Group of friends, Bolton 1930s



Photo 11. Blackpool studio photograph, 1930s



The Manchester Studies archive may show working people who were ignoring the vertical or hierarchical frameworks seen in previous chapters. Instead, they repeatedly selected, and therefore indicated the significance of, their family, friends and workmates. They were using photography to establish and reinforce a sense of self, based around strong horizontal connexions at work, within their communities and at home. However, this alone does not establish the existence of some kind of counter-culture or resistance to power. But when other archives of working-class photography are located they are found to contain very similar characteristics. Only a sample of these is presented here, and they are restricted geographically in that they are largely, but not exclusively, from Yorkshire. Yet, they do extend beyond the urban and industrial environment of Manchester to cover a range of industries across the north of England - coal mining, farming and fishing - and, together, they represent something of a cross-section of working-class experience at this time.

For example, two photographers of coal-mining communities adopt a very similar methodology to the Manchester photographs, and contain very similar values. The first of

these was Jack Hulme, a working-class photographer. As a consequence of a playground accident which left him slightly crippled for the rest of his life, he was only fit for surface work at Fryston Colliery, near Castleford in Yorkshire. During his working life he felt the need to supplement his income with various part-time jobs - cutting hair, mending boots, playing in local musical groups and photography. He bought his first camera from the second-hand market in Castleford in 1920, at the age of fourteen, and spent the next sixty years photographing his village and its people. Fryston had 'a curiously enclosed geography' of just twelve brick terraces clustered around a pit:

Built specifically to house the Victorian pits' miners, it was sandwiched between the River Aire and the colliery railway line with only one approach over a narrow railway bridge. Self-contained and largely self-sufficient, it was likened to one big interdependent family with a sometimes claustrophobic feeling of physical and social isolation.³¹³

Jack Hulme said of his pictures:

I took photographs for pleasure. I got nothing for it, I've given thousands away.....Photography is an expensive hobby, I'm not saying I could afford it, but I didn't smoke, drink or gamble. I was a saver not a boozier.³¹⁴

And:

I took a lot of pictures others wouldn't bother with because they wouldn't think the subjects were important enough. There's not many pictures about of women using a dolly tub, hanging out washing, blacking grates, cleaning windows, pea pulling or scrubbing a pavement.³¹⁵

Here is a working-class photographer, interested in working-class subjects, producing pictures for his own and his community's interest and pleasure. His photos show the people of Fryston as an energetic and enterprising people (Photo 12), who supplemented their income from the pit with work on the allotments and from seasonal work. And as a warm and humorous people (Photos 12, 13, 16), who were also concerned about events such as evictions (Photo 14). These are photos of an independent, capable, self-sustaining people for whom work and play were equally important. They do not look to the camera for any

external validation, but with a real sense of self-worth (Photo 15). Indeed, there is a sense of an equality of worth because of Hulme's gaze down his lens, which is affectionate and respectful, celebratory and joyous about his subjects. His practice was to keep the negatives and give the photos back to his subjects. In exactly the way that Bessie Goodwin did, these images circulated within families and across the community, flagging-up and celebrating their connexions, their lives and their identity. Hulme's respectful appreciation of his peers reminded all of his customers of those values of independence and energy, warmth and humour which underpinned their sense of self-worth. It is true that this is not a photography which was concerned to explore the nature and causes of class conflict, and could not be described as a 'political' photography in a direct or formal sense. But, equally, it is one in which any sign of vertical divisions or hierarchical arrangements is completely absent. It contains very little sign of the commodification of domestic life or leisure time that marked the rise of consumerism. There is absolutely no sense that the people of Fryston were in any sense victims, that Hulme was a tourist in the village or that this was in any way an anthropological information gathering exercise. Even his pictures of evictions (Photo 14) contain absolutely no sense that these people were either the hapless architects of their own downfall, or the helpless casualties of powerful forces beyond their control and understanding. Instead, the evictees are pictured in exactly the same way as everyone else in the village, dressed in a sense of their respectability and worth. Above all it is a photography that stands at the polar opposite to those increasingly popular voices, in the 1930's, that expressed biological critiques of working people. There were voices such as the eugenics movement in this country which felt that they could describe the working classes as the 'standing army of biological misfits'³¹⁶, or that they were composed 'very largely of hereditarily defective individuals, social inefficients'³¹⁷, or 'what American authors call 'morons'³¹⁸. Anyone who looked through Jack Hulme's lens, particularly those in Fryston at the time who received and kept his photos, would see only a deeply human, even noble, people.

Photo 12. Pea Picking. Jack Hulme.



Photo 13. Gossip. Jack Hulme.



Photo 14. Eviction. Jack Hulme.



Photo 15. Saturday Morning. Jack Hulme.



Photo 16. Ring-a-roses. Jack Hulme.



Another photographer of a coal-mining community, with a similar methodology and similar values, was Alf Tulip. Sometime prior to the nationalisation of the coal industry, towards the end of the inter-war period he acquired a camera in order to make a little extra money by taking pictures of his fellow miners at Roddymoor Colliery in County Durham. What made his images distinct from Jack Hulme at Fryston was the fact that he took them down in the pit. Not only was this illegal, it was also quite dangerous in that the lighting was provided by setting ablaze strips of magnesium. Alf Tulip's archivist considered the Roddymoor pit to be different from others:

Roddymoor was a family pit, even a happy pit, this is the impression gathered from all that I have talked to. This in spite of the day to day dangers, the many accidents, some of them fatal, the feeling of cheerful comradeship came strongly through.³¹⁹

And he quotes Jack Simpson, surveyor at the pit:

Over my surveying career I've as many as fifteen different jobs. But the happiest I ever had was at Roddymoor. Everybody knew everybody else and most had a kind or cheery word.³²⁰

This may well be reflected in Tulip's photos and they may not be entirely representative of miners' experiences across the country. Nonetheless, he has left a wonderful series of images of working people in their place of work. His pictures were taken at the beginning and end of shifts - the coal dust during working time would have made it impossible to photograph - and so they are all carefully posed to meet the requirements of his customers. Tulip was not attempting a documentation, he was taking photos for money, so the poses the miners adopted reflected how they wished to be seen. Fifty of these have been published: of these 44 per cent are taken in some kind of working position, while 60 per cent are posed with friends (32 per cent are posed alone, while 8 per cent asked to be pictured with their pit pony). Among the adopted poses are men sawing and placing pit props, men hacking or drilling seams of coal, filling in reports, telephoning the surface and sat with their ponies. Photo 17 is not untypical, it shows two men with their tools in a small, ill-lit coal face, on top of a pile of coal that they have loosened and are about to send to the surface. They are animated, displaying a pride, almost an enjoyment, in their work; not only are they efficient 'cogs in the machine' but they are happy about this, and it is interesting that these miners wanted to see themselves, and wanted others to see them, like this. Their work was largely hidden from the world and there is in these photographs a narrative about their work, its value and importance. A photograph gave them concrete proof of this to share with others, to take home and preserve, and to establish and reinforce identity. Photos 17-19 are also very typical of Tulip's work, both showing small groups of miners who were not just working colleagues but appear to be very close. Here the horizontal bonds are very obvious and nowhere in his photography is there any sign of any hierarchical arrangements. They stare out of these images with a strength, confidence, energy and pride, and in their bodies and gestures they appear far from passive, docile producers of profits for others. Repeatedly they select to pose with, and therefore give significance to, their shovels, drills, saws, pit props, ponies and indeed with the coal itself. Indeed, in the very act of choosing to be pictured in the workplace itself, there appears to have a genuine pride in their economic function and value. These qualities may have arisen, partly at least, from the relationship between photographer and subject. There seems to be little obvious sign of the distance or social awkwardness between the two seen in the previous chapter. Tulip and his subjects were all miners from the same pit and may well have been more relaxed, more 'themselves', but the end product is a photography conducted among equals.

Possibly the nature of the industry - away from the direct gaze of the managers, not as directly related to the dictates of a machine, forced into close co-operation by the imperatives of danger - made it much more difficult for hierarchical structures to emerge in this imagery. But, just as in Jack Hulme's work, what can be seen in Tulip's photos, is a self-confidence and energy and independence among working people. Here there is also an assertion of the economic worth of their work, of their place in society and of the strong horizontal connexions between them. When Foucault argues that the organisation of bodies, gestures, expressions and conduct reveal an exercise of power through a range of techniques that impact on the self-formation of everyone, it may equally be said that, at least some of, the photography of this period shows bodies and gestures that are not locked into vertical arrangements, hierarchies or even displays of material well-being. These are images which do not completely match the totality of discipline and control that he describes. If his 'anatomo-politics' were the battleground on which capitalist societies organised populations for the insertion of bodies into the machinery of production, then there may be an inter-war photography, in the coalfields at least, that seems to say that some of the population did so on their own terms, retaining other alternative values and concerns.

Photos 17-19. Roddymoor Colliery. Alf Tulip.





Far removed from these coal-mining communities was the world of farming in Yorkshire. The nature of the archive at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming has already been described. It contains an eclectic mix of buildings both new and very old, new machinery and prize animals. When the photos are of people they are often presented within the pastoral myth. But this is not always the case and scattered through the archive there is, now completely detached from its origins, a family photography (Photos 20-23). The ribs of the horses in Photo 20 indicate that these are not the wealthiest of families, rather this is a photography of people who actually worked the land. And these are photographs that ooze affection for their subjects, choosing to place them at the centre of the image. In some ways this is an unremarkable technique - where else would the subject of a family photograph be? But this simple act stands in stark contrast to the photography seen in Chapters One and Three which persistently sought to obscure and marginalize working people in the image. This centrality permits an almost heroic quality to emerge (Photos 21-23) which arises partly from the sense that the hard and difficult work of the subjects (harvesting the winter fodder, taking the feed out to the animals in the snow, rescuing an injured sheep) is important. But it also arises from the perspectives that are possible once working people are brought to the centre of the image. So in Photo 22, for example, the camera looks up to the couple and their horse as they, almost triumphantly, certainly joyfully, leave the field with their harvest, in a way that is almost reverential about them and their work. And it is a photography which honours the everyday; sandwiches and cold tea at midday are important events in a working life (Photo 20). These elements are also very evident in Photos 24-28 which are taken from a series of twenty-four called 'Sheep Farming - West Riding'. They do contain elements of pastoralism and pictorialism, but, despite their title, these are not a random series of artistic shots taken across a relatively large region of diverse shepherds. Rather, they are portraits of an intimately known community in the sense that they appear to have been mostly taken within one valley, or Dale, and of a limited number of shepherds who repeatedly appear in the series (Photos 24-26 and Photos 27-28, for example, are of just two people). This intimate presentation and celebration of known and recognisable individuals distinguishes this photography from the pictorial and pastoral which displayed little interest in the individuality of its subjects. A tangible closeness and a friendliness between the camera and the shepherds can be seen (Photos 24 and 25 for example). But it is their composition which contains essential components of this working-class

photography. It is one that celebrates the everyday work of working people - these shepherds. And, as the motif of landscape and animals is repeated, the working person is placed precisely in the centre of the image honouring their lives and work. These are highly respectful images in which working people held up a mirror for each other that showed them, perhaps for the first time visually, as hardworking and vital elements of the social fabric. They brought elements of the familiar into consciousness, and did so in ways that encoded these images with the importance, the humanity and the significance of working people. This is a long way from the semiotics of discipline and control.

Photos 20-23. Family photography. Yorkshire Museum of Farming.







Photos 24-28. Sheep Farming- West Riding. Yorkshire Museum of Farming.







In theory the costs of owning a camera at this period could have excluded working people from any access to photography. This is far from the truth. The expense of a camera did not inevitably mean an absence of photographs or photographers. There were always enterprising individuals who would take pictures for sale - at the seaside, on works' outings, or in the streets, for example- and who were keen to produce images that reflected their customers' inclinations and expectations. Just as a comparison of nineteenth-century newspaper sales with estimated readership figures reveals that newspapers were often passed around, and the more literate read the news to others so that their readership was far greater than sales, similarly at this time there were those among the working class who could afford a, usually second-hand, camera and who used it to take photos of, and for, their own communities. Alf Tulip and Jack Hulme were doing exactly this in their coal mining villages.³²¹ This photography was passed on, or sold, to be included in the sorts of domestic collections of pictures that have been preserved in such large numbers in the archives of the Manchester Central Library. The very same activity can also be seen in the East Coast fishing industry. Chapter One has already discussed the marginalisation and hierarchisation that could be seen in the photography that was commissioned by the fish merchants and boat owners. However, in the archives of towns such as Grimsby, Hull and Scarborough another type of photography can be found, taken at sea on board the fishing boats that set out from these ports, usually by the skippers or radio operators who had the means and the skills to buy and operate a new technology such as a camera. Their selection of images, their choice of what they regarded as important to themselves and important in terms of what they wanted others to see of their lives, can be seen consistently across these archives. And it is striking. There are compelling pictures of the dangers at sea in the archives- the ice, the mountainous seas, the perilous lumps of rock rising out of the sea. Their working environment was utterly unlike anything to be found at home, it was a source of awe and wonder, and it would have been of great interest to family, friends and themselves when they returned. A more common selection was their own working lives. This was not so much a fascination with particular tasks such as hauling-in or processing the fish, as much as with themselves, as clearly identifiable individuals, engaged in these tasks (Photos 29-30). Overwhelmingly, however, the content of their photography was themselves and their workmates. The main selection, the thing that they most wanted to remember and that they most wanted to be seen by their friends and colleagues, was the people they worked

with and the bonds between them (Photos 31-33). They produced a tellingly warm and affectionate record of their lives at sea which had a number of shared characteristics. It is a record that is consistently non-hierarchical. Here working people are not pushed into the shadows or to the margins of the image, but brought to the centre and front. There they adopt relaxed poses, sitting closely with their fellow workers, sometimes actually with their arms around each other (Photo 31). These pictures resonate with a sense of strong horizontal bonding between these men. It asserts the economic and social significance of a hard-working, humorous, self-sufficient, closely-entwined and very human group of working people. Who would not be privileged to spend an hour in the company of the crew of *The Cape Spartel*? (Photos 34-36). These images record characteristics, or values, which were the very same as those that circulated around the mining villages of Fryston and Roddymoor, and around the agricultural villages of Yorkshire. And it is a record only made possible by the relationship between camera and subjects. In these photographs the camera is always grounded on the same physical level as the subjects, it is also able to approach them frontally and to within close distances. This is the exact opposite to the photography seen in Chapter Three, which was so constrained by awkward social distances. It treated its subjects as equals - an egalitarian photography which was only able to emerge because of the familiarity, respect, affection and mutual recognition that so obviously exists between the camera and its subjects.

Photo 29. Net Repairs. c1930's



Photo 30. Four Crew Members in the North Sea. 1926.



Photo 31. Eight crew members. c. 1920.



Photo 32. Drinking Tea. c.1930.



Photo 33. Crew of *The Orpheus*. c.1930.



Photos 34-36. Crew of *The Cape Spartel*. 1932.





Just seven archives have been discussed here which must be a small sample of what is, potentially, a massive collection of archives scattered across the country. But it is a sample that is powerfully interconnected by their shared characteristics. They share a common purpose: this is a photography produced by, and for, working people, to be held in their family collections. Often the means of creating, communicating and circulating 'meaning' are dependent on technologies that are dominated by a social elite. In these circumstances this 'meaning' can become a vehicle for transmitting the values and perspectives of this elite³²². But here, in these early days of popular photography, working people had, to some extent at least, got their hands on the technology, and they had established, small-scale but effective, ways of circulating their own images or 'meanings'. Consequently these images contain distinct, and consistently repeated, modes of presenting working people. In stark contrast to those seen in Chapters One and Three, the subjects are brought to the centre and front of the image.³²³ It is true that this is hardly the most innovative photographic technique and, if anything, those other photographers who contrived a whole range of methods to marginalise working people displayed a greater inventiveness. Nonetheless, part

of the importance of this working-class photography lies in this difference. Across the images of these farming, fishing, mining and industrial communities this frontality and centrality can be seen and it was only possible because of the familiarity that existed between camera and subject. This created the context within which a photography could emerge which honoured and celebrated working people. But this emergence was not just a simple matter of new techniques. It arose also from the attitudes that permitted this change - from the recognition, the respect and the affection that these photographers brought to their work. These attitudes produced the most significant commonalities to be found across these archives: their intimacy, their warmth, their ability to see the noble and heroic, their egalitarianism. They had the ability to perceive and to celebrate these qualities in the everyday and among their peers in the working class. Their celebration of these qualities ensured them a market for their photography. Shared paths of circulation, common purposes, common modes of representation, common differences with other modes and, above all, a common respect for the people around them are what gives these archives a coherent and distinct identity. This thesis contends that this sample is merely the tip of, what must be, a magnificent archive of working-class life that lies scattered across the country. But, importantly, it was not one that was concerned to provide some form of objective realism, it had no interest in slums, disease, infant mortality, dirt, despair, exhaustion, unemployment or hunger for example. This was a photography which was neither an attempt at documentation nor concerned to create 'artistic' images. It more resembled a conversation between working people. Perhaps partly constructed in fantasy, this conversation was about the subjects at the heart of all worthwhile cultural activity. What kind of people are we? What kind of people could we become? How might we best present ourselves? ³²⁴ As such, it was a very humanizing activity, and which produced a very clear and subjective narrative. This narrative was concerned to establish and assert the place of working people in the national discourse. It was not directed to others, and is most definitely not an appeal to others. This is a personal and domestic photography rather than a public one and it is addressed to themselves. And if photography can be used as a mirror this was not one which reflected back any sense of a grim reality, instead it was focussed upon the economic, social and personal value of working people. These were not photos that pushed working people into the shadowy margins of the image. Just as the family albums of Bessie Goodwin and Mrs. Taylor were, these were assertions of their existence.

They were pieces of their lives thought valuable enough to preserve, essential elements of their individual and social narratives as they strove to establish their self-esteem and self-respect. So photographs of them bringing in the hay or the fish or the coal asserted their economic worth. Images of friendly and harmonious groups of miners, farmers and fishermen reassured them of their social value. Pictures of warm, noble, even heroic working people convinced them of their personal worth. This was a photography taken, or bought, to be collected within families to assist them in establishing a positive sense of self.

In *Power/Knowledge* Foucault described a form of power ‘that had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour’³²⁵ and his descriptions of an all-pervasive, ever-present form of discipline that arose from this power, affecting each individuals’ self-formation can present themselves as an overwhelmingly successful method of social control, with little hope of resistance in the face of ‘the mighty cosmos of the modern economic order.....the iron cage’³²⁶. This was a power capable of totally dominating any sense of self and the influence of this very physical discipline can be seen in much of the photography discussed in Chapters One and Three, but there were indications even there that this control was not complete. And, repeatedly, when working people photograph themselves there appears to be some quite persuasive signs that Foucault’s individualising, dividing techniques of discipline were not universally applied or all-conquering. A photography existed, produced by working people, that includes signs of some very strong ‘horizontal conjunctions’ and that brings into the social and political discourse images of working people as valuable and important human beings in their own right. This is a photography that does not fit neatly into a Foucauldian model of discipline and control. However, to be fair to him, despite the totality of some of his descriptions of the social control exercised in modern capitalist economies, he did write, ‘No matter how terrifying a given system may be there always remains the possibilities of resistance, disobedience and oppositional groupings’³²⁷. Foucault himself seems not to have spent much time addressing where this resistance may be found, or, just as importantly given his descriptions of the efficacy of social control, how this resistance could ever be constituted.³²⁸

This question becomes for this study - how can the kinds of representations of working people, seen so far in this chapter, ever have come into existence? Particularly when it did so in the face of those photographs seen in previous chapters that seemed to deliver the semiotics of power in ways that fit so securely into a Foucauldian model of social control. Foucault himself offers two ideas that may help to develop an explanation. In his description of what he believed a history of thought should look like he says:

By thought I mean what establishes in a variety of possible forms, the play of true and false, and which as a consequence constitutes the human being as a subject of learning.....in other words it is the basis for accepting or refusing rules.³²⁹

At the heart of the individual's subjectivity or self-formation is this 'play of true and false,' what we are prepared to accept as true about ourselves. The post-1918 period, with its prolonged crises, was undoubtedly one in which established truths and certainties were promoted with some hesitancy and questioned vehemently. When reviewing his own work Foucault thought that the power he described consisted of:

The establishment of a certain objectivity, the development of a politics and government of the self, and the elaboration of an ethics and practice in regard to oneself....[or] a game of truth, relations of power and forms of relation to oneself and others.³³⁰

He describes a multi-centred, fully-integrated model of social discipline and power, but the 1919-1945 period was one in which the relations of power - one of the key elements in this model - were far from stable, and it may have been this instability that created the space in the social and political discourse which allowed 'horizontal conjunctions' to form, and made it possible for new forms of subjectivity to emerge as the rules in 'the game of truth' became more vaguely defined than previously. The value of a study of the photography of this period is that it captures this emergence, it captures new forms, or alternative forms, of subjectivity in the place of 'a certain objectivity'. At a time when unemployment had undermined the economic value of labour, when the power of the unions had been undermined in 1926 and its aftermath, when there was widespread disillusionment with the performance of the Labour governments, when biological theories of genetic inferiority were openly circulated, it may be reasonable to expect to find a crushed spirit among

working people. This photography reveals that this was certainly not universal and that there were, indeed, possibilities of resistance, or, at least of independence. There is also a historiographical point to consider. Foucault's work was based largely on official records - of doctors, psychiatrists, police officers, government officials, prison governors and lunatic asylum directors - which capture the thoughts of those engaged in the processes of classifying, dividing, individualising and constructing hierarchical pyramids. These thoughts and processes provide evidence of their powerful intentions, intentions which may fade in their efficacy, however, the further one moves from the institutions upon which their power was centred. Crudely, it may be easier to impose the techniques of discipline within the tightly structured confines of a prison or a school, than it was in a trawler fifty miles out in the North Sea or in a pit half a mile underground. These were locations more distant from the centres of management, and maybe more reliant on the independent initiative of the workforce. Of course, the fishing fleet or the mining industry may well have had their own systems of discipline, which were unlike those of the state institutions. But the essential point is that while Foucault looks at his systems of control from the viewpoint of the controllers, this is a photography created by the 'controlled', and, while there may well have been variations in the nature of control from location to location, these were insufficient to prevent working people from producing their own, alternative and widely shared kinds, of representations. Indeed, this photography may well give historians a glimpse of a self-formation among working people that went on away from the centres of official power and went on in ways that show a resistance to the techniques of discipline emanating from those centres. And it would seem that the economic, geographical and political contexts of the period in which these photographers and their customers found themselves, influenced the ways in which they decided what to accept as true or false, which in turn impacted on the efficacy of the forces of social control described by Foucault.

He also discussed at length the formation of knowledge, demonstrating that ultimately it depended on its utility to power, no knowledge could survive if it did not support and reinforce power. The connexion between knowledge and power is interesting. While power may well be disproportionally gathered into the hands of small minorities it never becomes the complete monopoly of any one group. However unequal its distribution, it is always, to

a greater or lesser extent, diffused among other social groups outside of the elite and there is no reason to suppose that these groups did not also develop knowledge that was useful to their own power. Hence in the photography of this period at least some working people can be seen to resist those modes of representation that deliberately marginalised them and placed them in hierarchical frameworks. Instead, it presented a knowledge, or modes, which were more useful to them in that it enhanced their importance, presenting themselves as indispensable members of society. Any crude concept of working people blindly, sub-consciously, passively, even stupidly, accepting modes of representation which were designed to undermine their position and to reinforce a malevolent power has to be replaced by a scenario in which working people actively developed more useful alternatives, to themselves, that represented a cultural resistance to power. At the heart of Foucault's discussion of social control is the self-formation of the individual. This was based on the inter-play of true and false in each person's mind about the knowledge that is presented by power. But this is not a completely stable base upon which to build the structures of power. Foucault himself argued that 'power relations are mobile relations, that is they may become modified, they are not given once and for all' ³³¹. If knowledge is based upon power and power relations shift as historical forces play upon them, then the interplay of true and false, the individual's acceptance or rejection of the knowledge presented by power, will also shift. In these shifts resistance emerges. The photography seen in this chapter is evidence of such a shift as working people rejected one form of representation and replaced it with another. It is this basic instability in the formation of power and knowledge that makes this photography possible. Recognizing this instability is important to understanding the nature of these archives. They hardly ever present a clearly defined, exclusive or all-embracing mode of representation. Within each of the studied archives it is possible, for example, to detect pictorial or pastoral elements, and to see the differing modes interpenetrating and competing with each other. The motor driving this competition is precisely this instability, which weakens older modes and allows new ones to emerge. It is maybe here that we can hear Foucault's promised 'roar of battle'.

This is an interpretation of working-class photography based largely upon its contents, apparent purposes, and audience. It may be a big claim to make from the evidence of a

relatively small sample of what, in all likelihood, must be a large archive. But there are parallels that are both interesting and supportive. The first comes from the work of the historians of post-colonial photography, whose output, remarkably, far outstrips that of historians of the photography of another group dominated by the ruling elite of this country - the British working-class. Their studies of the photography of countries which were once part of the British Empire reveal modes of representation and motivations that were a deliberate reaction against that of their former colonial masters. But for this thesis their real interest lies in the similarity of this reaction to the photography already seen in this chapter. Christopher Pinney has written extensively on this photography, contrasting it with that of colonial times, which was concerned to establish an orderly world which could be measured, penetrated and colonised. In turn this encouraged an imagery of the everyday, of people and places, classified and firmly fixed in taxonomies that organized the world into a field for exploitation. It had a very rigid view of the world and was uninterested in exploring alternatives or doubts or uncertainties and because of this it became a photography 'peppered with a dislike of the dialogical spaces of face-to-face encounters'³³² and which refused to engage in the uncertainties of 'the intimate space between viewer and image'³³³. A negotiation between camera and subject risked altering or undermining the colonial world view and so was avoided. In contrast Pinney described the photography of post-colonial Central India as a 'visual decolonisation in which alternative modes of self-representation were developed'³³⁴. He, and others have developed a narrative of post-colonial photography in which the semiotics of power were rejected in favour of self-created ones³³⁵. This was a photography of people seeking to resist the dominant modes of representation, and to create new forms. Forms which presented the things they held to be significant, and which presented these in ways that enhanced this significance. Such a photography is clearly of interest, at least as a point of comparison, when studying that of another group using photography for much the same ends. This is particularly the case when it appears that there were a number of affinities with the sorts of photography discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, the distaste that colonial photography had for face-to-face encounters with working-class subjects has interesting parallels with the issues faced by the photographers discussed in Chapters One and Three. But it is the long list of similar features identified by these historians in this post-colonial photography with that produced by the British working-class that is so striking. The placement of the camera at the same level as

the subject, the insistence on the frontality, clarity and visibility of the subject, the use of full body images, the reciprocated gaze between the subject and the viewer, the close relationship between the camera and the subject, the disinterest in any form of 'realistic' documentation, and the careful posing in order to be seen 'at their best' are, remarkably, to be consistently seen in both.³³⁶ Although, it maybe unsurprising that very similar techniques were developed in such widely separated places: they were both reacting to a common ruling elite, they were both engaged in a photography to be preserved within the family, and these were the most efficient ways in which the dispossessed could demonstrate and assert their worth. They were united in content and purposes. If this post-colonial photography can be seen to represent a very clear cultural resistance to the semiotics of colonial power then there is every reason to believe that the presence of very similar techniques in British working-class photography indicates a similar resistance to power. The British photography does contain, however, one significant difference. In India, Gambia and Nigeria the determination to look 'at their best' is very concerned to include displays of material wealth - even if this was only borrowed from the photographer. This was not the case here, looking good did not seem to involve displays of material wealth. When the photographs were framed and posed for here, concepts of looking good among British working people seem to have been constructed around productive work, good relations with those around them and good humour. These are distinctive values which ignore the hierarchies created by the distribution of wealth in favour of less materialistic values. Perhaps these can be described as egalitarian values.

A second method of validating the claims made here for working-class photography is to set it into the context of British working-class culture of the time. Cultural historians have described a vigorous, independent and creative activity among working people that was concerned to assert their worth and to affirm their identity. These historians have not included photography in their work but there appear to be close affinities between this photographic activity and the general cultural life of the working-class revealed in similarities of character, intentions and significance.

At the heart of these cultural histories has been an assertion of the universal human desire to live a life that extended beyond mere material survival. This ambition drove people of every background and of all times to search for value and worth in their lives, often through cultural activity. While it has been argued here that this is precisely what can be seen in the photography presented here, others have found the same in a whole range of activities. Perhaps the most impassioned affirmation of this can be found in Jacques Ranciere's account of a relatively small number of worker intellectuals, living and writing in France from around 1830-1890. This is of relevance because of the clarity of his description of this central assertion. He follows these workers through their writing as they grapple with the issues of their time, often sacrificing sleep to work into the night thinking, talking and writing³³⁷. In this activity he feels that he has uncovered an authentic working-class voice, one that jars with that identified by the too crude imposition of current ideologies onto the empirical record. He believes these impositions have distorted the meaning of this voice: 'In the interpreters quest for a working-class essence the voices in which workers speak of their existence and aspirations are distorted, amplified, censored and pushed aside to confirm the 'already known'.³³⁸ And he is insistent on an empirical approach: 'The actions, murmurs and struggles of the workshop, the cries and festivities of the common people enact culture and bear witness to the truth far more than does the vain science of ideologies.'³³⁹ Believing that when 'common people enact culture' it can provide alternative insights as it is here 'one can see the labouring class living its true life'.³⁴⁰ And Ranciere's ideas of the nature of this 'true life' are interesting. Centrally he believes what working people found hardest to bear

was not the poverty, the low wages, the uncomfortable housing, or the ever present threat of hunger. It was something more basic: the anguish of time spent every day working up wood or iron, sewing clothes or stitching footwear, for no other purpose than to maintain indefinitely the forces of servitude with those of domination³⁴¹.

The time spent at work, Ranciere argues, is time taken from the human being trying to be itself. At the heart of the exploitation of working people is the, 'moral misery produced by an existence condemned to mere survival that no longer permits a person to imagine the possibility of another life'.³⁴² So the most important issue is not the worker possessing the full value of his labour 'but to possess oneself',³⁴³ therefore 'It is not knowledge of

exploitation that the worker needs in order to stand tall in the face of that which is ready to devour him. What he lacks and needs is a knowledge of self that reveals to him a being dedicated to something else besides exploitation'³⁴⁴. As Ranciere reads through the writings of these worker intellectuals he finds an almost spiritual yearning, a dream of independence that is never concerned to present spectacles of degradation, it is oblivious to either the virtues of poverty or the idea that poverty may arise from the apparent moral vices of the poor. This French example may not completely correspond to the British experience, but this portrayal of the thirst among working people for a 'full life,' a life beyond material subsistence, a spiritual life, insists that theories of the all-embracing domination of power omit essential aspects of working-class aspirations and experience, parts of their lives that only empirical studies of their cultural activity can recover.

Nevertheless, this approach suggests that there are methodological difficulties to overcome in engaging in these empirical studies and some cultural historians have been critical of failures within the historiography to address these. Ken Worpole suggests that problems with the archives have caused

the fragmentation of working-class historical consciousness....is not exactly surprising given the fragmentation and lack of concern for the material artefacts of that consciousness, that is to say the photographs, short stories, novels, autobiographies, histories produced by that historical class culture which were allowed to disappear through neglect³⁴⁵.

But Jonathan Rose insists that there are other issues such as

the failure of political criticism [of working-class uses of literature] as it is actually practised is methodological: with some examples it ignores actual readers. In this terrain critics repeatedly commit what might be called a receptive fallacy: they try to discern the messages a text transmits to an audience by examining the text rather than the audience³⁴⁶.

And he calls for a 'history of audiences' which do not focus 'on the controllers rather than the people who are supposed to be controlled' in the way that some theoretical discussions of power and domination do ³⁴⁷. Robert James supports this approach, arguing that

It is wrong to assume that the working class were passive consumers of the leisure product. Indeed....working-class consumers were not cultural dopes who lacked agency, and popular entertainment did more than show a mass of anodyne products that 'fed' middle-class ideology to them³⁴⁸.

Together these historians are very cautious about political theory which envisages the complete domination of working people by power, particularly if this presupposes their passive acceptance of the values of the ruling elite. This critique calls for the reconstitution of the fragmented archives of the working class, and for the reconstruction of their place in the lives of their 'audiences'. When this is done working people emerge as active and rational creators of their own cultural lives rather than passive absorbers of the dominant ideology. This is the methodology that has been used in this thesis to discuss the photography here, but when it is applied to other cultural areas, it produces conclusions that help to illuminate its significance.

Just three examples of these cultural studies are discussed here. Each are relevant, providing illuminating parallels to this photography. Partly because they address the inter-war period and so arise from the same cultural contexts. But also because they arrive at their conclusions by examining both the content and the purposes of their studied activity, which is the approach that has been used here to examine this family photography. The first two are relatively small scale studies of working-class reading and cinema-going habits. Both suggest the same rejection of dominant cultural modes, in favour of alternatives, that can be found in the photography presented in this chapter. The third uses Jonathan Rose's encyclopaedic study of working-class intellectual life to place this photography into the vigorous and independent cultural world of working people at this time³⁴⁹.

The 1920's and 1930's are often described as the golden age of British crime fiction, but this was a genre which was largely ignored by working-class readers who much preferred American crime fiction. Ken Worpole is very dismissive of this golden age, considering it to be a time when the British crime novel

was a form of fictional reassurance for a middle-class readership that the continuity of the class system was safe....[they were set] in a village, largely a commuter village in the Home Counties, where there is always a church, a village inn, very handy for the odd Scotland Yard inspector and his man who came to stay for the regularly recurring crimes...Such working-class people who appeared in these novels did so as quasi-feudal retainers: cooks, butlers, domestic servants, gardeners and, sometimes, a local policeman who could exemplify the important class precept of 'rural idiocy'³⁵⁰.

This is a description that could, of course, equally well apply to the pastoral photography of the time. Worpole contrasted this with American detective novels in which

many British working-class readers, including political militants, found a realism about city life, an acknowledgement of big city corruption and an unpatronising portrayal of working-class experience and speech which wasn't found in British popular fiction of the period, least of all in the crime novel obsessed as it was with the corpse in the library, the Colonel's shares on the stock market and thwarted passion on the Nile.³⁵¹

There was nothing of themselves, nothing to inform them of their lives, in the British fiction, whereas the American novels adopted themes of the decent man fighting to put things straight, of dreams of success set against the harsh background of the city, of naked ambition and corruption among the wealthy, and of sexual politics and identity. Dan Billany was a working-class novelist of the time and his perception of its literature is interesting.

It used to be the fashion to see the working class from a little distance - if not through bars, at least through an impervious psychological screen, so that their actions and emotions were as irrelevant to the gentle Writer and the gentle Reader as those of flat-fish on the floor of their aquarium, on the other side of thick glass and in their own bottle-green element.³⁵²

This description of the distance between the middle-class author and a working-class subject could just as easily define much of the photography seen in Chapters One and Three where the photographers found it so difficult to cross the social gap between themselves and their subjects. In both British crime fiction and in pastoral and pictorial photography there was nothing there in which working people could recognize themselves.

Consequently, in both cases, they rejected the culture of the dominant elite in favour of cultural forms which more directly addressed their own interests and concerns. When working people chose the books they wished to read or the films they wished to watch, their choices reflected the issues that were important to them, issues that were often at variance with those of the dominant culture. And it appears that the same processes were at work in their photography. When they chose what to photograph they identified and highlighted those parts of their lives that were important to them. Again, these choices led to cultural manifestations, or representations of themselves, that were demonstrably different from those of others in society.

Robert James has produced a similar history of working-class cinema-going habits. In 1934 there was a lucrative weekly audience of eighteen and a half million people, most of them working class, and cinema managers were very concerned to identify films that would attract this market. Two of the favourite genres were British comedies and American blockbusters - both widely condemned by the establishment as escapist trivia and likely to encourage a 'general atmosphere of loose morals and farmyard partnerships'³⁵³. But James is clear that behind these preferences lay rational and sophisticated cultural choices. He felt that the comedies were so successful because they starred characters that triumph through a combination of good luck and personal shrewdness: 'Many of the British produced comedies....were highly anarchic and featured working class characters who were not only deeply disrespectful to their social superiors but were also vigorously anti-authoritarian'³⁵⁴. While the American films had recognizably working-class characters and addressed themes which highlighted social injustices, addressed sexual issues, suggested individual efforts could overcome adversity and that there were resolutions to deprivation. James felt that working-class audiences

wanted to see films that encouraged a sense of self; films that provided reassurance about their place in society. As such these film audiences' tastes say much about their hopes and aspirations, about their attitudes to society, about their feelings towards their position within it. In fact the dominance of American-made films is in itself highly significant. While they were favoured by many working-class consumers because of their high-gloss production values and narrative speed, American films were also...often heavily critical of entrenched wealth and privilege and more willing than British produced films to pose radical social alternatives to oppression.³⁵⁵

At its simplest level these audiences chose films that made them feel good about themselves, but this involved a very explicit rejection of establishment values and their cultural manifestations, prompting an active search for those stories and themes that provided a reassurance about their worth as individuals and as social animals. When Mrs. J Hollingworth was asked by Mass Observation in 1939 about her film choices she responded by saying that 'they give you the feeling that you are human after all'³⁵⁶. They were choosing films to assist their self-formation in ways that made them feel comfortable with themselves. These choices were often far from reinforcing the values of the dominant elite and, indeed, resisted those values. These cultural choices reflected exactly the concerns that were to be seen in their photography: in both cases these were made in a manner which was carefully tuned into their own interests and concerns.

A more general survey of working-class cultural activity has been written by Jonathan Rose, which focusses largely, but not exclusively, on their traditions of reading. His starting point is to reject any concept of passivity, criticising those 'literary critics who tend to see literature as freighted with ideological baggage that may insidiously indoctrinate the unsuspecting reader'³⁵⁷. In common with James and Worpole, he presents a narrative of a working class hungry for a cultural life and energetically developing musical, reading and writing traditions that were partly constrained by their material circumstances, but which were wholly concerned with addressing their own experiences. While it may have been difficult to put together working-class orchestras, for example, there was a widespread tradition of popular music making, often around choirs, as in the Welsh mining communities, or brass bands. Indeed Rose thought that the brass band movement was one of the most vibrant

expressions of working-class culture - by 1913 there were 2600 of them in the country, one for every 15,500 people³⁵⁸. Driving their cultural involvement was the tradition of the autodictat, which 'was more literary than musical. That was partly a matter of material availability: second-hand book stalls and Sunday School prizes could be found in the smallest and remotest of communities'³⁵⁹. And he goes on to describe the network of formal and informal self-schooling networks, largely based around individual reading and communal discussion, which spread across the country: 'This they accomplished by improvising a vast grass-roots movement which had no central organization, but was a presence in hundreds of chapels and millions of kitchens'³⁶⁰. Books were swapped, passed on, given as presents and prizes, bought second-hand, gathered in 'mongrel libraries' that made incoherent collections and were ignorant of any received classical tradition of literature. But they were treasured for their knowledge and for the openings they created to other worlds. Almost regardless of the political inclinations of their authors, this wide-reaching network was subversive in itself in the way it introduced new horizons, new ideas and new frameworks for thinking. And it was the ability to think independently that was so highly prized: 'That was the autodictat's mission statement; to be more than passive consumers of literature, to be active thinkers and writers'³⁶¹. Rose believes that this informal network grew to the extent that by the 1930's 'a large personal library was not a rarity in the slums'³⁶². And it was matched by the more formal arrangements of the rapidly increasing mutual improvement societies and by branches of the Workers' Educational Association. The latter was only founded in 1903, by the 1930's it had 60,000 students, and by 1948 it had 111,000³⁶³. Together these provided forums for working-class reading and discussion that were so influential that at the time of the 1945 Labour victory one commentator (noting that a total of fourteen members of the new cabinet and fifty-six M.P.s had at some time been involved in the Workers' Educational Association) felt that 'It is an England moulded by the W.E.A. that has swept into power'³⁶⁴. Rose describes the inter-war period as one in which working-class cultural activity and cultural independence was rapidly developing and flourishing. This is important as this is the context within which popular use of the camera was equally rapidly expanding. In these circumstances it could be reasonably anticipated that working-class photography would share characteristics with the rest of working-class culture. So the emergence of independent modes of photographically representing working people were mirrored by the ways in which these working-class reading forums that

appropriated the great English writers for their own ends. For 'many of them Shakespeare was a proletarian hero who spoke directly to working people'³⁶⁵, while Robinson Crusoe 'was read as a fable of individualism. It showed what one working man could do without landlords, clergymen or capitalists'³⁶⁶. Dickens provided 'a universe solid enough and familiar enough to provide a common frame of reference' for working people³⁶⁷. These were readings of the classics that were, perhaps, different from the mainstream. Formal and informal webs of reading and discussion criss-crossed working-class communities. These provided a cultural activity that reinforced their sense of self in that it supplied them with alternative ways of looking at the world and augmented their sense of an ability to stand intellectually independent and not be reliant on the vicar, the schoolteacher, the employer or any other visitor from another class to explain the world to them. These networks 'addressed one of the most basic intellectual hungers of the working class: the need to understand how his individual life fitted into the larger society'³⁶⁸. Of course this may simply describe a universal human need, but Rose's point is that, for working people, this hunger was gratified in ways that were set apart from the dominant culture and that actually prized this separateness, or independence, as one of its central characteristics. Consequently, it was a culture of reading and discussion that was used to actively and independently address their own different needs and which allowed them to come to their own conclusions about how they did indeed fit into the larger society - an activity replicated in the photography of working people at exactly this same time.

When the photography presented in this chapter is placed into the more general context of British working-class culture those tentative conclusions about its nature and significance are considerably reinforced. The family photography of industrial Manchester, and of the coalfields, farms and harbours of the North can then be seen to be both resisting the dominant modes of representation seen in earlier chapters, and to be actively developing and circulating alternatives to these in ways that working people replicated across a range of cultural activities. In this context this photography can be seen to be an integral part of a wider discourse developed by working people at this time. If he never actually investigated it, Foucault certainly predicted this sort of popular resistance. And when his own ideas about the utility of knowledge to power are extended to cover all groups in society then it

becomes inevitable that each would resist a knowledge that undermines or marginalised their position and will attempt to produce one that they find more 'useful' to them. Similarly, when his ideas about the imperative of power to establish a single objective 'truth' and to eliminate other subjective truths are examined, it seems again inevitable that social groups with differing interests will each attempt to develop their own 'truths.' While Foucault has been criticised for presenting an all-conquering, ever-renewing narrative of power, his own ideas actually suggest that this power would be constantly questioned, and that social, or cultural, arenas would be sites of permanent struggle. In the case of photography this struggle can be seen in the differing modes of representing working people, in the remarkable differences in the modes seen in Chapters One and Three to those seen in this chapter. But these differences cannot be explained simply by identifying instabilities in the formation of power. It is not enough to describe the consequences of political turmoil in this period, or to note the impact of differing social relations in differing geographical or economic locations on power formation. In themselves they are an insufficient explanation of the photography to be seen here. Pinney, Ranciere, Rose, Worpole, and James all describe a basic hunger among working people around the world for a cultural life that helps them to understand, or reassures them about, their lives. The common methodology of these historians concentrates on the actions of the oppressed rather than the intentions of the oppressors and it has been this that helps to identify this hunger. When this approach is applied to the field of photography it is possible to see this fundamental human need in the imagery produced by working people. Here they were clearly identified, their distinct values stated, their worth celebrated and their lives validated. It was both the weaknesses in power formation and this fundamental drive among working people that combined to create the remarkable photography produced by working people at this time.

ii. The Press.

The rejection of the dominant modes of representation and the construction of alternatives in the familial photography of working people can be seen to have an informal political significance. This was enhanced when these new kinds of representation were taken up, firstly by large sections of the press in the 1930's, and then by the wartime government in its propaganda campaigns. At this point they acquired a more formal political importance³⁶⁹. This chronology is important as what work has been done on these modes of photography clearly see it as a product of the Second World War. While they were certainly a feature of wartime propaganda, their origins can clearly be found in the earlier family and press photography of the inter-war period. This more nuanced chronology permits a better understanding of the significance of this photography. The links between working-class photographers, such as Jack Hulme and Alf Tulip, busy creating images within their own communities, and press photographers, such as Bert Hardy and James Jarche, using the same sort of images in the national press was partly a case of shared technique. But they can be seen also as part of a quasi-Gramscian model of social change. Crudely, in this model working-class (amateur photographers) and middle-class intellectuals (press photographers) combine to produce cultural changes which impact on social attitudes to the point where they effect political change. Gramsci himself believed that this process would lead to revolution which, of course, was never the case in this country, but a process of cultural and political evolution can be traced by following the changes in nature of the representations of working people that occurred at this time. Of course, it would be fanciful to think that photography could single-handedly produce political change and it is important to see it as part of the broader cultural changes described in the previous section. Nevertheless, if it can be seen to stimulate political change, it is essential to understand the character of this photography if its contribution to this change is to be understood. This section, then, sets out to describe the ways important sections of the press portrayed working people, to describe its character and to outline how it contributed to political change.

Labour was one of the journals that consistently used the alternative ways of photographically presenting working people that have been seen in their own photography.

It was a monthly newspaper produced by the National Council for Labour to provide a platform for the leaders of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. As such it was relatively well resourced, and during its life, from September 1933 to August 1938, it was able to afford illustrations on every cover and, occasionally, on its inner pages. Of the sixty cover photos that were produced, fifty were pictures of working people - close up and at work. The methodology of these was remarkably similar to that employed in the familial photography seen earlier (Photos 37-39). Not only did they bring working people to the front and centre of the image, but they also captured them in their place of work, each performing economically valuable tasks. These pictures represented a wide range of occupations, from steel workers to night-watch men, and from coalmen to librarians. Importantly, those pictured were not at all restricted to the labour elite, to the most powerful unions or even to unionised labour, and they present a strikingly inclusive or egalitarian cross-section of the working-class. Perhaps the clue to the motivation behind this mode can be found in the July 1938 edition of *Labour* in which the T.U.C. pavilion at the Empire Exhibition was featured, largely in an extensive photographic spread. As visitors to the pavilion left they could read in large letters above the door: 'Shall you complain who feed the world? / Who clothe the world, who house the world? / As from this hour, you use your power/ The world must follow you'³⁷⁰. This photography was part of an assertion of the economic worth and the potential political strength of working people, and this was not necessarily an appeal to others - surely very few middle-class readers would have ever bothered to read *Labour* - as much as providing encouragement to each other. Encapsulated within the sixty front pages of *Labour* are the cultural assertions of worth that had been developed in the family photography of working people, the reiteration of their economic value and the direct employment of these modes to mobilise their political strength. But perhaps the most unusual aspect of the paper's photography is its inclusive nature in which skilled female workers followed char-ladies and highly unionised railway workers in the weekly sequence, implying that the whole of the workforce belonged to one homogeneous group.

This implication of homogeneity, however, may have been just the wishful thinking of the editors of *Labour*. While reference has been made throughout the thesis to a 'working class', this can never have been a static, unchanging, univocal entity. Within any social

grouping it is inevitable that there were tensions and conflicts between different elements, and that these elements would have had differing perceptions of themselves and differing relations with other social groups. Given these dynamics it may be foolhardy to presume a consistent, uniform manufacture and consumption of photography by any one group. Nonetheless, the economic background to social change at this time is very interesting. Mike Savage and Andrew Miles have surveyed the literature on class formation at this time. Their summary suggests that the 1930's came at the end of a long period of change which saw the consolidation of barriers between the middle class and the working class, and the concurrent weakening of divisions within the working class itself. For example, the inter-war period saw a concentration of male workers into trade, transport and manufacturing industries, a fall in the wages of skilled workers relative to the more stable incomes of the semi- and unskilled workers, and an even sharper fall in the wages of all manual workers relative to the middle and upper classes³⁷¹. At the same time social mobility among the different groups within the working class increased, producing

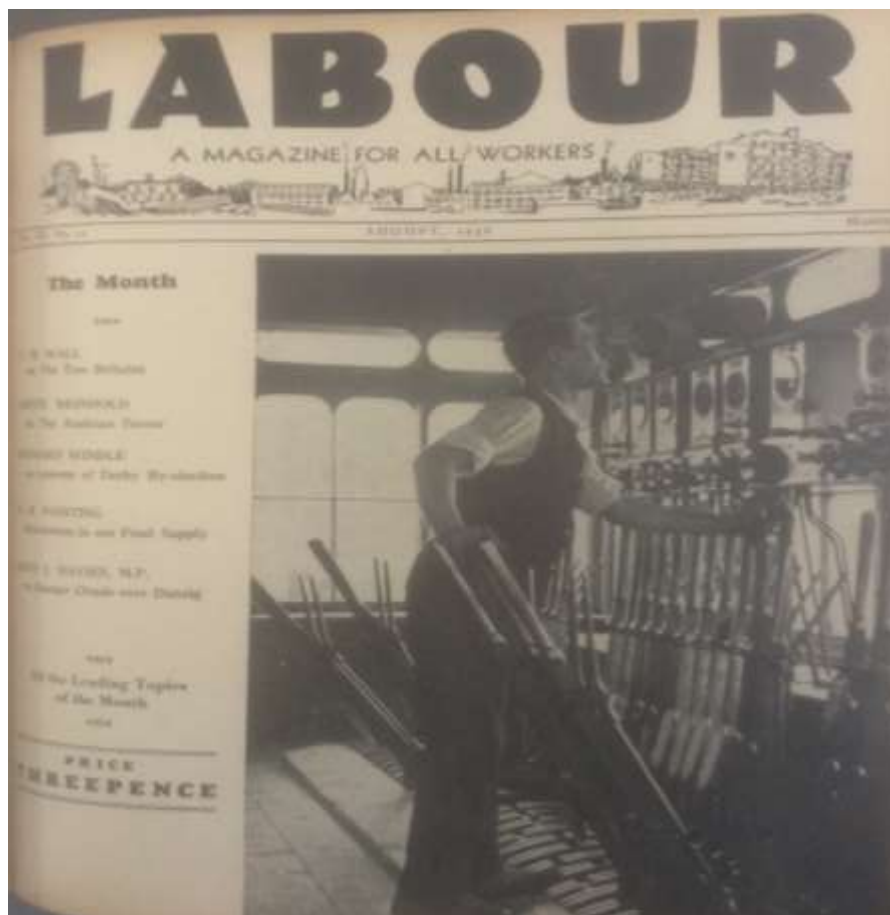
a pattern of separation between the classes, and the fundamental trend towards homogenisation within the working class [in which] the extent of demographic class formation is unquestionable³⁷².

Within industry there was also a marked trend towards larger companies so that 'by 1930 the one hundred largest firms accounted for 26 per cent of the total manufacturing output'³⁷³. These gathered working people together in larger groups, and subjected them to more impersonal and scientific management styles than hitherto. The mass unemployment of the time threw many working people together into the same grim circumstances regardless of their skill levels. While, at the same time, the cities were becoming dominated by the working-class as the middle-class moved out and the working-class consolidated their identity around their own institutions - co-ops and friendly societies, sports, social, and burial clubs, religious and educational activities - so that:

By the First World War the decline of elite middle-class civic involvement and the rise of working-class associational activity had turned many towns from middle-class to working-class environments³⁷⁴.

The consequences of each of these factors was the formation of a much more homogenous working-class than that which had characterised the Victorian city. It is not necessary to claim a direct cause and effect, but this background of economic change and of class formation may well have had an influence on the forms of a more egalitarian photography presented both on the front pages of *Labour* and within the family photography seen earlier. Linking economic change, class formation and cultural developments together in this way is, however, open to criticism from those historians who claim that, in reality, class never existed in any meaningful way³⁷⁵. In which case, linking it to economic and cultural events is an exercise in futility. This is a discourse largely based upon the claim that there is little real evidence of class and class formation, in particular they point to the lack, among working people, of any clear articulation of 'the language of class'³⁷⁶. But this may be an argument that undervalues the cultural dimension of class formation. Savage and Miles believe that, outside of the realm of formal politics, there are 'practical politics'. These are concerned with people's everyday struggles which they describe as 'strategies employed by people ...to reduce the insecurities which are inherent in capitalist society.'³⁷⁷ Employment and money would be the most obvious of these insecurities. Alongside of these, particularly in a time when mass unemployment loomed so large, would have been profound insecurities about personal worth. A family and a public photography which asserted the personal and economic value of working people would clearly be one that addressed, at least some of, these insecurities. Here was a collective, fairly homogenous response, which was distinctive in both form and content. And it can be seen as a shared response, across a particular social grouping, and across private and public arenas, to the contemporary economic crisis. As such, it can be seen to be an integral part of the class formation at this time, described by Savage and Miles. The 'language of class' may well be elusive, but perhaps it can be glimpsed in this photography, and in other working-class cultural activities, which articulated a shared response to the economic events of the period and which was particular to one social grouping - the working class themselves.

Photos 37-39. The Front Pages of Labour. 1933-1938.





Bert Hardy's photography used very similar modes of representing working people to those found on the front pages of *Labour*. His origins were also the same as other photographers, such as Alf Tulip and Jack Hulme, in that his background was solidly working class. His father was a carpenter and his mother a char-lady, and Hardy's description of his youth was one of ducking, diving and scraping to find additional income for his family. 'It was all a question of the struggle for survival'³⁷⁸. When he left school he found employment as an errand boy at the Central Photographic Services in the Strand. There he learned to develop and print, and he taught himself to use a camera, making money from taking pictures on pub outings from Blackfriars and then selling them to the day trippers. It is interesting that his earliest photography was of his family and friends and it was a photography firmly rooted in the modes of working-class family photography (Photo 40). He also took up cycling and found that he could regularly sell photos of bike races to the *Bicycle*, the leading cycling magazine of the day. Hardy felt that this was an important grounding for him.

It was a time when I learnt a lot about photography; the importance of quick reactions, in getting a good shot, and a willingness to experiment technically; and an

appreciation of what can be done in the dark room to bring out the best in a picture taken in less than perfect conditions³⁷⁹.

After nine years of this apprenticeship Hardy moved on to work for photographic agencies who were selling photos to the press. This was another important stage in his development; one that he saw as being different from news photography in that he spent his days going through the papers looking for unusual stories that he could turn into saleable photos, producing pictures of wart charmers, stone growers, alligator hypnotisers, bird surgeons and fish hospitals. This endeavour to find interest and amusement in the photography of the everyday was an important element in attracting popular interest and provided a very commercial training, based on an acute sensitivity to 'what the people wanted'. Hardy himself said 'I was receiving a Fleet Street education', and this was not an arts-based project, it was producing what he could sell from what he knew of the world.³⁸⁰ It was this that brought him to the attention of *Picture Post* and increasingly he was drawn into its orbit. As war broke out he produced a series of famous pictures of the Home Front, the Blitz, and the role of ordinary people in the War, so that by 1942 the Army was keen to call him up into their Film and Photographic Unit where he produced iconic images of the D-Day landings, the liberation of Paris, the crossing of the Rhine and the liberation of Belsen. His work is characterised by a strong commercial opportunism and throughout his life he was always acutely aware of framing an image that would immediately appeal. But his work is also characterised by a straightforward, uncomplicated aesthetic in that they are taken at street level and speak at that level to the viewer. They contain an overriding interest in the everyday life of ordinary people. And they display the same techniques of frontality and centrality, together with the same respect for his subjects that were such defining features of the family photographs seen earlier (Photos 41-46). Boyd Tonkin notes the 'generosity' of spirit that Hardy brought to his pictures, 'and their constant attentiveness'³⁸¹:

The most striking of these images are the results of conscious poses, of second attempts, of spoken or wordless negotiation between the photographer and the people who became his subjects....[He] seldom bothers with the illusion of total spontaneity...Hardy regularly attracts the gaze of his subjects, who often compose themselves for the camera and are shown doing so³⁸².

This mutual recognition or complicity echoes the quality of the relationships between camera and subject that were so characteristic of working-class family photography. Partly this was a consequence of Hardy's own background, but even he had to work at this to win the compliance of strangers.

At the end of the War, Hardy returned to the *Picture Post*. Once again his work covered a wide range of newsworthy international and domestic topics. These included visits to the working-class communities in Liverpool, Cardiff, Newcastle, London and Glasgow. The documentation of the Gorbals in 1948 and of the Elephant and Castle in 1949 are of particular interest as an example of the enormous care needed in documenting these communities - while it was relatively easy to walk the streets of a 'poor' district, genuine access to the lives of the people there was much more difficult. *Picture Post's* approach was to always send a journalist along with the cameraman. Hardy was usually accompanied by Bert Lloyd who

Photo 40. Hardy's Childhood home. Bert Hardy.



was one of the most brilliant men I have ever met. He came from a large and poor family, most of whom had died from T.B.....He was a card carrying Communist, but for all the right reasons. He just didn't think that money should matter.....We became very good friends.....His greatest asset was his ability to win people's confidence instantly, and to talk to anyone. This made him the best man to send along to places like the East End of London³⁸³.

Despite this and Hardy's own childhood in the East End of London, they were shocked when they arrived in the Gorbals.

The poverty was much worse than anything I had known around Blackfriars and that was saying something. The long narrow streets were lined with high tenement blocks with grimy, uncleaned windows, and tattered rags for curtains. As slowly we walked the streets, the misery of the place began to get to us.....Each of the great blocks of flats had just one little lavatory at the bottom of the stairs, often with the door knocked off, and none had proper washing facilities³⁸⁴.

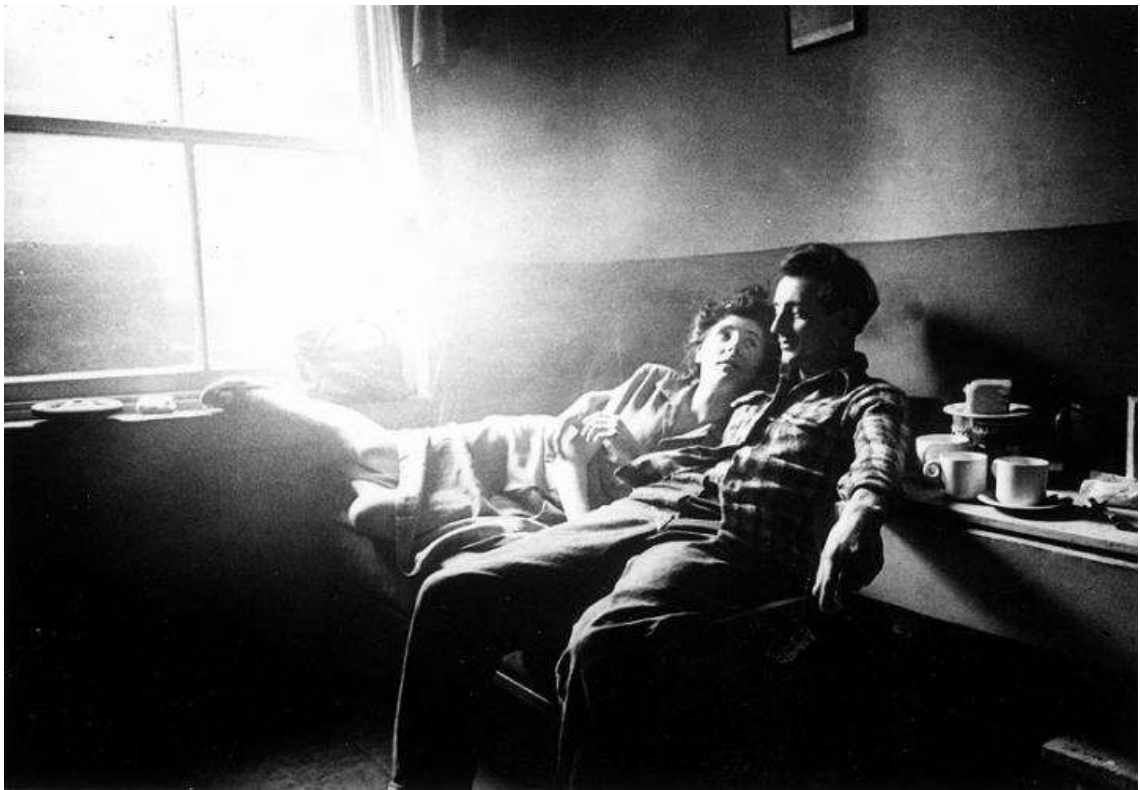
Real access to the lives of the people here was hard to gain, but, 'One day, when we were walking around, a woman standing outside her home called out to us ' If you want to see a bonny mess come and look in here'³⁸⁵. The consequence of this invitation was a tremendous series of pictures documenting a dreadfully deprived community, but one in which the humanity of the people – especially the children - shone through. This problem of access resurfaced when Hardy was sent to the Elephant and Castle to document the community there.

Like the Gorbals story it was difficult to find a way to start.....It was a dreary November and, in those days before smokeless fuels, the whole area was shrouded in thick fog for most of the time. It wasn't long before Bert and I thought we must be bloody mad: all we had were pictures of trams, smog and trams in smog³⁸⁶.

The problem was solved when, seeing Bert's camera, a friendly prostitute called Maisie shouted across the street 'Ow about taking a picture of me?' She befriended the two Bert's and, 'She acted as our contact and guide while we were doing the story, giving us ideas, and telling us where to find anything'³⁸⁷. The result was another prize-winning documentation of a vigorous, very human community of working people. The ability of people like Bert Hardy

and Bert Lloyd, with their backgrounds and social skills, to access working-class communities on a relatively egalitarian basis was essential. It was an ability that stood in stark contrast to those photographers seen in the previous chapter who found it so difficult to bridge the social gap to their subjects. And their acceptance, and their success as photographers and reporters who could attract the sorts of mass working-class audiences *Picture Post* was able to secure, arose also from their affection and respect for their subjects. They produced images that, in the direst of circumstances almost invariably focussed on the positive. They produced images which were in exactly the same mode as the family photography seen earlier, and which reassured their subjects about their lives. So his pictures of The Elephant and Castle in London (Photos 41-13) place the people, not the conditions, at the centre of the images, and show a people full of good humour, enterprise and human warmth. These are images full of horizontal connections between working people, which celebrate their worth as individuals and as a group, and which provided affirmation to them of the value of their lives. Hardy's documentation of the Gorbals provides confirmation of his photographic ambitions. Initially, this was a project given by *Picture Post* to Bill Brandt, but his gloomy, Germanic, images were not thought quite suitable for publication and Hardy was sent. His shock at what he found was obvious and he too, was, quite willing to take pictures of the dreadful conditions there. But he also searched for the positive and found it largely among the children (Photos 44-46). Indeed Photo 45 was one of his most popular, and Hardy's favourite.

Photos 41-43. The Elephant and Castle. Bert Hardy. 1949.





Photos 44-46. The Gorbals, Glasgow. Bert Hardy. 1948.





Hardy's images were so closely aligned with the methods of working-class family photography that it may be possible to think of him simply as a 'super' family photographer, one perhaps without a studio, but one who was very proficient in the techniques seen in the first section of this chapter. Except that his pictures, particularly those published in *Picture Post*, were hugely popular, widely circulated, and they were not only very similar to those seen in *Labour*, but also to what could be seen in a large number of other high circulation publications. Indeed Hardy's methodology was widely shared. For example, *The Daily Herald's* photographic archives are fascinating for this period. By 1929 it was in the hands of Odhams, a private publishing firm, and it was relaunched as a much more commercially-orientated enterprise. Political and industrial coverage were given only a page each, while the remaining eighteen pages were devoted to the columns of leading authors, serialised thrillers and human interest stories. There was a new layout and new staff; by 1939 its circulation had risen steadily to 2.5 million. Photography was an integral element of the new commercialism and, in 1930, of James Jarche, one of Fleet Street's star photographers was taken on³⁸⁸. In 1934 he published his autobiography, *People I Have Shot*. It is not a particularly enlightening work which seems to underline the paper's drift away from the politics of the Left. Jarche himself makes it clear that 'Politics were, and are not, of any interest to me'.³⁸⁹ His account of his work is an inconsequential narrative of knockabout and 'personality' in the capture of good photos and there is certainly no sense in his account of a planned agenda for the paper's photography.³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, *The Daily Herald* did regularly call upon its staff to photograph working people and this did leave something of an impression on Jarche: when returning from photographing trawler men in Aberdeen he reflected on

how hard a man must work under present conditions to make a livelihood at all.....there were fisher folk going out in all weathers, often running grave risks to ensure fresh fish for the market and a mere pittance for themselves.....O yes, the labourer is worthy of his hire³⁹¹.

But interpreting the *Daily Herald's* archive is not straightforward. Jarche leaves his readers with the sense that any political considerations were inconsequential afterthoughts, and the photography was more the consequence of individual quick wits and chance rather than a thought-out policy. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern a persistent interest in

photographing working people. Quite often this was done using modes that obscured or marginalized working people. They were frequently presented within pastoral contexts, their prominence sacrificed to the demands of pictorialism, their concerns lost in the promises of techno-utopianism, their presence buried beneath sentimentalism, sensationalism or pseudo-constructivism. These are the very same modes of representation to be seen in Chapter One. But emerging from these competing, clashing modes were constants. Firstly, it was working people who were photographed, who were regarded as important enough to be published and who were a subject of interest to readers. Often these working people were actually at work, and seen to be performing valuable functions. In many ways *The Daily Herald's* archive is analogous with the entire photographic archive of the era in that there was always a range of ways of presenting working people and that these battled with each other, interpenetrated and vied for dominance. But from these encounters a strong, and very numerous, strand of photography materialises which, in exactly the same way as family photography, was concerned to bring working people to the front and centre of the image. Here, this strand is illustrated by the photography of Edward Malindine of the *Daily Herald* in his photographs of the Scottish herring girls at Great Yarmouth in 1933. These were a migrant and temporary workforce of women who followed the herring fleet up the east coast of Britain, performing a physically demanding, smelly task at all hours of the day. There was a photography, seen in Chapter One, which very much regarded these women as 'other', as strange objects of curiosity. Malindine's photography is entirely different (Photos 47-52). Physically his camera is at the same level, or slightly beneath, his subjects. There appears to be a warmth between him and his subjects, and between the subjects themselves. And his night-time shots give a drama and importance to their work. Malindine brought the same deeply respectful and affectionate frontal gaze to these women that was such a feature of family photography. John Roberts, in his study of the American social photographer, Lewis Hine, attached great importance to this style.

Frontality signified that nothing was hidden, in the sense that a sitter for a photographic portrait was, by looking directly into the camera, exposing himself or herself to an 'objective' process. To the spectacle of a painting, frontality of posture and eye-to-eye contact signified a.....honesty.....In Hine's photography the same principle applies: frontality is embraced essentially as a democratic convention.....For

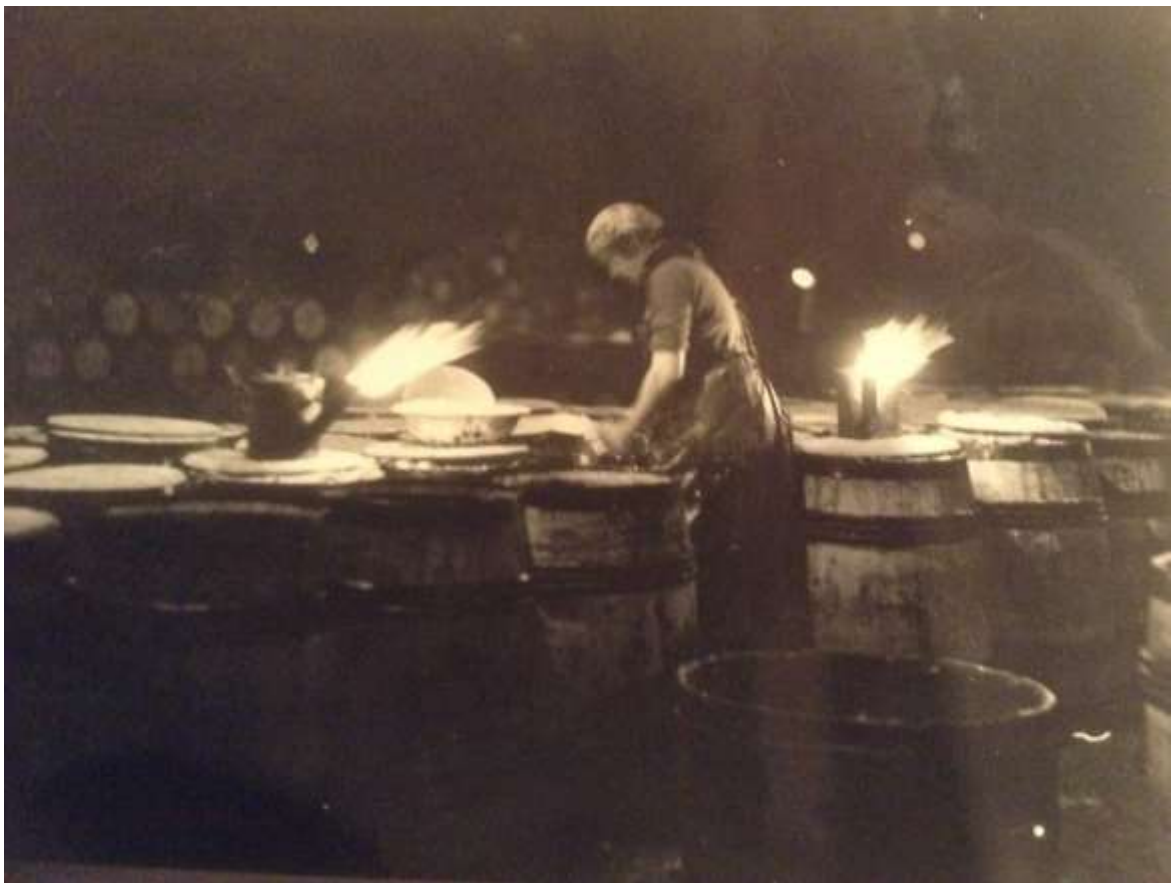
Hine, though, this relation is a class conscious act. For the child labourer or male or female worker to stare out of the photograph with a certain pride or autonomy is to transform the object of the capitalist labour process into the subject of that process. This was profoundly radical and must have been profoundly disturbing for those used to seeing the poor and workers as the passive object of their gaze.³⁹²

The most important group of people to be 'profoundly disturbed' by these images surely were the working people themselves, Malindine took time to write on the reverse of each picture the name of the woman he had photographed: Mrs Elsie Campbell, Miss Neta Gray, Mrs Jessie Campbell- mother of Elsie, Nellie Ritchie, and Chrissie Crawford, all from Fraseburgh. When they saw these wonderfully composed images of themselves, when others in comparable occupations saw them, staring out with 'pride and autonomy', the impact on their sense of self- and social- worth can have only been positive.

Photos 47-52. Scottish Herring Women at Great Yarmouth. *The Daily Herald*, Edward Malindine. 1933.









Nevertheless, Photos 51-52 contain distinct elements of pictorialism, elements that feature throughout this newspaper's archive. But this was a photography that was never concerned to provide a simple documentation of reality. It presented aesthetics that have caused some historians concern. David Levi Strauss, for example, has warned that 'to aestheticize tragedy is the fastest way to anaesthetize the feelings of those who are witnessing it', and that 'beauty is a call to admiration, not action' ³⁹³. While Martha Rosler has pointed to the power of the commercial market to produce a photography mired in an entertainment mode of cultural production. This privileged appearance over interpretation, and it avoided

the identification of individuals responsible for oppression - and only focusses on the victims without any evidence of a route to a better place, where there is no model of social progress...[and which] becomes a depoliticised typology of social losers. ³⁹⁴

In this discourse the market is capable of taking any cultural form, even those displaying elements of resistance, and, by introducing an aesthetic beauty, reducing it to impotence by recycling it back as a saleable commodity devoid of any of its initial significance. Cultural activity then merely serves to reinforce the interests of those who benefit most from the

market, and to neutralise opportunities for effective social change. There is a great deal in this argument, but this chapter suggests that its underlying pessimism may be overstated. Two historians, Jacques Ranciere and David Levi Strauss, have addressed this pessimism. Both have tried to envisage how cultural forms can emerge which represent effective alternatives to the dominant forms. In his book, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Ranciere starts by rejecting notions that the audiences for art are passive, ignorant or subjects of a 'false consciousness'. He has no time for those theories of domination that are founded on 'the stupefaction of the spectator'³⁹⁵. He asserts the more egalitarian concept of an equality of intelligence between artist and audience. And he sees audiences as intelligent participants in any cultural activity: 'The spectator also acts like a pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares and interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of places'³⁹⁶. Audiences, including working-class audiences, are intellectuals 'as is anyone and everyone.' Rather than passively accepting whatever form is presented to them, they actively take this up to make and re-make their lives in an infinite number of, perfectly rational, but unpredictable ways. This activity produces

a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world they live in and the way in which they are equipped to adapt to it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such it allows for new modes of political construction, of alternative enunciation³⁹⁷.

It is the very unpredictability of the creative response of individuals to a cultural form that can give it a political potential. A cultural form that avoids crude propaganda and regards the audience as equal and active participants can 'extract from the life and settings of[their] precarious existences and return them back to their owners, making them available like a song they can enjoy, like a love letter whose words and sentences they can borrow for their own lives'³⁹⁸.

Levi Strauss shares much of this viewpoint. He sees art, particularly photography, not simply as a method of transporting messages of subjection, but as a two-way form of communication, 'communication as an inclusive, inquisitive process'³⁹⁹. He feels that

audiences actively used cultural forms to identify and locate themselves, in which they searched for the best of themselves. He accepts that there is a photography of working people that identifies them as 'other', as objects of pity, as passive victims with a culture that needs to be replaced. But he also believes that there can be a photography which carries a sense of devotion to its working class subjects, which is concerned to 'show them at their best,' which reveals 'aspects of the divine' in these subjects and which affirms their value⁴⁰⁰. In this photography beauty provides working people with a means of recognizing the very best of themselves. It is not necessarily the aesthetics themselves that determines whether a particular photography represents a resistance to the dominant modes. Rather it is the purposes to which these aesthetics are put, and how they are received by their audiences, that are central to understanding its significance.

This chapter suggests that there was a photography in inter-war Britain capable of engaging its audience in exactly the sort of responses that Ranciere and Levi Strauss envisaged. These were responses which involved the audience in an active consideration of the nature and value of their own lives. This photography used older aesthetic traditions, but combined this with modes of representation developed in working-class family photography. In this way it presented back to working people aspects of their own lives, in attractive and life-affirming forms. A sense of devotion to its subjects and aspects of the divine were common characteristics. It was a love letter, from which working people could borrow for their own lives. This use of aesthetic beauty can be seen in the photography of *Labour* and in the work of Bert Hardy. It can also be seen in the work of Thurston Hopkins. He started work at the *Picture Post* in 1936 and continued there for many years with only a short break in the RAF's photographic unit during the Second World War. His obituary in *The Independent* places him firmly within the traditions of the *Post*, describing his work as capturing, 'the humanity, spirit and social inequality and contradictions of life.... Many of his pieces dealt with issues that were close to the heart of ordinary working people, illustrating them with images of people like them'⁴⁰¹. Photo 53 is taken from a series on 'Life in Liverpool' which, though shot in 1955, is characteristic of much of his work. It has the title 'Face Wash'. The background shows a grimy, stark interior, the fire has not been lit, the only decoration is a calendar just above the fireplace, while a candle flickers in front of a mirror casting little light; the steam

rising from the woman's head suggests a chill in the room. By inference this dwelling has not got a bathroom or a sink. This is exactly the sort of accommodation the slum clearance programmes wanted to destroy. The composition of the photo has strong Pictorialist elements with the white circle of the bowl shining out from the gloom. But, while the background is as grim as any taken by, for example, Walker Evans in his series on the homes of southern sharecroppers in the U.S.A., it shares none of his despair. In the midst of difficult living conditions the woman is cleaning herself. The trouble taken to do this is considerable - the water has had to be fetched and heated, the table protected by newspaper, a moment of privacy found in a, probably, crowded home - and despite this the woman is determined to be clean. There is a nobility in this effort that is enhanced by the aesthetic beauty Hopkins utilises. Many working people would have recognised this situation immediately, it is an image in which they could recognise something of their own lives. And it is an image that stimulates both an empathy with the woman's position and an understanding of their own. It is an image that does not 'separate' but rather one which makes and consolidates, to use Foucault's phrase, 'horizontal conjunctions'. It is an image that rejects the patronising, hierarchical assumptions of the slum-clearance programmes that the poor lived in filth and needed to be rescued from it. Here is an image of someone who may well have lived in poor conditions, but was doing something about it herself. Finally, the relationship between Hopkins and his subject has not got the awkward and suspicious distances that were seen in the slum photography seen in Chapter 3. Rather there is an intimacy and familiarity evident in the relationship between photographer and subject, without which such a picture would not be possible. This is not a photograph mired in the entertainment culture or one that carried intimations of power. It is full of devotion to its subjects, regardless of their circumstances. It was made possible because it utilised the methodology of working-class family photography that insisted that the subject should be at the centre and the front of the image. It was made possible because of the quality of the relationships the photographer was able to create. And it was made possible because of the skill with which Hopkins utilised the aesthetics of Pictorialism. These aesthetics, used in this manner, did not distract from the realities of working-class life. Rather they helped to create a profoundly egalitarian image in which working people could recognise the quality and value of their lives. The kind of image that can be found throughout the archives discussed in this chapter.

Photo 53. Face Wash from 'Life in Liverpool'. Thurston Hopkins. 1955.



It could be argued that the coincidence of forms and content between the photography of Left-leaning publications such as *Labour*, *Picture Post* and the *Daily Herald* with those found in working-class family photography was a simple function of pointing the camera at working people and there was nothing intentional or significant about this. The absence of a substantial, supporting literary archive makes it difficult to be certain about the motivations of these photographers. But a connection between technique and motivation can be glimpsed in the traces of editorial processes in the archives of both the *Daily Herald* and the

Labour Party. Occasionally some of the photos retain, sometimes on both sides, the editor's crayon marks as the image was prepared for the press. At times this was done simply to remove blurred or excessively dark sections of a picture, but always the end product is the same - working people are placed at the centre of the frame. The *Daily Herald's* archive contains this sort of manipulation. Photos 54-55 are of Watson's Smithy in East London and they are typical of the *Herald's* interest in capturing working people in their occupational environment; in both cases the peripheral detail is not without interest, but it has been sacrificed in order to bring the worker into a more prominent position in the composition. While Photos 56-57 are taken from a series of gypsy life during the 1930's, which include a characterful set of close-ups of gypsy women. Given the place of gypsies in contemporary racial hierarchies, these represent a powerful concern to represent the humanity of one the most marginalised groups in British society using the same techniques that were used for other groups of working people - a very egalitarian concern. Here again the same editorial process can be seen, where peripheral details are excluded, even when they have an intrinsic interest, in order to bring the human being to the centre of the viewer's attention. Photos 58-59 are from the Labour Party's photographic archive and were taken as part of inter-war campaigns about housing conditions. In each instance the peripheral details of the image are entirely relevant to the aims of these campaigns, emphasising the gloom, the clutter, and the cramped and crowded conditions. In each case the editor has sacrificed these details in order to bring the people more prominently into the centre of the image. This was a conscious and deliberate process, and it was certainly not accidental or coincidental. Consistently, amateur working-class and professional photographers, and editors of Left-leaning newspapers, shared the same technique of highlighting the working person as an individual in the belief that their customers, working people, were attracted to and interested in these forms.

It is noticeable that this same process appears to spread across the regional press as well. The web-site, www.mirrorpix.com, stores a lot of the photography from regional newspapers that have, today, been taken over by the *Daily Mirror* and, while hardly a proper survey, a quick glance through this archive shows many examples of this mode of representing working people from the *Liverpool Echo*, the *Birmingham Post and Mail*, the

Newcastle Chronicle and Journal and the *Manchester Evening News* (Photos 60-61). This is not to claim this was the dominant mode in these papers, that were often a long way from the politics of a publication like *Labour*, for example. Rather to state that these modes were there in the mainstream, fighting for space among other modes that were rather less supportive of working people and that this was a mode with widespread appeal.

Photos 54-55. Watson's Smithy. *The Daily Herald*. 1935.





Photos 56-57. Gypsies, Epsom Downs. *The Daily Herald*. 1933.





Photos 58-59. Housing Conditions. The Labour Party.





Photo 60. Cotton Mill Workers. *Manchester Evening News*. 17/08/32.



Photo 61. Chimney Sweep. *Manchester Evening News*. 12/12/33.



Alongside the identification of the extent and character of the photography described in this chapter, and it may also be possible to describe the significance of this cultural development. Writing in a Fascist prison in Italy around 1929-35, Antonio Gramsci shared the bewilderment of many Marxist intellectuals of the period. If, as Marx had predicted, the development of capitalism should inevitably lead to the triumph of the proletariat, what had gone wrong? Instead of a triumph he had seen a passive proletariat, or even one that had happily supported the fascists all over Europe. Some intellectuals, such as the Frankfurt School, tried to understand and explain how this had happened, but Gramsci sought to understand the nature of societal change and then to develop strategies that could accelerate that change and ensure that it would be beneficial to the workers and peasants. Ultimately he was trying to identify methods that would lead to the triumph of the proletariat, and while this was slow in arriving, his ideas about the nature of major change in society remain both very interesting and relevant to these studies of the photography of working people.

One of the key areas of his thought are the mechanisms by which one class establishes power, or hegemony, over another, and he argues that this is not solely dependent on physical violence or economic power, but more importantly, on persuading the ruled to accept the systems of belief of the rulers and to share their social and moral values. He saw this cultural dominance as the vital element in hegemony. Indeed a successful ruling class was one which, before it actually took power, had already established its intellectual and moral leadership. Thus there was a period of time in which the class that was preparing to take power first established their cultural hegemony. This Gramsci termed a 'war of position' or a 'passive revolution' which preceded a 'war of manoeuvre' in which political power was obtained.

When a new social grouping makes its political appearance on the historical stage it is already equipped for all its social functions and can therefore struggle for total domination of the nation⁴⁰².

Gramsci described this 'passive revolution' as

a molecular social transformation which takes place, as it were, beneath the surface of society...even when frontal attack [revolution] may be impossible, a passive revolution may nonetheless be taking place, the class struggle continues despite the appearance of surface stability⁴⁰³.

These molecular changes 'modify the pre-existing composition of forces and hence become the matrix of new changes'⁴⁰⁴; changes which involve gathering all the political and moral resources available to establish an alternative visualisation of 'what ought to be'⁴⁰⁵. This comes to dominate interpretations of history, of philosophy, politics and, most importantly, of the everyday. In this model there is no significant change in political hegemony without a prior pre-figuring or pre-fixing of the nature of this change by the up-and-coming social group in civil society.

These ideas put the intellectual at the centre of this process of pre-figuring social change, and Gramsci's ideas about the nature of the intellectual are interesting. He believed that

Every social group coming into existence in the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals, which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function, not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields⁴⁰⁶.

He felt that it was the role of the intellectuals within the working class to produce the molecular changes that would lead to both cultural hegemony and, then, to their assumption of power. The responsibility of these 'organic' intellectuals who rose from the ranks of the workers and peasants was to clearly establish 'what ought to be' throughout both their class and through the rest of society, and in particular to conquer and assimilate the traditional intellectual who hitherto had supported the ruling elite. But he had also an extended concept of the intellectual,

All men are intellectuals....although one can speak of intellectuals one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist....There is no form of human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded....Each man, outside his professional activity, carries some form of intellectual activity, that is he is a philosopher, an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, he is conscious of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world, or to modify it, that is to bring in new modes of thought⁴⁰⁷.

And passion was essential if the organic intellectuals were to link with these intellectuals, 'History and politics cannot be made without passion, without this emotional bond between intellectuals and the people'⁴⁰⁸. At the heart of Gramsci's thought was a belief that social reality was, to some extent, a cultural construct, almost a construct of the spirit. If the organic intellectuals could bond with the intellectual constructs of the people to establish an alternative way of looking at the world, to be clear about 'what ought to be', then an alternative mass culture could develop to erode the hegemony of the ruling class and deprive it of the consensus of the mass of the people. At that point the war of position would be won and the next step would be to assume political power.

The question of how the organic intellectuals could do this is, of course, hugely problematic; what would this process look like in reality? Possibly the inter-war photography of working people can offer a working model in which the establishment of a cultural hegemony outside of the ruling elite can be seen. Here the work of photographers such as Bert Hardy, Alf Tulip and Jack Hulme, for example, all from humble backgrounds, can be seen as the work of organic intellectuals. While the images created by Margaret Monck and Helen Muspratt, for instance, both from privileged families, can be seen as the assimilation of traditional intellectuals into the new cultural hegemony. And, perhaps, the family photographs and the studies of shepherds in the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, or the photographs taken by the East Coast trawler-men, can be seen as the work of 'everyman' intellectuals, developing modes which the organic intellectuals used in their own photography. The affection and respect seen in the photography of publications such as *Picture Post* and the *Daily Herald*, and the enormous popularity of these publications, could be seen as the establishment of the vital emotional bond between organic intellectuals and the people. The rejection of the modes of representation seen in the mainstream photography of bodies such as Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society may be evidence of the molecular changes beneath the surface stability that served to undermine the cultural hegemony of the middle class. There were well-established forms in British photography which largely ignored working people, but these were challenged by another that did the opposite. This new mode of representation put working people at the centre of their images, establishing an essential cultural, social and political statement - we are important - which challenged the existing orthodoxies. These representations can be seen to be circulating and recirculating across a range of public and private forums, sharing a common audience of working people, and of those with a sympathy for them. They were underpinned by the ideas, values, social attitudes and concepts that made their production and reception possible. Each of these were re-made and recirculated among this audience as the images were re-created and recirculated. In this way an alternative discourse or cultural code emerged. This repeated re-creation and recirculation lead to this discourse acquiring an authority, establishing a different way of seeing, and even constructing a 'truth.' And it is in this alternative 'truth' about working people that the political importance of these kinds of representations can be seen.⁴⁰⁹ If this is a valid model of the development of cultural identity then the photography uncovered by this research has some significance:

the repeated patterns of representation seen across numerous archives were not accidental, they were part of a Gramscian war of position, part of a cultural upheaval in which British society can be seen quietly, but fundamentally, to be changing itself.

At the heart of this war of position were the connections formed between informal cultural activity and more formal political activity. In the field of photography these links were to be found in the commonalities of the content of working-class familial and the press photography of the Left. It can be seen also in the movement of photographers, such as Bert Hardy, from their family photography into this press photography. In these ways a popular photographic mode had been taken up and shared across a range of working-class communities, and it was the very popularity of this exchange that made it attractive to others seeking wider audiences for their own photography. As these others took up these new cultural forms, created by working people, their influence spread. And this connectivity took a more formal political character and significance when these modes can be found infiltrating the photographic archives of the Labour and Communist Parties. At this stage the original cultural resistance to the dominant modes of representation and the creation of alternatives, which had spread across family photography, into Left-leaning publications such as *Picture Post*, *Labour*, the *Daily Herald*, and the regional press, began to enter the arena of party politics.⁴¹⁰

The Labour Party's collection of photos is relatively small in number and rather anonymous, probably because it could rely on the resources of the *Daily Herald* for any photographic materials it needed. The collection largely features leading figures in the Party, elections and bye-elections and important committees. Working people often appear simply as attentive audiences, but otherwise they were depicted in the context of housing improvement. Labour seems to have been concerned to trumpet the slum clearance and house building programmes of its town and city councils, so that 'before' and 'after' pictures were popular. Of course, this involved documenting some grim scenes but this took a completely different form from that seen in Chapter One. Here the photographers were able to establish close contact with their subjects, to address and photo them frontally and, most importantly, to

identify the fortitude, even the good humour, of working people in these circumstances (Photos 62-63). These are modes which, of course, are very familiar.

The Communist Party's photographic collection, however, is much more impressive. It was originally housed at 16, King Street, Covent Garden, sharing the premises with, and serving, the Communist Party press agency, the *Daily Worker*, the publishers Lawrence and Wishart, the People's Press Printing Society and, of course the Communist Party itself. Each of these used the Picture Archive, allowing them to reduce costs by avoiding the professional press agencies, while assembling a catalogue that more closely matched their particular requirements.⁴¹¹ The archive consists of over seventy boxes of photographs, with their contents assembled in themes, arranged alphabetically rather than chronologically. By far the most common category is that of photographs of individuals, particularly of those associated with the Left. Taking three boxes at random. Box 15 contains pictures of eighteen individuals, including De Gaulle, Angela Davis and the Dean of Canterbury; and three envelopes of Communist Party delegations to the USSR. Box 39 has photos of thirty-seven individuals, including Lenin, Karl Liebknecht and Lloyd George, as well as sets of photos on London, the London Pipe Band, the London Trades Council, the League against Imperialism, the Labour Party, and the Left Book Club. While Box 55 has photos of twenty-nine people, including Arthur Scargill, Vishnu Sharma and Mrs Simpole; as well as the Schools Cuts Campaign, the Second Front Demonstrations of 1942, Ships, the Siemens Strike of 1939, and Social Conditions. While this method of organizing photographic material for newspaper use was perfectly normal, the content clearly reflects the special interests of its users.

Organisation, agitation, confrontation, conferences, May Day demonstrations, selling *The Daily Worker*, and scenes of mutual support in the times of crisis are the main areas of interest. And there are numerous images of strikes, including unofficial strikes which were a particular interest to a Party concerned about the very conservative leadership of the Unions post-1926. Equally, pictures of confrontations between the state and the workers are well represented. The violence that often accompanied the culmination of the hunger marches in London, the General Strike and the anti-fascist riots of this period all provided images that clearly interested this revolutionary political organisation. The cumulative effect is of a well-organized, self-sufficient working class movement in constant conflict, in places

of work and on the streets, with the state. At the centre of this is the Communist Party. None of which is at all surprising given the original aims of those for whom this archive was assembled.

Perhaps more surprising are the areas that are either missing or only poorly represented in the archive. There is virtually no interest in portraying 'new technological environments', which is in contrast to the image makers in both the Soviet Union and the U.S.A., for example, who were fascinated by the new 'Machine Age' and shared a positivism about its impact on human progress. Similarly there is almost a total absence of pictures of working conditions and certainly no attempt to explore these systematically beyond pictures of the strikes that may well have resulted from these conditions. And there are only occasional photos of social conditions; these are, at times, almost light hearted and even when there are pictures of the upper classes they do not seem to have been juxtaposed with those of horrendous social conditions, using a very obvious photo-journalistic technique. Neither working nor social conditions are systematically explored with a view to mobilising the anger of readers. Compared, for example, with the wide ranging photographic ambitions of the German Communist Party publication (*Arbeiter Illustrie Zeitung*) this was a limited photography.⁴¹² It was not the living and working conditions of working people that were of interest to the photographers of the Communist Party; it was their militancy in the workplace, their solidarity and their organization that received their attention. This was not a photography that was particularly concerned to record working-class lives as much as present images of working people in their moments of political activity.

John Roberts, in his studies of inter-war documentary photography, is dismissive of the British Communist Party's use of photography, identifying weaknesses which arose from

its rejection of the radical functionalism of Soviet and German aesthetics, its distance from the modernist avant-garde, and its rapid assimilation into modes of social democratic paternalism and bourgeois humanism⁴¹³.

He considered that its photography was generally 'rather dilettantish' and that the Communist Party's use of the photograph was 'culturally conservative'⁴¹⁴. It displayed little interest in the new forms such as Constructivism or New Objectivity that were so popular on the Continent. Roberts contrasts this with the social photography of the Soviet Union and Germany.

Here the ideal of a new kind of reporter, the worker correspondent, had been mobilized in order to promote a revolutionary culture of worker self-representation, overturning the image world of imperial reaction.....training party members in the techniques of the dialectical photograph - techniques that aims to inform the self-understanding of the proletariat as a class and to foster a recognition of its exploitation within a broader conception of society⁴¹⁵.

This is a perfectly accurate critique of the photography in this archive. Across most of the spectrum of British photography at this time there was little interest in the radical artistic conventions that were being developed in Germany and the Soviet Union. There, alliances of radical artists and communists attempted to use photography as a means of directly combating dominant narratives and of reconstructing working-class perceptions of themselves and their place in the world. But to some extent this is to miss the point. The Communist Party adopted, instead, those modes of representing working people which had both the greatest attraction for them and the same basic refusal to see them as victims. These were the same modes that lay at the heart of all the photography to be seen throughout this chapter. For example, one of the liveliest components of this archive are the dozens of photos stamped on the reverse with the words 'Wal Hannington'. Although he may have clashed at times with the leadership of the Communist Party these are still included in its archive. Hannington was the leader of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (N.U.W.M) from 1921 to 1939 and most of these photos are concerned with its activities. Indeed some of them appear in his account of the N.U.W.M., *Unemployed Struggles* published in 1936. These pictures are entirely in line with the concerns of the rest of the archive in their narrative of an organized and disciplined working-class, not begging for help but demanding their rights, and so coming into violent contact with the state (Photos 64-67). But their modes of representation are very familiar. Again the position of the photographers stays at the same level as their subjects, it is eye-to-eye, almost among

them, one of the group. There is no sense of awkwardness or of social distance between the photographer and subject. These are people in very difficult circumstances - on a Hunger March or in conflict - but there is no sense of desperation or hopelessness; these photographs are not part of any 'tradition of victim'. Their power comes from their 'everydayness', these people are ordinary people unbowed by the desperate issues they had to live with. Hannington produced another book the following year, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*.⁴¹⁶ This included 32 photographs that are different in character from much of the photography of the Communist Party's archive (Photos 68-69). Given the central concern of the book, this is probably not surprising. But the photographs here did focus on the suffering of working people - unemployment, life in the Government's Labour Instructional Camps, pit disasters, poor living and working conditions. Despite this emphasis, however, the same modes of representation can be found. There is still the same frontality and proximity, still the same intimacy between photographer and subject, and still the same stark contrast with the photography seen in previous chapters. These photographers were different from those seen in Chapter Three. They were willing and able to enter the houses of working people, in ways that individuals such as Margaret Monck and Humphrey Spender explicitly found impossible. They were able to address the inhabitants of the slums in ways a photographer such as James Cleet could never manage.⁴¹⁷ And they were able to return the gaze of working people, even in the most difficult of circumstances, in the way that someone such as Amy Flagg studiously avoided.⁴¹⁸ These photographers, who illustrated Hannington's books, may not have matched the ideal that Forbes saw in Germany and the Soviet Union, but they were very close to their subjects, taking photographs of their equals and peers. Again, it may be argued that this was not a considered or premeditated form of photography, that the only focus for a photographer interested in, for instance, a strike, would be the strikers and that their appearance is not so much a sign of a 'photographic resistance' as much as the natural consequence of 'point and click'. Except that this flies in the face of the evidence in which all sorts of ingenious ways of presenting strikes were devised and which avoided any focus on working people. So, the General Strike was overwhelmingly portrayed as a parade of state power, while a strike could be portrayed with an image of stationary winding gear or an idle factory. Indeed, it is the contrast with this kind of marginalisation which helps to reveal the distinct character of these forms of representing working people. A character the Communist Party (and so, of course, its

publication *The Daily Worker*) shared with *Labour*, *Picture Post* and *The Daily Herald*, papers which by 1939 enjoyed a combined circulation of nearly four million readers. When this is put together with the increasing use of photography in working-class families, sharing many of the very same features, it is clear that a significant cultural presence is at play, and it is one that had a formal political potential for at least some of its participants. This entanglement of cultural and political developments, which can be traced in the use of this photography, may well also reveal an unfolding Gramscian 'war of position' in which established and dominant cultural norms were being quietly replaced by an alternative discourse, which were held high in popular affections and esteem. These popular, commonly shared, alternatives moved back and forth from family photography to the press photography of the Left. Both manifestations used the same forms and contained the same message about the value and importance of working people. It is this that facilitated the impact of a cultural development on the political discourse of the time.

Photo 62. Glasgow Slums. 1930's. The Labour Party.



Photo 63. Blackness Road, Dundee. 1928. The Labour Party.



Photo 64. First aid for Hunger Marchers, 1932. The Communist Party.



Photo 65. The Hunger March, 1932. The Communist Party.



Photo 66. Violence at the end of the 1932 National Hunger March. The Communist Party.



Photo 67. A kiss for a miner returning from a five day sit-in, 1935. The Communist Party.



Photos 68-69. From Wal Hannington's *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*.



THIS HOLE WAS DISCOVERED WHEN THE WALL WAS STRIPPED FOR RE-PAPERING



SLUMS IN CANNING TOWN

Finally, the chronology underpinning the development of this photography is worth considering. It is difficult to establish a neat sense of cause and effect and it would be very satisfying to be able to advance a very neat Gramscian model of change. In this, crudely, technological changes in the 1920's enabled working people access to photography which they used to develop their own modes. These then were taken up by the popular press in the 1930's as it became interested in using photography to boost circulation and influence the national discourse. Consequently political change was effected in the 1940's. In reality, however, this process looks far more complex. Stuart Hall, in his essay on the 'social eye' of *Picture Post* described the magazines' impact in very Gramscian terms, 'one of the ways in which the dominant value systems maintain their hegemony is to limit and restrict the kinds of 'logic' within which social reality can be signified'⁴¹⁹. And the importance of *Picture Post* came from the fact that it created, or helped to create 'new logics of social perception.....within the public discourse and find expression inside the hegemonic ideological institutions like commercial publishing'⁴²⁰. This journalism (including photo-

journalism) 'began to open up structural fissures in the social fabric of society, creating moments of transparency'⁴²¹. These were crucial.

In moments of transparency.....the roots of social experience are rendered socially visible; the hidden actors- the masses of ordinary people- enter the stage of human action in their own person; society is revealed to its self⁴²².

And he felt that this new 'self- knowledge' was vital in both developing popular support for the Second World War, but also in the emergence of a popular determination to secure social gains for working people immediately afterwards. But Hall is very clear about both the timeline for this emergence and about what was the fundamental mover propelling this development - it was the War, the need for a collective response to a very real threat from Fascism, and the impact of mass mobilisation all brought about significant change in political consciousness. He acknowledged that there were pre-1939 factors which also contributed to the emergence of the powerful journalism of *Picture Post*. Documentary film makers such as John Grierson had developed narratives of the everyday, or 'the drama of the doorstep'⁴²³. Similarly the Mass Observation programme, and the efforts of writers and journalists such as Orwell and Priestley, had made the effort to 'break through the crust of tradition and inherited social sightlessness which had kept half - the greater half - of England such a well- guarded secret from the other - the lesser, more powerful half'⁴²⁴. Hall also acknowledges other factors such as the impact of the mass unemployment of the Thirties and of the arrival of foreign journalists, such as Stefan Lorent the founder of *Picture Post*. But he is adamant about the paramount importance of the War.

The values and social rhetoric of the documentary style [of *Picture Post*], in themselves an active response to the social crisis of the inter-war period, were crystallised in the conditions of total war and civilian mobilisation. In such circumstances, an idiom which might, in other circumstances, have remained marginal to the dominant discourses of English society, converge for a time with the dominant structure of popular feeling.⁴²⁵

This is a powerful and persuasive argument, outlining the 'historical conjuncture' which led to a successful and influential form of journalism concerned with, and supportive of, working people. What Hall has little time for is any contribution from a pre-War tradition of

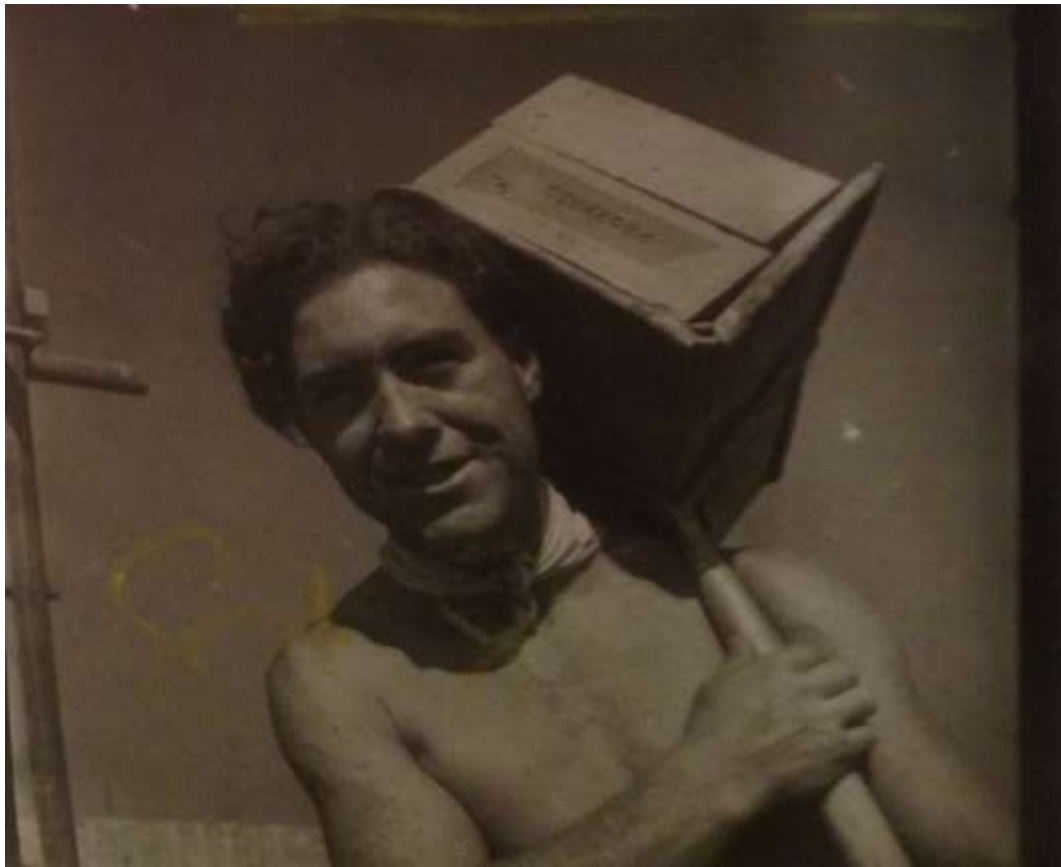
British social photography to this opening up of the 'social rhetoric'. Indeed he is dismissive, considering it to be, 'Composed, in almost equal parts, of a visual traditionalism (amounting almost to illiteracy) and a fixed opinion that the Great British Public is an ass'⁴²⁶. But the evidence of these inter-war archives suggests that working people had actually used this period to assiduously address this visual 'illiteracy' in ways that had indeed developed the nature of this 'social rhetoric'.

This is not to say that Hall's analysis of the 'historical conjuncture' which created wartime and post-War journalism is flawed, but it may be that he underestimated developments in the inter-war photography of working people. A, largely ignored or forgotten, tradition had arisen from developments in photographic technology, but, above all, had grown from the impact of the prolonged economic, social and political crisis of these years. It is striking that *Picture Post* was able to secure a circulation of 1.7 million very quickly after its inception in 1938, before the War; while in 1935 *The Daily Herald*, 'the world's best-selling daily newspaper', had two million readers.⁴²⁷ The audience for the journalism and the photography that Hall celebrates as a wartime and post-War phenomenon had been established before the War. It is undoubtedly true that mass mobilisation was a harrowing and cathartic experience, but so was life in inter-war Britain for many people. It may be that Hall's 'historical conjuncture' started to develop a little earlier and more forcefully than he thought. Indeed, it is noticeable how in 1939/40 the government raided the offices of *Picture Post* and *The Daily Herald* to co-opt exactly those photographers who had been so proficient in bringing working people into the national debate. Their role in war-time propaganda was not to develop new modes of representation, but to employ exactly those that had been developed before the War in order to attach working people to the war effort. This working-class photography consistently displayed values of energy, optimism, good humour, co-operation, and it was these that made their representations so valuable to a war-time government. Photos 70-71 are from *The Daily Herald* in during the dark days of 1941 and show the very same characteristics that were to be found in the photography of the East Coast fishing men or the shepherds of the Yorkshire Dales. Once again the working person is placed at the centre of the image. Their work is celebrated again, and the economic worth of working people re-emphasised. Their cheerfulness is highlighted, again

underlining the personal qualities of working people. The pictures have been taken from slightly below the level of the subject, developing their heroic qualities - and not just for a skilled elite, these are labourers. This wartime photography had the very same attributes as working-class family photography and the press photography of the Left. It was the same honorific and celebratory photography. This was not new, but had been developed by working people over the previous twenty years.

Although it may be difficult, then, to discern a neat Gramscian model, it is equally difficult to agree with Hall's description of the Second World War being the only important catalyst in the development of this photography. And it may be more productive to abandon attempts to identify a clear sequential chronology in favour of treating this as a social attitude. An attitude that unfolds and spreads, hesitatingly and in conflict with others at times, but crossing from family to public photography and back again, both mutually reinforcing and stimulating the other, in what can be seen in a quasi-Gramscian manner. But underlying these photographic developments was the steady and persistent pressure of a people determined to assert and confirm their worth, largely to themselves and to each other, but eventually onto the national stage. It was the upheavals of the inter-war period that brought this out of the family album into the civic arena and that ensured that a particular kind of representation grew to acquire the significance of an alternative discourse. But the single most important factor in the development of this photography was undoubtedly the desire for self-affirmation of working people and their refusal to accept the marginalisation and hierarchization that power sought to impose upon them. And the single most remarkable feature of this assertion and affirmation was its non-materialistic and egalitarian nature. This celebration, of the economic and personal worth of all working people, expanded the concept of the 'deserving poor' way beyond its Victorian confines to the point where it included almost everybody. This attitude can be seen in the photography and it was this attitude that made it possible to envisage a welfare state.

Photos 70-71. We're Building a Munitions Factory, Bedford, 1941. *The Daily Herald*.



iii. Conclusions.

Stuart Hall, impressed as he was by much of the photography in *Picture Post*, felt it had serious limitations.

Its 'social eye' was a clear lens, but its 'political eye' was far less decisive. It pinpointed exploitation, misery and social abuse, but always in a language which defined these as 'problems' to be tackled and remedied with energy and goodwill; it was instinctively reformist.....It never found a wayof relating the surface images of these problems to their structural foundations..... There is a rhetoric of change and improvement there, of people capable of resilience and courage; but there isn't anywhere a language of dissent, opposition or revolt.⁴²⁸

There is much in this statement. The photography seen in this chapter never had a revolutionary character. Its artistic conventions failed to make a clear break with the past in the manner of Alexander Rodchenko in Russia, or Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield in Germany. It never sought to analyse the structural causes of inequality and injustice, or to suggest ways in which these could be addressed or overthrown. It was limited in the sense that it originated in, and was developed as, a means for working people to confirm and reassure themselves about their own identity within the existing social context. There was never a suggestion that this context should be destroyed or replaced. Even in the National Unemployed Workers' Movement's most violent depiction of the disturbances that often accompanied the end of the Hunger Marches, the underlying motivation of the marchers was to petition Parliament, for succour within the existing system.

If it was never a 'revolutionary' photography this does not mean, however, that it could not be an agent of radical change. The character of this force for change can be understood by combining elements of Foucault's ideas about the formation of knowledge with Gramsci's thoughts on the way cultural change can encourage political adjustments. Foucault's ideas about knowledge and power have been interpreted as a description of an all-conquering, ever-renewing paradigm within which any resistance was either impossible or futile. And, at times, the photographic representations of working people seen in previous chapters would

largely seem to support this. However, alternative modes can clearly be seen to be developing, to be widely shared and circulated, cohering into a community of shared styles and values. Together these developments underline that the connections between the continuity of power and the formation of new knowledge were never seamless. Weaknesses and gaps can be seen to appear as different groups sought to develop more subjective forms of knowledge which were more positive about, or more supportive of, their own interests and power. This was a process driven by the desire of working people for a self-formation based upon more than the invisibility, marginalisation, hierarchisation, or their simple presentation as disciplined units of production, that were so clearly to be seen in many forms of contemporary photography. When the newspapers associated with the Left began to use photography to enlist the support of a mass audience they too turned to these alternative forms that were so attractive to this potential audience. These newspapers again publicised and circulated these forms, their meaning deepening and acquiring a political significance as they were widely shared. In this way a cultural form was able to take on a more formal political character precisely because it had originated in the active resistance of working people to the more negative, dominant, modes of representing them. Foucault's thoughts about the individual's self-formation involves a constant search for positive validation and affirmation (and an implicit rejection of more unfavourable narratives), which can help to explain the development of a photography from a family photography into a more politically aligned cultural form in very much the way that Gramsci predicted. It is within this self-formation that a gradual shift in cultural perceptions evolved to acquire the political significance of an alternative discourse. This was a photography concerned with idealising working people and it is easy to understand why this would be so appealing to them. But it was also one that often did not reflect some of the brute realities of working-class experiences at this time. Implicitly, and for some at least, there was a contrast between how they would like to envisage their lives and how things actually were. But the very tension between these two also helped to bring a political significance to this photography.

This perception, of the ever-present political potential of this family photography, is only made possible by understanding the motivations behind its origins. It is helpful not to regard

it as some kind of art movement such as constructivism or surrealism or even social realism. It did not arrive with a manifesto, a supporting journal, showcase exhibitions and fashionable retail outlets in London. In fact it was not an '-ism' at all, and it would be completely wrong to look for the pre-calculated or contrived conventions of an art movement. Rather these pictures reflect a social attitude, made up of the deep respect for, and knowledge of, family, friends and peers among the working class so evident in the photographs seen in this chapter. And they reflect a widely shared and circulated 'conversation' among working people about this knowledge and respect. It was this attitude that led to a photographic 'conversation' that was characterised by widely shared features and underlying values. This is what made it an agent for cultural, social and political change.

This is crucial to appreciating the significance of this photography - it was not just a nice way of taking family snaps, it was an agent of change. There was change implicit in who actually did the photography. At its inception, it was a photography done by and for working people. In their wholesale rejection of the dominant modes of representing them they demonstrated that they were far from being mere passive absorbers of the culture of others, but were active participants in forming modes that more accurately expressed their interests. This new social practice of creating their own photography, and so participating in their own self-formation, was, in itself, a challenge to power. Indeed, it could be argued that this practice was as important as the actual content of the photography. But there was certainly change implied in what this photography presented. It was a discourse in which alternative values honoured and celebrated working people as capable, energetic, intelligent, friendly, and good humoured. It moved them to the centre of the image, presenting them as valuable members of society. It ennobled them. Change, as well, was inferred in what was omitted from this photography. There was no reference to social hierarchies, or to displays of material wealth, or, strikingly, to the grim realities that faced many working people. 'Victim' photography is only a very small part of the archives studied and the negative aspects of the society they lived in were noticeable largely by their absence. At a time when the economic value of labour was undermined by mass unemployment, when eugenic theory openly questioned their biological worth, when their lives were often a bleak struggle for survival, this photography presented the working-class

world as it should be. Change was suggested in how these images were created. The frontality, centrality, complicity and mutual recognition visible in the pictures seen in this chapter created an intimate photography, conducted among equals, capable of looking the subject square-on, and which treated them with a grace and affection, a respect and devotion, based on this mutual recognition. This was an attitude extended to all of the working class, from gypsy and char-lady to skilled engineer. Political change was integral to this photography. It contained a distinct egalitarian counter-ideology, respecting and cherishing working people in ways that foreshadowed the remarkable egalitarian political settlement of 1945.

There are those historians of photography, such as John Roberts and John Tagg,⁴²⁹ who adopt a Foucauldian 'orthodoxy', in which they see, in their subject matter, the constant renewal of existing power structures. This 'orthodoxy' has been challenged by other historians, including historians of photography such as Chris Pinney.⁴³⁰ They see in the evidence before them a resistance to power which leads them to question the utility of Foucault's ideas about power formation. The photography presented in this chapter falls very much into this second category. It forms part of an active working-class culture in which they constructed perspectives of themselves that challenged that dominant culture seen in earlier chapters. This suggests that there are limitations to Foucault's discourse about power as it ignores the existence and significance of popular culture. But it is argued here that his thoughts about knowledge and power remain useful tools in understanding the significance of the photography seen in this chapter. This is for two reasons. First, as the earlier chapters showed there was a very pervasive and powerful dominant culture at play in the visual representation of working people. But also because his ideas about self-formation and power are very useful in explaining how resistance can emerge in the face of this dominant culture. And this utility is considerably enhanced when these ideas are combined with Gramsci's ideas about the connections between cultural and political change. Indeed it is a synthesis of the two thinkers that makes possible a more nuanced understanding of those granular changes in popular cultural and political attitudes that helped to produce the social transformations that eventually resulted in the political settlement of 1945.

Finally, there are a number of insights to be gained from the study of this photography - an empirical working through of political theory, a perception of the cultural arena as a site of conflict, the observation of working people actively involved in their own cultural formation. But there is not one greater than the sound of a shared voice, echoing across the nation, from fishing boats to national newspapers, asserting 'this is what we are like'. Particularly evident in their own photography, this was the voice of working people, their own voice, which was, extraordinarily, an egalitarian voice.

Conclusion

This thesis originated from an awareness of the remarkable photography of working people that can be seen during the inter-war period in countries such as Russia, Germany and the U.S.A., prompting a search for a similar British tradition. It was a search which asked how working people were represented in an era when photographic technology became cheaper for, and more accessible to, a wide spectrum of society. The resulting search for this tradition also aspired to establish its cultural and political significance. No simple, univocal tradition, no lost British social realism, was uncovered. No British school of photography, the equivalent of Alexander Rodchenko and the Russian Constructivists, or Dorothea Lange and the American photographers of the New Deal, or August Sander and the photographers of the German New Objectivity, was found. Rather a range of modes of intertwined and competing representations were identified. Many were produced by photographers from outside of the working class. Among these were those found in the Survey Movement, or in the pictorialism of photographers such as Edward Chambre Hardman and those of the Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society who reduced working people almost to the point of invisibility in their images. Others presented working people within a pastoral idyll in which the realities of industrial capitalism in the 1920's and 1930's were ignored in preference for the certainties and stabilities of a mythical agrarian past. Those photographers commissioned to capture the processes of production in the textile, fishing and farming industries presented a disciplined workforce - in dress, posture and gesture - displaying norms of physical deportment impregnated with the expectations and requirements of their employers. Even the photographers of slum clearance programmes, such as Amy Flagg and James Cleet, presented images that seemed to imply that working people required the assistance of others, their social superiors, to organize and improve their lives more effectively. Then there were photographers such as Tom Grant, John Maltby, J. Allen Cash and Helen Muspratt who display an obvious sympathy for the working class, but found that commercial considerations made it very difficult to find a way for their photography to develop from a personal concern into anything that could remotely impact upon the lives of their subjects. Others, such as Samuel Coulthurst and Humphrey Spender, found ways to anthropologically enter and explore the worlds of the working class,

attempting to bring their images back to the attention of those who may be in a position to improve their conditions.

In some ways it is counter-productive to see these various photographs simply as distinct forms of representation. They were each, for their own differing purposes, constantly adopting and adapting the German focus on the everyday and the older British traditions of pictorialism and pastoralism, influences which swirled through the photography of this period. Together they present a discourse, however, which has been united by the condemnation of many of the historians who have viewed them. At their worst they are felt to reduce working people to the point of invisibility, where they become apart from, and irrelevant to, the mainstream social discourse. Other historians have seen the forces of power and control as described by Foucault. Even at their best they are felt to contain a liberal 'tourist', or victim, gaze, which contains underlying assumptions about a passive, helpless working class that required the interventions of their 'betters' to secure amelioration. Here a generic humanitarian gaze obscures both the conflicts and contradictions arising from industrial capitalism and any class-based solutions that may address these. Of course, in a nation that did not experience the revolutionary situations of Russia and Germany, or the extremes of economic depression seen in the U.S.A., and in which the ruling elite was never really seriously threatened, it is perhaps unsurprising to find that this sort of imagery is so strongly represented in the archive; or that the semiotics of power they contain have been so quickly identified and so negatively regarded by those historians who have examined these photographs.

At the heart of this thesis, however, is the assertion that there was also a working-class photography. This was significantly different to that produced by others from outside the working class. It was distinctive in both the approach of the photographers, in the nature of its representations of working people and in the values it affirmed. Consequently, it had an importance that was completely different to that of 'outsider' photographers. This photography could be seen in the coalfields of South Yorkshire and the North East, in the fishing towns of the East Coast, in the family albums of Manchester, in the textile industry of

Huddersfield, and in the farms of Yorkshire. When this is contrasted to other contemporary photographs a distinct and definable mode of representation emerges. It is a photography that brings working people to the front and centre of the image, in which a palpable intimacy between photographer and subject can be felt, in which the photographer and subject are on the same physical level and in close proximity, and in which the image is concerned to honour and value the subject. Hitherto, this is a photography that has been largely ignored. It becomes visible when it is contrasted with the images produced by 'outsiders'. But its visibility becomes further enhanced by employing the methodologies of those historians of the anthropological photography of the British Empire, which encourage consideration of the materiality of photos - the ways in which they are produced and consumed. When this is done with this worker photography it is possible to reconstitute an often fragmented archive as a familial or domestic photography, produced and collected by working-class families and reflecting their interests, concerns and aspirations. This is important, as regarding this photography in this way reveals working people using this new technology to actively define their lives, giving it a cultural significance. And it reinforces the work of other cultural historians who, rejecting notions of a working-class passively internalising the semiotics of power, have uncovered alternative discourses formed around a cultural resistance to power and an active self-formation. Only when this photography, produced by working people of themselves, is studied is it possible to see that the photography of this period was more than just another vehicle for the transference of the values of the dominant elite to a docile, passive working class. The significance of this photography lies in its revelation of an independently-minded working class actively using a cultural form to bring meaning and value to their lives.

This thesis further argues that this photography also had a political significance arising from the adoption of exactly this mode of representation was picked up and employed by a significant number of newspapers and journals, together enjoying substantial circulation figures, such as *The Daily Herald*, *The Daily Worker*, *Picture Post*, *Labour Monthly*, and, eventually, *The Daily Mirror*. They, too, brought working people to the centre and front of their images, displaying the same intimacy between subject and photographer, and the same egalitarian gaze. It would be wrong to suggest that this was a uniform development,

and it is important, aesthetically and politically, to recognize that other modes, pictorialism and pastoralism especially, continue to be employed by these publications throughout this period. Nonetheless, increasingly at this time it is possible to see a commonality of technique between these publications of the Left, and working-class family photography producing images which enhanced the social value of working people, in which they were honoured and celebrated. These were not representations which presented them as victims, needing the assistance of others, rather they emphasised their importance to the economic life of the nation, and formed a self-representation that underlined their very human qualities of independence, resilience, energy and humour. Underlying this approach was a remarkable egalitarianism in which everyone was valued from tramp to technician, char to carpenter, shepherd to steelworker, expanding the concept of the 'deserving poor' to include almost everyone and certainly reflecting, possibly contributing to, the social formation of the working-class at this time. Here can be seen some of the roots of those social and political forces that produced the relatively egalitarian settlement of 1945.

The existence, in both worker photography and in substantial sections of the press, of common ways of representing working people may have some theoretical implications. This interplay between the cultural life of the working class and the more formal political life of the nation would seem to provide a measure of empirical validation to Gramscian ideas about the contributions that culture can make to the development of an alternative discourse and to social formation in those societies in which a strong capitalist system is entrenched. Indeed, if this relationship between cultural and political forces can be seen to actively encourage positive change for working people this could serve to temper the pessimism of those historians who have developed the ideas of the Frankfurt School and of Michel Foucault, in which the cultural and political manifestations of power appear to be all-embracing and all-powerful. Indeed, the presence of differing representations of working people suggests that a cultural form, such as photography, was far from being a mere reflection of the monolith of power. Rather it appears to be participating in an arena within which differing representations competed for dominance, reflecting, instead, social conflict. This is, of course, a conflict that only becomes visible when this working-class photography is seen alongside those representations created by others from other sections of British

society. And it may be that the inter-war period, with the successive impacts of wars, economic depression and persuasive new radical ideologies, was one in which existing power relationships may have been temporarily unsettled, allowing independence, or resistance, to emerge, develop and, to some extent at least, to succeed. If this is the case, then the empirical findings of this thesis would seem to support those cultural historians who have developed methodologies capable of identifying the active participation of working people in their own self and social formation.

It is important not to be too dogmatic about these suggestions, however, as this thesis cannot be regarded as a comprehensive study of the archive of working-class photography. It has geographical limitations in that most of the archives studied come from either Yorkshire or Lancashire. They are a sample only of what must be a vast archive held in museums, libraries and archives across the country, often fragmented and removed from their original domestic context. A greater breadth of research across these would help to validate these findings. This thesis has been concerned to recover and describe the photographic self-representation of working people and to ascribe a significance to this within the spectrum of representations that were being created at this time. But the same archival material could clearly be used to consider questions of gender relations, childhood, and attitudes to work and leisure. These could provide a much fuller account of contemporary working-class experiences. Also, this study has used archives from the fishing, farming and mining industries where the workforce can often be at a remove from the direct observation of managers, and it may be revealing to examine more closely the photography of industries where the management has a tighter grip upon its employees. A study, perhaps, of the new industries of the 1930's, employing assembly-line processes and the ideas of Taylorism, may reveal the sorts of relationships that Foucault found in those state institutions that were able to successfully deploy their management ideas in a very tightly controlled environment. It would also be of interest to trace the lives of those photographers who worked for newspapers such as *The Daily Herald*. Men such as Bert Hardy and James Jarche had strong affiliations with working people and fall neatly into Gramsci's ideas about the role of 'organic' intellectuals stimulating cultural and political change. A study of others among these photographers could be insightful about their role

in developing the social formation of the working-class. Similarly, this thesis has suggested that these photographers and their modes of representation were seized upon by the state to assist in the war effort against the Nazis, particularly in the mobilization of the civilian population, and it would be interesting to analyse their output and its impact, assessing the role of a cultural medium like photography in developing the social and political responses desired by the war-time government. Finally, if as this thesis argues, the arrival of cheaper photographic technology provided a powerful tool for the self and social formation of working people, it would be reasonable to expect this impact to intensify as this technology grew cheaper into the 1950's and 1960's. It would be fascinating to trace how the forms of 'realism' seen in the images presented here survived during a period in which the meteoric rise of consumerism, the Cold War and the development of post-modernism and abstraction came to dominate aesthetic trends. This thesis may just be representing photographic, cultural, political and aesthetic responses to a particularly traumatic twenty years of British history in which the forces of power and control were temporarily weakened at precisely the time when a new and attractive cultural form - photography - became available to working people. The suggested lines for further enquiry would help to confirm the central ideas of this thesis about the cultural and political significance of the photography of working people, but would also settle these more firmly in time and space, into a longer term context and into a broader discourse about the possibilities of resistance to power in an advanced capitalist society.

If, however, the emergence of this honorary and celebratory mode of representing working people was a mere reflex, a temporary reaction to a particularly unstable period of British history, then it was a fascinating one. Perhaps for the first time, visually, it is possible to see how working people regarded themselves - as proud, capable, intelligent, vigorous, caring, humorous human beings. The egalitarian gaze of this photography asserted a distinct form of self-representation, with distinct values, which constituted a powerful, life-affirming assertion of what it was to be of the working class.

Appendices

Appendix 1: One of the sheets recording Bessie Goodwin's donation (DPA 53, Manchester Central Library)

Negative Sheet Number	Item Number	Details	Original Size	Original Colour	
				B & W	Sec
F39/37	9	The donor with her sister, May Cockson, and their parents.			
F40/29	10	Bathesda, Leicester Road. May Cockson is on the left of the front row. On the far right in a wheelchair. is Quennie.			
F40/28	11	Arthur Eaton (sitting) and his brother George. Arthur owned a greengrocers in Wellington Street, Gorton.			
F40/27	12	Fred Cockson, the donor's paternal uncle, who lived near Chorlton at the top of Beech Road and died in the First World War.			
F40/12	13	Dora George, a friend of May Cockson.			
F41/19	14	May Cockson and James Goodwin, the donor's son.			
F41/20	15	May Cockson (on right) abroad somewhere.			
F41/21	16	May Cockson at Abergole Hospital.			
F41/22	17	Fanny Goodwin (left), the youngest sister of the donor's husband, with a friend in Blackpool.			
F40/5	18	May with the first child she nursed.			
F40/8	19	The first articulated lorry driver by Mr. Goodwin (donor's husband) who drove for the railways after the First World War. Taken near Ardwick Heath Goods Station, in the 1930's.			
F40/21	20	Fanny Goodwin (youngest sister of the donor's husband) with Big Charlie, on a Whit Monday.			
F40/19	21	May Cockson (right) with Lady Londonderry. May nursed the Londonderry's nanny. Taken at Loch Lomond.			
F41/25	22	Soldiers at the end of World War 1.			
F39/11	23	Nilly at Gaddum private house.			
F40/25	24	May with an unknown baby and Nick at Bessie's in Chorlton-cum-Mardy.			
F40/31	25	Miss Vincent (see 1).			
F42/11	26	Dick Pearl, cousin of the donor's husband.			
F42/12	27	Three mill girls in dresses made for the wedding of a colleague. Lily Goodwin is at the back (she is the donor's sister-in-law); also present are Bessie Goodwin and Anne Soreason.			

Appendix 2: (ZZ140 Bolton History Centre)

MRS DAVIES. PHOTOS.

- 1) 1932 FRASER ST. MRS D. & FRIENDS.
- 2) 1936 FRIEND OF MRS D.
- 3) UNKNOWN.
- 4) WALKERS TANNERY LATE 1930'S.
- 5) MRS D. 1930 BEST CLOTHES.
- 6) EARLY 1920'S. CAST OF PLAY.
- 7) MOTHERS UNION ON SERMON SUNDAY 1930-31.
- 8) FAMILY PHOTO 1930
- 9) WALKERS TANNERY PRE-WAR.
- 10) LOCAL GIRL GUIDES 1935, AT SOUTHPORT.
- 11) ISLE OF MAN 1929.
- 12) MRS D IN SCHOOL UNIFORM. 1934.
- 13) WALKERS TANNERY PRE WAR.



Bibliography

Primary Sources: Archival Photographic Collections.

Broadfield Mills, Lockwood, photographs, Kirklees Local History Library, Huddersfield.

James Cleet photographs, www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

Communist Party Picture Archive, The People's History Museum, NMLH.2000.10. Box 2, 15, 23, 31, 32, 39, 45, 55, 62.

Fishing Industry photographs, Grimsby Local History Library Collection, Box 727/387-1, G 727/639, the private collection of Dr. Alec Gill, contactable through the Hull History Centre, and the Woodend Museum, Scarborough, Box PH4, PH5-P1, PH21.

Amy Flagg photographs, www.southtynesideimages.co.uk

Tom Grant photographs, The Grant Papers, National Media Museum.

Wal Hannington Papers, The People's History Museum, CP/Ind/Hann/09.

Fred Hartley photographs, Huddersfield University, Heritage Quay Collections, Hartley Contacts, 0800-0999, S/CO54/1344, 0293, 0294.

The archive of the Huddersfield Naturalist, Antiquarian and Photographic Society, contactable through their secretary.

Jack Hulme's photographs, www.wakefield.gov.uk/museums/photography

Labour, (1933-38), the People's History Museum, Manchester.

Labour Party Photographic Archive. The People's Museum, Manchester. Folders 2 and 3.

Liverpool slum clearance photographs, www.streetsofliverpool.co.uk

Manchester family albums, the Manchester Archive, Manchester Central Library, and the Bolton History Centre, Bolton Library.

Mass Observation photographs, www.boltonworktown.co.uk, and Worktown Photographs, Bolton History Centre.

Walter Nurnberg photographs, Walter Nurnberg archive, National Media Museum, Box BA/WN1 and BA/WN4.

Picture Post, sussex.ac.uk/library/2011/06/picture-post-archive-online/

Nora Smyth photographs, *The Woman's Dreadnought*, International Centre for Social History, Amsterdam.

The Daily Herald Photographic Archive, National Media Museum, Box 1320, 1327, 1328, 1332, 1333, 1339.

The Daily Herald Photographer Day Books, The National Media Museum, Books 1- 6, 1931-39.

The Daily Mirror, www.mirrorpix.com, *The Daily Mirror* archive, Box 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 69, 71, 77, 81, 123, 126, 129, 152, DM 8931G, and the 'Lensman' file.

Yorkshire farming photographs, Photographic Collection, Yorkshire Museum of Farming, P238-40, P400, P2719, P2720, P3317, P8421.

Primary Sources: Books.

Mary Benedetta, *The Street Markets of London* (London, 1936).

John Betjeman, *An Oxford University Chest* (Oxford, 1938).

H.H.Charlesworth and M.A.Ellis, *The History of a Society* (unpublished Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society booklet).

Bernard Ferguson, *Eton Portrait* (London, 1937).

Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas* (London, 1937).

E.O.Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures: The Success of a Photographer* (London, 1945).

Karl Hutton, *Hutton: Speaking Likeness* (London, 1947).

Christopher Isherwood, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* (London, 1992).

Bernard Grant, *To The Four Corners*, (London, 1933).

James Jarche, *People I have Shot*, (London, 1934).

Arthur Koestler, *Arrival and Departure* (London, 1943).

H. V. Morton, *In Search of England*, (London, 2013).

Margery Spring Rice, *Working Class Wives: Their Health and Conditions* (Harmondsworth, 1939).

Henry Williamson, *The Story of a Norfolk Farm*, (London, 1941).

Published Photographic collections.

Cyril Arapoff photographs, Mike Seaborne, *Cyril Arapoff: London in the Thirties* (London, 2006).

Bill Brandt photographs, Bill Brandt, *The English at Home* (1936), Bill Brandt, *A Night in London* (1938), *Picture Post*, 1939.

Harry Cartlidge photographs, Arthur G. Credland, *Harry Cartlidge, 1893-1987: Hull Photographer* (Hull, 1998).

Allan Cash photographs, Allan Cash, *Living on my Camera: Ten Years of Free Lancing*, (Aylesbury, 1946).

Edward Chambre Hardman photographs, Peter Hagerty, *Liverpool through the Lens: Photographs by Edward Chambre Hardman* (London, 2007), National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, *Edward Chambre Hardman: Photographs 1921-1972* (Liverpool, 1994).

Samuel Coulthurst photographs, Friends of Salford Museums Association, *The Samuel Coulthurst Photographs: Victorian Salford and Manchester* (Salford, 2000)

Bert Hardy photographs, Bert Hardy, *My Life* (London, 1985).

E. O. Hoppe photographs, E.O.Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures: The Success of a Photographer* (London, 1945), W. Pett Ridge, *London Types*, (London, 1926).

Jack Hulme photographs, Richard van Riel ed. *World Famous Round Here. The Photographs of Jack Hulme* (Yorkshire Arts Circus, 1990) and *Jack Hulme. A Photographic Memory* (Yorkshire Arts Circus, 1990), no author or editor given.

Karl Hutton photographs, Karl Hutton, *Speaking Likenesses* (London, 1947).

John Maltby photographs, Robert Elwell, *John Maltby*, (London, 2000).

Felix Mann photographs, Felix Mann, *Sixty Years of Photography* (London, 1983) and *Felix Mann: 60 Years of Photography* (Exhibition Catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum (1983).

Helen Muspratt photographs, Jessica Sutcliffe *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester, 2016).

Edith Tudor Hart photographs, Duncan Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart, In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Edinburgh, 2013).

Alf Tulip's photographs, Bob Abley, *Underground Images: A Photographic Recollection of Roddymoor Miners c.1945* (County Durham, 2001).

Humphrey Spender, *Lensman: Photographs, 1932-52*, (London, 1987).

Humphrey Spender, *Worktown People: Photographs from Northern England, 1937-38*, (Bristol, 1982).

Secondary Sources: Books.

Eds. William Abbey, Charmain Brinson, Richard Dove, Marian Malet and Jenifer Taylor, *Between Two Languages: German Speaking Exiles in Great Britain, 1939-45* (Stuttgart, 1995).

James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (New York, 1941).

John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligensia, 1880-1939* (London, 1992).

Arts Council of Great Britain, *The Real Thing: An Anthology of British Photographs, 1840-1950* (London, 1975).

Michael Bartholomew, *In Search of H. V. Morton* (London, 2004).

Ed. Richard Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning* (London, 1992).

Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001).

Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (London, 2012).

Fer, Batchelor, Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism. Art Between the Wars* (Open University, 1993).

Duncan Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart: In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Edinburgh, 2013).

Duncan Forbes, *An Exile's Eye: The Photography of Wolfgang Suschitsky*, (Edinburgh, 2002).

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995).

Bill Hagerty, *Read all About It: 100 Sensational Years of The Daily Mirror*, (Gloucestershire, 2003).

Eds. Stuart Hall and Sean Nixon, *Representation* (London, 2013).

John Heartfield, *1891-1968: Photomontages at the Institute of Contemporary Arts* (Exhibition Catalogue, London, 1969).

Eds. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Newell Smith, *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London, 1998).

Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930's* (London, 1976).

Tim Gidal, *Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-1933*. (London, 1974).

Tim Gidal, *In the Thirties: Photographs by Tim Gidal* (Jerusalem, 1975).

Robert James, *Popular Culture and Working Class Taste in Britain, 1930-39. A Round of Cheap Diversions* (Manchester, 2010).

James Joll, *Gramsci* (Glasgow, 1979).

Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1990).

Keith Laybourn, *Britain on the Breadline: a Social and Political History of Britain between the Wars* (Gloucester, 1990).

Eds. Keith Laybourn and John Shepherd, *Labour and Working-Class Lives: Essays to Celebrate the Life and Work of Chris Wrigley* (Oxford, 2017).

John Lewis, *The Left Book Club: An Historical Record* (London, 1970).

Audrey Linkman and Caroline Warhurst, *Family Albums* (Manchester, 1982).

Eds. Marian Malet and Anthony Grenville, *Changing Countries; the Experience and Achievement of German Speaking Exiles from Hitler, from 1933 to Today* (London, 2002).

Ed. David Mellor, *Germany, The New Photography, 1927-33: Documents and Essays* (London, 1978).

Eds. Chris Pinney and Nicholas Petersen, *Photography's Other Histories*, (Durham, 2003).

Chris Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London, 2004).

Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, *The Story of the Artist's International Association*, (Oxford, 2000).

Annebella Pollen, *Mass Photography: Collective Histories of Everyday Life* (London, 2016).

Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, (London, 1984).

Jacques Ranciere, *The Nights of Labour* (Philadelphia, 1989).

Jacques Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London, 2009).

Jorge Ribalta, *The Worker Photography Movement, 1929-1936: Essays and Documents* (Madrid, 2011), p.34.

Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left*, (London, 1997).

John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday*, (Manchester, 1998).

Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (London, 2004).

Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (London, 2016).

Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (London, 2001).

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2003).

Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class* (London, 1994).

Side Photographic Gallery, *James Henry Cleet, a South Shields photographer, 1876-1959: Housing Clearance in the 1930's* (Newcastle, 1979)

Barry Smith, *Michel Foucault* (London, 2002).

Eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography* (London, 1991).

David Levi Strauss, *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (Singapore, 2003).

John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York, 1988).

Ed. Liz Wells, *The Photography Reader* (London, 2003).

Val Williams, *Women Photographers: The Other Observers, 1900- the Present* (London, 1986).

Ken Worpole, *Dockers and Detectives: Popular Reading, Popular Writing* (London, 1983).

Secondary Sources: Articles.

Sally Ann Baggott and Brian Stokoe, 'The Success of a Photographer: Culture, Commerce and Ideology in the Work of E.O.Hoppe,' in *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2003.

Duncan Bell, 'Mythscape: Memory, Mythology and National Identity,' in *The British Journal of Sociology*.

Graham R. Gibbs, 'Discourse Analysis, Part 2: Foucauldian Approaches' (on-line lecture, *YouTube*, 2015).

Mick Gidley, 'E.O.Hoppe's Ambiguous Photographic Autobiographies,' *Photography and Culture*, Vol.6, Issue 3, 2013. Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer,' (1934, reproduced in *The New Left Review*, 01/62/August 1970).

William Bishop, 'Man in Industry' in *British Journal of Photography*, 18/02/87.

Stephen Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Gender and Race in the photography of Roger Mayne,' in *Journal of British Studies*, Number 53, 2014.

Liam Buckley, 'Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography,' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 16, September 2000.

Simon Caulkin, 'Nurnberg puts Industry in the Picture,' *Management Today*, April, 1987.

Alan Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,' in *American Historical Review*, Vol.102, No. 5, December, 1997.

Paul Delaney, 'The Charm of the Alien,' *The Guardian*, 21/02/04.

Terry Dennett, 'The Workers Film and Photo League in Photography,' *Politics, One* (London, 1979).

Peter French, 'South Shields Photographer is Focus of Attention,' in *South Shields Gazette* (26th August 2016).

Dick Geary, 'Working-class culture in Britain and Germany,' in eds. Keith Laybourn and John Shepherd, *Labour and Working-Class Lives: Essays to Celebrate the Life and Work of Chris Wrigley* (Oxford, 2017).

David Green, 'Classified Subjects: Photography and Anthropology: The Technology of Power' in *Ten*: 8: 1985

Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' in *The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (University of Birmingham), Vol. 2, 1972.

Stuart Hall, 'What is Visual Culture?' in eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, *Visual Culture: the Reader* (Cambridge, 1999).

Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,' in *History and Theory*, Vol.41, No.2, May 2002.

Tamara Kay, 'Building Solidarity with Subjects and Audience in Sociological and Documentary Photography,' in *Sociological Forum*, Number 26, 2011.

Fiona McCarthy, 'The Fiery Stimulator,' *The Guardian*, 18/03/06.

David Mellor, 'Patterns of Naturalism: Hoppe to Hardy,' in *The Real Thing: An Anthology of British Photography, 1840-1950*, (Arts council of Great Britain, 1975).

Walter Nurnberg, 'Planning a Series of Photographs,' *Industrial Advertising and Marketing*, January, 1967.

Walter Nurnberg, 'Men and Machines,' *Quarry Managers Journal*, February, 1962.

Matt Perry, 'Visualising Labour,' in *Labour History Review*, Volume 84, Number 2, July 2019.

Chris Pinney, 'Crisis and Critique,' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, 12th May, 2006.

Christopher Pinney, 'Notes from the Surface of the Image: Post-Colonialism and Vernacular Modernism' in eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Petersen, *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham, 2003).

Karlis Racevskis, 'Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances,' in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 2005.

G.R.Searle, 'Eugenics and Politics in Britain in the 1930's' in *Annals of Science*, 36, 1979.

Allan Sekula, *Photography against the Grain, 1973-1983* (The Nova Scotia Series, Source Materials for the Contemporary Arts, Vol.16, 1984).

Alan Sekula, 'Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital,' in ed. Liz Wells *The Photography Reader* (London, 2003).

Ruth Spencer, 'Walter Nurnberg,' *The British Journal of Photography*, 14/06/74.

Stephen Sprague, 'Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba see themselves,' in *African Arts*, Vol. 12, No.1, November, 1978.

Julian Stallabrass, 'Sebastian Salgado and Fine Art Photojournalism,' in *New Left Review*, Number 223, 1997.

Brian Stokoe, 'The Exemplary Career of E.O.Hoppe: Photography, Modernism and Modernity,' in *The History of Photography*, Vol., 38, Issue 1, 2014.

Brian Stokoe, 'High Society and Low Life: Celebrities and Social Types in the Portrait Photography of E. O. Hoppe,' in *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2008.

Boyd Tonkin, 'Icons of the Dispossessed: Bert Hardy and the Documentary Photograph,' *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue 1.

Interviews.

Walter Nurnberg interview with Josef Graz, *Photography*, March, 1987.

Walter Nurnberg interview with Michael Colmer, *Photography Journal*, November, 1974.

Helen Muspratt, on-line interview at www.bl/soundsarchive/artandphotography/anorahistoryofbritishphotography.co.uk. 1990.

Margaret Monck, on-line interview at www.bl/soundsarchive/artandphotography/anorahistoryofbritishphotography.co.uk, 1990.

Stanley Baldwin, *What England Means to Me*, speech to The Royal Society of St. George, 1924, on-line at spinet.eu/images2013-15/baldwin1924.

References:

¹ See Jorge Ribalta, *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926-1936. Essays and Documents* (Madrid, 2011).

² David Mellor, ed., *Germany: The New Photography. 1927-33* (London, 1978), p.35.

³ Duncan Forbes, 'The Worker Photography Movement in Britain, 1934-39,' in Ribalta, *The Worker Photography Movement*, p.214.

⁴ See, for example, for this country if not for this period, Stephen Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam Street: Class, Gender and Race in the photography of Roger Mayne', in *Journal of British Studies*, Number 53 (2014), pp. 453-96; and for wider discussions, Julian Stallabrass, 'Sebastian Salgado and Fine Art Photojournalism', in *New Left Review*, Number 223, 1997, Tamara Kay, 'Building Solidarity with Subjects and Audience in Sociological and Documentary Photography', in *Sociological Forum*, Number 26, 2011, and Matt Perry, 'Visualising Labour', in *Labour History Review*, Volume 84, Number 2, July 2019.

⁵ Interview with Jorge Ribalta in *Foto/08*, 30th May 2011.

⁶ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), his chapter on 'The Making of Documentary: Documentary after Factography.'

⁷ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York, 1988), p.12. Also see his chapter on 'Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State.'

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995), pp. 26-29.

⁹ Karlis Racevskis, 'Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances,' in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 2005 (no page numbers given).

¹⁰ Chris Pinney, 'Crisis and Critique,' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, 12th May, 2006, p.74.

¹¹ Chris Pinney, 'Introduction: How the Other Half...' ed. Chris Pinney and Nicholas Petersen, *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham, 2003), p.14.

¹² Robert James, *Popular Culture and Working Class Taste in Britain, 1930-39: A Round of Cheap Diversions*, (Manchester, 2010), p.4.

¹³ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (London, 2001), p.4.

¹⁴ Quoted in Karlis Racevskis, 'Edward Said and Michel Foucault.'

¹⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham, 2012), p.11.

¹⁶ Anabella Pollen, *Mass Photography: Histories of Everyday Life* (London, 2016), p.160.

¹⁷ Chris Pinney, *Photography's Other Histories*, p.8. .

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.13..

¹⁹ Chris Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London, 2004), p.204.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.8.

²¹ Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London, 1998), p.106 ff.

²² See for, example, Chris Pinney, *Photographies other Histories*, or Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*.

²³ See, for example, E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1968), or Sheila Rowbottom, *Hidden from History* (London, 1973).

²⁴ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, p.151 and the chapter on 'God's Sanitary Law: Slum Clearance in Late Nineteenth Century Leeds.'

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.151.

²⁶ Liam Buckley, 'Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography,' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 16, September 2000, p.81.

²⁷ For sheer manageability this list does not include the extensive area of commercial advertising, which often included, and was aimed at, working-people.

²⁸ See Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (London, 2016) - especially Chapter 4, Compositional Analysis, and Chapter 5, Semiology.

²⁹ Graham R. Gibbs, *Discourse Analysis, Part 2: Foucauldian Approaches* (On-line lecture, YouTube, 2015), and Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, Chapter 8, Discourse Analysis.

³⁰ For example, Jorge Ribalta, *The Worker's Photography Movement*, especially the Introduction, and Duncan Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart: In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Edinburgh, 2013).

³¹ See for example, John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), or John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York, 1988).

³² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2003), p.20.

³³ Christopher Pinney, 'Crisis and Visual Critique,' *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, May 2016, p.74.

³⁴ Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001), p.132.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.187.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.187.

³⁷ Quoted in Barry Smith, *Michel Foucault* (London, 2002), p.74.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.80.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995), p.28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁴¹ Smith, *Foucault*, p.123.

⁴² Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, (London, 1984), p.261 (from *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.1).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.180-1, (from *Discipline and Punish*).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.186, (from *Discipline and Punish*).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.183, (from *Discipline and Punish*).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.195, (from *Discipline and Punish*).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11, (from *The Howson Lectures*).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.209, (from *Discipline and Punish*), my underlining.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.174, (from *What is an Author?*).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.335 (from *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.2).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.263, (from *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.1).

⁵² This was a national network of amateur photographers who, towards the end of the nineteenth century and at the start of the twentieth century, sought to preserve photographically evidence of an older England that was fast disappearing under the pressures of urbanisation and industrialisation

⁵³ See www.huddersfieldpic.org.uk

⁵⁴ Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society (HNPAS), Winter Lecture Series, 1919-1939.

⁵⁵ H.H.Charlesworth and M.A.Ellis, *The History of a Society* (unpublished HNPAS booklet), pp.30-1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.30.

⁵⁷ HNPAS, Summer Outing Syllabi, 1919-1939.

⁵⁸ HNPAS, Minute Book, Summer Outings.

⁵⁹ HNPAS, Winter Lecture Syllabi, 1919-1939.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Huddersfield Examiner*, 6 March, 1928.

⁶³ HNPAS, Catalogue of Lantern Slides.

⁶⁴ *Huddersfield Examiner*, 19 August 1938.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (London, 2012), p.125.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.193.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.XII.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.196.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.197.

⁷² Annebella Pollen, *Mass Photography: Collective Histories of Everyday Life* (London, 2016), p.161.

⁷³ Edwards, *The Camera as Historian*.

⁷⁴ Edwards, *The Camera as Historian*, p.85.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.193.

⁷⁶ Allan Sekula, *Photography against the Grain, 1973-1983* (The Nova Scotia Series, Source Materials for the Contemporary Arts, Vol.16, 1984), p.48.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁷⁹ This seems to have been a common feature of the period. Others, such as Helen Muspratt, Bert Hardy and James Jarche, were largely self-taught and moved across the amateur/professional divide with relative ease, which was also the case with Maltby, Cash and Chambre Hardman - photographers featured in this chapter.

⁸⁰ Arthur G. Credland, *Harry Cartlidge, 1893-1987. Hull Photographer* (Hull, 1998).

⁸¹ National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, *Edward Chambre Hardman: Photographs 1921-1972* (Liverpool, 1994), p.8.

⁸² John Maltby was born in Manchester in 1910, the son of a leading Quaker educationalist; he attended Liverpool School of Art where he developed a keen interest in film and photography. After graduation he attempted to set up a studio in Birkenhead and when this failed he moved to London in 1935 to set up a second studio. There he became involved in left-wing politics. Terry Dennett, in his early study of the Workers' Film and Photo League noted that, 'Mr Maltby worked with the League from 1934 until its demise in 1939. Involving himself in both still and cine work, his archive contains a number of negatives made for the League and a film for the Merseyside Workers Film Society, previously thought to be lost: *Liverpool: Gateway to Empire*.' (Terry Dennett, 'The Workers' Film and Photo League in Photography,' *Politics, One* (London, 1979), p.104.) His biographer, Robert Elwall, notes that during the Second World War he was a conscientious objector, and that after the War he worked with those architects 'whose left-wing views he shared.' Elwall comments on Maltby's great personal modesty 'which once led him to describe himself as simply a

‘record photographer’ who rebuffed any attempt to intellectualise his work and who did not leave an autobiography. (Robert Elwall, *John Maltby*, (London, 2000), pp 7-11.). There is, however, an extensive archive of his workbooks and photographs held by the Royal Institute of British Architects, among which are scattered pictures of working people.

⁸³ Robert Elwell, *John Maltby* (London, 2000), p.7

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁸⁶ Cash was born in Manchester in 1902; he trained as a radio engineer and in 1925 he left for Canada to pursue a career in radio and film. This was brought to an end by the Depression which forced him to try photography as a means of earning a living (J. Allan Cash, *Living on my Camera: Ten Years of Freelancing*, (Aylesbury, 1946)

⁸⁷ J. Allan Cash, *Living on my Camera: Ten Years of Free Lancing*, (Aylesbury, 1946), p.11.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁸⁹ Dennett, *The Workers Film and Photo League*, p.102, note 30.

⁹⁰ Cash, *Living on my Camera*, pp.45-57.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.66 and 103ff.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.67.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.90.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.83.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.144.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.262.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.263.

⁹⁹ Mick Gidley, ‘E.O.Hoppe’s Ambiguous Photographic Autobiographies,’ *Photography and Culture*, Vol.6, Issue 3, 2013, p.279.

¹⁰⁰ E. O. Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures: The Success of a Photographer* (London, 1945), p.5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁰³ Hoppe arrived in London from his German birthplace in 1900, initially to take up a post at the Deutsche Bank, but this career was quickly abandoned as his photographic interests took over - in 1903 he joined the Royal Photographic Society and in 1907 he set up his own

studio. From that point he worked assiduously to build a lucrative business and an international reputation. Hoppe's autobiography *One Hundred Thousand Exposures* details the great care he took in establishing this business. He set up his studio at Millais House in the fashionable district of South Kensington. This had been the home of John Everett Millais, the Victorian painter, and then of Julia Cameron, the famous pioneer photographer. His ambition was clear, 'I wanted to become the photographer of the most interesting people'. The studio was decorated to a sumptuous level, 'a photographer must think in terms of background, which necessitated the collection of antiques illustrative of the best epochs of English design.' These decorations were carefully used, 'occasionally I posed sitters against one of the fully proportioned doors which Sir John Millais incorporated in some of his works.' (E. O. Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures*, pp.16, 19, 20). And Hoppe used this studio setting to host music concerts and exhibitions, creating a fashionable hub which attracted many wealthy clients.

¹⁰⁴ Hoppe, *One Hundred Thousand Exposures*, p32.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.101.

¹⁰⁷ Brian Stokoe, 'The Exemplary Career of E.O.Hoppe: Photography, Modernism and Modernity,' in *The History of Photography*, Vol., 38, Issue 1, 2014, p.93.

¹⁰⁸ Brian Stokoe, 'High Society and Low Life: Celebrities and Social Types in the Portrait Photography of E. O. Hoppe,' in *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2008, p.27.

¹⁰⁹ Sally Ann Baggott and Brian Stokoe, 'The Success of a Photographer: Culture, Commerce and Ideology in the Work of E.O.Hoppe,' in *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2003, p.30.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.33.

¹¹¹ W. Pett Ridge, *London Types* (London, 1926), Chapter 2, p.8 ff.

¹¹² Baggott and Stokoe, *The Success of a Photographer*, pp.34-5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.35.

¹¹⁴ These are to be found in the Heritage Quay, Huddersfield University (Hartley Contacts, 0200-0999).

¹¹⁵ *Wikipedia*, List of Newspapers by Circulation.

¹¹⁶ Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left* (London, 1997), quoted on p.185.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.36.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.71.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.185.

¹²¹ Day Books 1-6, *The Daily Herald*, The National Media Museum, Bradford.

¹²² George Roper, *The Daily Herald* archive, The National Media Museum, Box 1327.

¹²³ H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (London, 2013), concluding paragraph.

¹²⁴ Stanley Baldwin, *What England Means to Me*, speech to The Royal Society of St. George, 1924, on-line at spinet.eu/images2013-15/baldwin1924.

¹²⁵ Henry Williamson, *The Story of a Norfolk Farm* (London, 1941), p.205.

¹²⁶ Michael Bartholomew, *In Search of H. V. Morton* (London, 2004).

¹²⁷ David Mellor, 'Patterns of Naturalism: Hoppe to Hardy,' in *The Real Thing: An Anthology of British Photography, 1840-1950* (Arts council of Great Britain, 1975), p.32.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.31.

¹²⁹ Bill Hagerty, *Read all About It: 100 Sensational Years of The Daily Mirror*, (Gloucestershire, 2003), p.36.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.39.

¹³¹ *The Daily Mirror* Photographic Archive, Boxes 55,56,57,81,123,126,129,152.

¹³² Tom was born in 1880, the eldest son of a London poulterer and fishmonger; he had two brothers who also became photographers at the *Mirror*. Starting at the paper in 1904 he was immediately sent to cover events abroad, working in forty countries, and covering the Young Turk revolution, the Portuguese revolution, the First and Second Balkan Wars, the Italian war in Tripoli, the wars in China and as an official war photographer during the Great War. Following the War he became a picture editor at the *Mirror*, where he remained until 1946.

¹³³ Bernard Grant, *To The Four Corners* (London, 1933).

¹³⁴ He described his childhood as a 'privileged background of frequently changed nannies and governesses and two devoted servants' and his education was that of a wealthy young member of the avant-garde. At the age of sixteen he was sent to study at the university in Freiburg in Breisau, Germany, and there he became very interested in the new continental cultural movements. He felt that he was, 'influenced by publications like *Arts et Metiers*, *Close Up* and the German monthly *Querschnitt*....I was impressed by the work of the great

Russian films and by the work of Man Ray, Moholy Nagy, Hoyningen, Heine, Munkacsi, Kertesz' (Humphrey Spender, *Lensman: Photographs, 1932-52*, (London, 1987), p.11). This cultural grounding was enhanced by his friendship with Christopher Isherwood, W. H. Auden and, of course, with his brother Stephen.

¹³⁵ Spender, *Lensman*, p.11.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹³⁷ Humphrey Spender, *Worktown People: Photographs from Northern England, 1937-38* (Bristol, 1982) p.6.

¹³⁸ James Jarche, *People I have Shot* (London, 1934).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.156, 160.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.189.

¹⁴¹ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), p.58.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹⁴³ Edwards, *The Camera as Historian*, p.227.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.50.

¹⁴⁵ Stuart Hall, 'Introduction,' in eds. Stuart Hall and Dean Nixon, *Representation* (London, 2013).

¹⁴⁶ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*), p.65.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Karlis Racevskis, 'Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances,' in *Research in African Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 2005.

¹⁴⁸ Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, p.245, (from *Space, Knowledge and Power*).

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *Michel Foucault*, p.135.

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Power*, p.26.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁵² David Mellor, ed., *Germany, The New Photography, 1927-33: Documents and Essays* (London, 1978), p.24.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁵⁵ This is discussed in far more detail in Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 'From Factura to Factography,' in ed. Richard Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning* (London, 1992).

¹⁵⁶ This is discussed in more detail in Mellor, *Germany, The New Photography*.

-
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp25-26.
- ¹⁵⁸ Fer, Batchelor, Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism. Art Between the Wars* (Open University, 1993), p.218.
- ¹⁵⁹ Mellor *Germany, The New Photography*, p35.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.78.
- ¹⁶¹ Buchloh, *From Fatura to Factography*, p.57.
- ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.71.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.69.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.71.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.69.
- ¹⁶⁶ Mellor, *The New Germany*, p.113ff.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.121.
- ¹⁶⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.75.
- ¹⁶⁹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer,' (1934, reproduced in *The New Left Review*, 01/62/August 1970), p.5.
- ¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Mellor, *Germany, The New Photography*, p.65.
- ¹⁷¹ Tim Gidal, *Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evolution, 1910-1933*. (London, 1974).
- ¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.20.
- ¹⁷³ Jorge Ribalta, *The Worker Photography Movement, 1929-1936: Essays and Documents* (Madrid, 2011), p.34.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 42 and 12.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.84.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.89.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.89.
- ¹⁷⁸ Both quotes from Fiona McCarthy, 'The Fiery Stimulator,' *The Guardian*, 18th March 2006.
- ¹⁷⁹ Duncan Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart: In the Shadow of Tyranny* (Edinburgh, 2013), p.70.
- ¹⁸⁰ Boyd Tonkin, 'Icons of the Dispossessed: Bert Hardy and the Documentary Photograph,' *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, p.158.
- ¹⁸¹ Duncan Forbes, *An Exile's Eye: The Photography of Wolfgang Suschitsky* (Edinburgh, 2002), p.7.
- ¹⁸² *Ibid.* p.7.
- ¹⁸³ Mike Seabourne, *Cyril Arapoff: London in the Thirties* (London, 2006), p.2.

¹⁸⁴ Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart*, p.9.

¹⁸⁵ David Mellor, 'Patterns of Naturalism: Hoppe to Hardy,' in Arts council of Great Britain, *The Real Thing: An Anthology of British Photographs, 1840- 1950* (London, 1975), p.30.

¹⁸⁶ Jorge Ribalta, 'The Workers' Photography Movement,' *Photo* 08/03/11, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart*, p.16.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.70.

¹⁹⁰ William Abbey, Charmain Brinson, Richard Dove, Marian Malet and Jenifer Taylor, eds., *Between Two Languages: German Speaking Exiles in Great Britain, 1939-45* (Stuttgart, 1995), p.119.

¹⁹¹ Marian Malet and Anthony Grenville, eds., *Changing Countries; the Experience and Achievement of German Speaking Exiles from Hitler, from 1933 to Today* (London, 2002), p.50.

¹⁹² Abbey et. al., *Between Two Languages*, p.124.

¹⁹³ Malet and Grenville, *Changing Countries*, p.25.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹⁹⁵ Arthur Koestler, *Arrival and Departure* (London, 1943), pp 38-39.

¹⁹⁶ Malet and Grenville, *Changing Countries*, pp.92-93.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.118.

¹⁹⁸ Abbey et. al., *Between Two Languages*, p.126.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.129.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.128.

²⁰¹ Malet and Grenville, *Changing Countries*, p.74.

²⁰² Forbes, *An Exiles Eye*, p.7.

²⁰³ Those identified in this study are: Cyril Arapoff, Ellen Auerbach, Bill Brandt, Trude Fleischmann, John Gay, Tim Gidal, John Heartfield, Karl Hutton, Edith Tudor Hart, Felix Mann, Walter Nurnberg, Lazlo Moholy Nagy, Grete Stern, Wolf Suschitsky.

²⁰⁴ The biographical details presented here have been gleaned from a variety of sources other than those already indicated: *The Jewish Women's Archive* (on-line); Karen David, 'Poignant Pictures of a Lost World,' *The Jewish Chronicle*, 27th May, 2019; Paul Delaney, 'The Charm of the Alien,' *The Guardian*, 21st February 2004; *John Heartfield, 1891-1968*:

Photomontages at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (Exhibition Catalogue, London, 1969); *Felix Mann: 60 Years of Photography* (Exhibition Catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983); Tim Gidal, *In the Thirties: Photographs by Tim Gidal* (Jerusalem, 1975); Karl Hutton, *Hutton: Speaking Likeness* (London, 1947); *Wikipedia*.

²⁰⁵ Mary Benedetta, *The Street Markets of London* (London, 1936): Bernard Ferguson, *Eton Portrait* (London, 1937): John Betjeman, *An Oxford University Chest* (Oxford, 1938).

²⁰⁶ For example, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995), pp. 26-7.

²⁰⁷ Dick Geary, 'Working-class culture in Britain and Germany,' in Keith Laybourn and John Shepherd, eds., *Labour and Working-Class Lives: Essays to Celebrate the Life and Work of Chris Wrigley* (Oxford, 2017).

²⁰⁸ Forbes, *An Exile's Eye*, pp.8-9.

²⁰⁹ Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart*, p.17.

²¹⁰ Margery Spring Rice, *Working Class Wives: Their Health and Conditions* (Harmondsworth, 1939).

²¹¹ Forbes, *Edith Tudor Hart*, p.66.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p.70.

²¹³ Paul Delaney, 'The Charm of the Alien,' *The Guardian*, 21st February 2004.

²¹⁴ Karl Hutton, *Hutton: Speaking Likenesses* (London, 1947), p.84.

²¹⁵ Interview with Josef Graz, *Photography*, March, 1987, p.69.

²¹⁶ National Media Museum, Walter Nurnberg Archive, WN1.

²¹⁷ Groz interview, *Photography*, p.72.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.73.

²¹⁹ William Bishop, 'Man in Industry' in *British Journal of Photography*, 18th February 1987.

²²⁰ Walter Nurnberg, 'Planning a Series of Photographs,' *Industrial Advertising and Marketing*, January, 1967.

²²¹ Interview with Michael Colmer, *Photography Journal*, November, 1974.

²²² Walter Nurnberg, 'Men and Machines,' *Quarry Managers Journal*, February, 1962.

²²³ Simon Caulkin, 'Nurnberg puts Industry in the Picture,' *Management Today*, April, 1987, p.45.

-
- ²²⁴ Ruth Spencer, 'Walter Nurnberg,' *The British Journal of Photography*, 14/06/74.
- ²²⁵ Duncan Forbes, 'The Worker Photography Movement in Britain, 1934-39,' in Ribalta, *The Workers Photography Movement*, p.207.
- ²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.206.
- ²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.206.
- ²²⁸ Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post,' in *The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (University of Birmingham), Vol. 2, 1972, pp. 81-84.
- ²²⁹ Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, *The Story of the Artist's International Association*, (Oxford, 2000), p1.
- ²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.45.
- ²³¹ *Ibid.*, p.44.
- ²³² www.boltonworktown.co.uk/photograph/william-coldstream
- ²³³ John Lewis, *The Left Book Club: An Historical Record* (London, 1970).
- ²³⁴ Val Williams *Women Photographers: The Other Observers, 1900- the Present* (London, 1986), p.42- my underlining.
- ²³⁵ Friends of Salford Museum Association *The Samuel Coulthurst Photographs: Victorian Salford and Manchester* (Salford, 2000) p.1.
- ²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7. Quoted from *Photographic News*, 1892.
- ²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7.
- ²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.10.
- ²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.4.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28. Quoted from *Amateur Photography*, September 1898.
- ²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.20. Quoted from *The Photographer*, May 1901.
- ²⁴² *Ibid.*, p.18. Quoted from *The Photographer*, June 1891.
- ²⁴³ www.southtynesideimages.co.uk
- ²⁴⁴ Peter French, 'South Shields Photographer is Focus of Attention,' in *South Shields Gazette* (26th August 2016).
- ²⁴⁵ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York, 1988), p.151.
- ²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.120.
- ²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.149.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.151.

²⁴⁹ Although even this 'good' has been questioned some historians who have noted that these inter-war slum clearance programmes actually produced little benefit for working people. The increased costs of the new council housing could be prohibitive, particularly for those most in need. But even for those that could afford, the increase in rent could result in lower levels of nutrition, with a consequent impact on health and mortality, Keith Laybourn, *Britain on the Breadline: A Social and Political History of Britain between the Wars* (Gloucester, 1990), pp83-85.

²⁵⁰ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, p.12.

²⁵¹ He was born in the town in 1876, his father was an artist and initially James trained to be an art teacher. However, in 1894 he took up an apprenticeship as a ship photographer and, eventually, set up his own business, making his own cameras and, at some time, specialising in secret pictures in the manner of Samuel Coulturst. In the 1930's he joined the Royal Photographic Society, but he is largely remembered for the work he did for the South Shields Corporation.

²⁵² Biographical details from Side Photographic Gallery *James Henry Cleet, a South Shields photographer, 1876-1959: Housing Clearance in the 1930's* (Newcastle, 1979)

²⁵³ www.sussex.ac.uk/broadcast/read/11001

²⁵⁴ Christopher Isherwood *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* (London, 1992), p.60

²⁵⁵ Humphrey Spender, *Worktown People: Photographs from the North of England, 1937-38* (Bristol, 1982), p.6.

²⁵⁶ Humphrey Spender, *Lensman: Photographs 1932-52* (London, 1987), p.15.

²⁵⁷ Spender, *Worktown*, People p.12.

²⁵⁸ Spender, *Lensman*, p.15.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

²⁶⁰ Spender, *Worktown People*, p.16.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

²⁶² Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930's* (London, 1976), p.279.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.260.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.271.

²⁶⁵ Spender, *Worktown People*, p.21.

-
- ²⁶⁶ Morris and Radford, *The Story of the Artists International*, p.3.
- ²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.
- ²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.29.
- ²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.51.
- ²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.43.
- ²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.13.
- ²⁷² *Ibid.*, p.16.
- ²⁷³ John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligensia, 1880-1939* (London, 1992).
- ²⁷⁴ Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (London, 2004), p.186.
- ²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.188.
- ²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.195.
- ²⁷⁷ Alan Sekula, 'Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital,' in ed. Liz Wells *The Photography Reader* (London, 2003), pp.445-51.
- ²⁷⁸ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), p.63.
- ²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.62.
- ²⁸⁰ David Green, 'Classified Subjects: Photography and Anthropology: The Technology of Power' in *Ten*: 8: 1985, p.37.
- ²⁸¹ Helen Muspratt, on-line interview at www.bl/soundsarchive/artandphotography/anorahistoryofbritishphotography.co.uk. 1990, section 1.
- ²⁸² Jessica Sutcliffe, *Face, Shape, and Angle: Helen Muspratt, Photographer* (Manchester, 2016), p.106.
- ²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.106.
- ²⁸⁴ Muspratt, on-line interview, section 4.
- ²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸⁶ Muspratt, *Face, Shape and Angle*, p.98.

-
- ²⁸⁷ Margaret Monck, on-line interview at www.bl/soundsarchive/artandphotography/anorahistoryofbritishphotography.co.uk, 1990, section 3
- ²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, section 3.
- ²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, section 6.
- ²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, section 5.
- ²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, section 4.
- ²⁹² *Ibid.*, section 3.
- ²⁹³ *Ibid.*, section 7.
- ²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, section 4.
- ²⁹⁵ Williams, *Women Photographers*, p.67.
- ²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.50.
- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.67.
- ²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.68.
- ²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.62.
- ³⁰⁰ James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (New York, 1941), p.43.
- ³⁰¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1995), p.26.
- ³⁰² Allan Sekula, 'Reading an Archive: Photography between Labour and Capital' in ed. Liz Wells *The Photography Reader* (London, 2003), p.415.
- ³⁰³ Val Williams, 'Carefully Creating an Idyll' in eds. Jo Spence and Patricia Holland *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography* (London, 1991), p.189.
- ³⁰⁴ Patricia Holland, 'Introduction' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.5.
- ³⁰⁵ Don Slater, 'Consuming Kodak' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.58.
- ³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.58.
- ³⁰⁷ Patricia Holland, 'Introduction' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.7.
- ³⁰⁸ Don Slater, 'Consuming Kodak' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.49.
- ³⁰⁹ Jeremy Seabrook, 'My Life is in that Box' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.179.
- ³¹⁰ Audrey Linkman and Caroline Warhurst, *Family Albums* (Manchester, 1982), for the background to this project.
- ³¹¹ Quoted by Jeremy Seabrook in 'My Life is in that Box' in Spence and Holland *Family Snaps*, p.179.
- ³¹² DPA53- Manchester Archives, Manchester Central Library.

³¹³ Richard van Riel ed. *World Famous Round Here. The Photographs of Jack Hulme* (Yorkshire Arts Circus, 1990). No page numbers in this book.

³¹⁴ *Jack Hulme. A Photographic Memory* (Yorkshire Arts Circus, 1990), p.11. No author or editor given.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.14.

³¹⁶ Quoted in G.R.Searle, 'Eugenics and Politics in Britain in the 1930's' in *Annals of Science*, 36, 1979, p162.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.161.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.161.

³¹⁹ Bob Abley, *Underground Images: A Photographic Recollection of Roddymoor Miners, c.1945* (County Durham, 2001), p.4.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³²¹ See, for example: Bert Hardy, *My Life* (London, 1985), p.22; Yorkshire Arts Circus, *Jack Hulme, A Photographic Memory* (Castleford,1986), p.6; Bob Abley, *Underground Images: A Photographic Recollection of Roddymoor Miners .c1945: Photographs by the late Alf Tulip* (County Durham, 2001), p.2. Each describe their purchase of second-hand cameras as their start in photography. Similar evidence for the fishing industry was provided in conversation with Dr. Alec Gill (historian of the Hull fishing industry, contactable through the Hull History Centre).

³²² Stuart Hall, *Representation and Media: Definition of Culture* (on-line lecture, You Tube, 1997).

³²³ G. Kress and T. van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London, 2006), pp. 124-129, argue that the techniques that these photographers used were crucial to the reception of their images. They suggest, for example, that the angle between the subject and the viewer is important - frontal angles being far more effective in engaging the viewer than oblique angles. They also feel that the height between subject and viewer has an impact, so that if they are at the same level then a relationship of equality is suggested. Similarly, pictures of people in close-up would seem to encourage a sense of intimacy between subject and viewer. These are, of course, all techniques used by the photographers seen in this section.

³²⁴ Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity?' in eds. Paul du Gay and Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London, 1996), p.4.

³²⁵ Ed. Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London, 1984), p.67 (from *Power and Knowledge*).

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.37 (from *Discipline and Punish*).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.245 (from *Discipline and Punish*).

³²⁸ Nonetheless, the issue of resistance is a recurring theme in Foucault's work. It is true that he presents a narrative of a 'carceral net' (*Discipline and Punish*, p.297) which is responsible for the production of 'submissive subjects' (*Discipline and Punish*, p.295). But *Discipline and Punish* also describes a perpetual battle to establish and maintain social control. While power can be seen to exert pressure on individuals to comply with norms of behaviour conducive to its preservation, equally these individuals 'themselves in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them' (*Discipline and Punish*, p.27). Within his model of domination and compliance, he insists on the 'necessity of combat' (*Discipline and Punish*, p.308) and on 'the possibilities of resistance' (*Power and Knowledge* quoted in Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, p.245). Indeed, 'in relations of power there is necessarily a possibility of resistance, because if there were no possibility of a violent resistance, of flight, of ruse, of strategies, that invert the situation - there would be no power relations at all' (quoted in Karlis Racevskis, *Edward Said and Michel Foucault*, see note 26, below). This 'necessity' of resistance has its origins in Foucault's own description of power. It comes, partly, from his account of the dynamic nature of power relations, 'power relations are mobile relations, that is they may become modified, they are not given up once and for all' (quoted in Racevskis, *Edward Said and Michel Foucault*). This is a dynamism that arises from the extraordinarily complex nature of these power relations. They need to be maintained and extended through 'the demographic, economic and political changes which accompany the development of an industrial state', and across 'the variables of space and chronology, longevity and health....[across] the submissive and the restive, rich and poor, healthy and sick, strong and weak' (*Power and Knowledge*, quoted in Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, p.279). And they need to be maintained across the variability of individual self-formation - 'how we are constituted as subjects of our own knowledge, how we are constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations, how we are constituted as moral subjects of our own actions' (*What is Enlightenment*, quoted in Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, p.48). It is this complexity and dynamism in Foucault's narrative of power relations that suggest an inherent instability in his model, an instability that allows and encourages

resistance to emerge. Although he never really pursued this line of enquiry, he did encourage studies of the nature of homogeneity within power structures and of 'the freedom within which they [individuals] act within these practical studies, reacting to what others do, modifying the rules of the game' (*What is Enlightenment*, quoted in Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, p.48). And in some ways, of course, this thesis can be construed as a study of homogeneity within one aspect of a particular power structure at a particular time.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.335 (from *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.2).

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.387 (from *Politics and Ethics :an interview*).

³³¹ Quoted in Karlis Racevskis, 'Edward Said and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances' in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol.36, No.3, Autumn 2005.

³³² Christopher Pinney, 'Notes from the Surface of the Image: Post-Colonialism and Vernacular Modernism' in eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Petersen, *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham, 2003), p.205.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p.216.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.219.

³³⁵ For example: Liam Buckley, 'Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol.16, September, 2000; Stephen Sprague, 'Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba see Themselves' in *African Arts*, Vol. 12, No.1, November, 1978.

³³⁶ It is these similarities in both the purposes and techniques of this post-colonial photography that make it such an interesting comparison when the nature of working-class photography in Britain is considered. Historians of this photography, for example, have noted that it avoided any depth in the image, preferring instead to bring the subject to the front and centre of the picture. These photographers and their customers abandoned any interest in realistic documentation in favour of careful posing against exotic and glamorous backdrops, Chris Pinney thought that 'No-one sees any value in photography's potential to fix quotidian reality. It is rarely there to memorialize the events and conjunctions of the past. It is prized rather for its ability to make people and places 'come out better than they really are' (Pinney, *Notes from the Surface of the Image*, p.216). Above all, he thought that these were modes which were 'Underwritten at every point by the desire for clarity and visibility....the eyes of the subject became critical markers of the image's ability to reciprocate the look of the viewer....this convention of visibility and clarity of form, line and identity resonates very deeply with the quest for frontality and visibility inscribed on a

surface that looks out, thus reciprocating the gaze of the viewer' (Pinney, *Notes from the Surface of the Image*, p.219.). Liam Buckley found the same in post-colonial Gambia where the photographic studios had a similar concern to show people at their best. Clothing (for example dinner jackets, bow ties, and spectacles) and equipment (fridges, telephones, and globes for instance) were provided for clients to dress up and glamorize themselves for their portraits. Buckley sees this photography 'as a vehicle for social and symbolic messages about how, for example, the disempowered take on power' (Liam Buckley, *Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography*, p.81). Pinney saw in these adoptions of props and backdrops as a rejection of realistic documentation and an adoption of negotiation between camera and subject', outside of the taxonomising and coercive techniques of colonial observers and the colonial state, backdrops tend to become part of a more complicated dialogue between the posed photograph and the practices of everyday life' (Pinney, *Notes from the Surface of the Image*, p.213). Similarly Stephen Sprague, in his study of post-colonial Yoruba photography, noted the contrast with the portraiture of the colonial era in which, 'The subject does not squarely confront the camera but usually turns asymmetrically to one side and looks out of the frame and away from the lens. The whole body is seldom shown: most British portraits ranged from three-quarters to extreme close-ups that only include the head' (Sprague, *Yoruba Photography*, p.54). Whereas in Yoruba photography, 'The subject always wears his best traditional dress and sits squarely facing the camera. Both hands are placed on the lap or on the knees, and the legs are well apart to spread the garments and display the fabrics. The face has a dignified but distant expression as the eyes look directly at the camera....The photography enhances the sense of dignified stateliness by a camera viewpoint either level with the subject's waist or looking slightly upward, as if from a position of one paying homage. The entire body is always included in the frame' (Sprague, *Yoruba Photography*, p.54). Pinney thought that these post-colonial modes, 'appear to be at an ultimate remove from the disciplinary framework through which photography first impacted on these locales, and they constitute a distinctive post-colonial aesthetic' (Christopher Pinney, 'Introduction: How The Other Half....' in eds. Pinney and Petersen, *Photography's Other Histories*, Durham, 2003 p.8). This was an aesthetic created by popular practice, by working people rejecting the 'disciplinary framework' and actively developing alternative ways of representing themselves. Which is a process which appears

to be exactly what can be seen to develop in the British working-class photography during these years.

³³⁷ Jacques Ranciere, *The Nights of Labour* (Philadelphia, 1989), Preface.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.xxxii.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.25.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.vii.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p.195.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.85.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.20.

³⁴⁵ Ken Worpole, *Dockers and Detectives: Popular Reading, Popular Writing* (London, 1983), p.10.

³⁴⁶ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class* (London, 2001), p.4.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.25

³⁴⁸ Robert James, *Popular Culture and Working Class Taste in Britain, 1930-39. A Round of Cheap Diversions*. (Manchester, 2010), p.4.

³⁴⁹ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*.

³⁵⁰ Worpole, *Dockers and Detectives*, p.34.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.35.

³⁵² Quoted in *ibid.*, p.70.

³⁵³ James, *Popular Culture and Working Class Taste*, p.73.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.182.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.92.

³⁵⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.101.

³⁵⁷ Rose, *Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*, p.9.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.197.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.206.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.57.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.57.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p.230.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.265.

³⁶⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, p.292.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.123.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.111.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.114.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.277.

³⁶⁹ If photography, particularly family photography, is seen to be a part of the field of memory studies, then the historians working in this area can make a contribution to understanding its importance. They attach a particular value to the transmission, diffusion and reception of cultural codes. So they are willing to accept a broadly Foucauldian interpretation of cultural activity. Duncan Bell, for example, thought that 'historical representation is built into the formation and re-negotiation of identity', and, at times, these representations can function as 'a counter-hegemonic site of resistance, (Duncan Bell, 'Mythscape: Memory, Mythology and National Identity', in *The British Journal of Sociology*, pp. 66-67). This is, of course, what this chapter has suggested about working-class family photography. But they have reservations about the simple attribution of social or political significance based solely on the content of a particular cultural activity. Wulf Kansteiner suggests that 'The formal and semantic qualities of historical representations have little in common with the intentions of their authors, and neither the object's characteristics nor the author's objectives are good indicators for subsequent reception processes' (Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', in *History and Theory*, Vol.41, No.2, May 2002, p.192). This is a view supported by Alan Confino, who felt that 'when we interpret a work of art [or a photo] we cannot assume that the images are the transparent expressions of political and social values, for, in fact, artistic style is a most treacherous key for ascertaining political and social developments. In short the work of art cannot speak for itself, to decipher its meaning, we must examine the intermediaries between the social world and the artistic representation' (Alan Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method, in *American Historical Review*, Vol.102, No. 5, December, 1997, p.1391). These historians argue that the significance of a cultural object arises not from what it represents or even from how it is represented, but from how this representation is received and interpreted. It is the reception of a cultural form that is crucial to understanding its importance. Kansteiner believed that cultural activities 'only assume collective relevance when they are used in a social setting', or when it can be shown 'that specific representations find large audiences' (Kansteiner, *Finding Meaning in Memory*, pp 190-194). And Confino suggests that what is

required is the 'systematic study of reception' (Confino, *Collective Memory and Cultural History*, p1397). Thus, for instance, a family photograph can only be considered to be of social or political importance when its mode of representation can be shown to have had widespread repetition, or reception, to the point where it has entered the collective memory. When this reception can be demonstrated an insight can be provided into 'that most elusive of phenomena, popular consciousness' (Kansteiner, *Finding Meaning in Memory*, p.180). This chapter attempts to demonstrate modes of representation that enjoyed this widespread repetition, diffusion and reception, not just across working-class families, but out into the more formal political domain and into the collective memory, permitting some access to the popular consciousness of the time.

³⁷⁰ *Labour*, July, 1938.

³⁷¹ Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940* (London, 1994), p.24.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p.39.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.48.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.68.

³⁷⁵ Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1990).

³⁷⁶ For example, Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1990), quoted in Savage and Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940*, p.14.

³⁷⁷ Savage and Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class*. P.20.

³⁷⁸ Bert Hardy, *My Life* (London, 1985), p.18.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.35.

³⁸¹ Boyd Tonkin, 'Icons of the Dispossessed: Bert Hardy and the Documentary Photograph' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, 1986, p.160.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p.162.

³⁸³ Bert Hardy, *My Life*, p.40.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.104.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.104.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.105.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.105.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.148-151.

-
- ³⁸⁹James Jarche *People I have Shot* (London, 1934), P102.
- ³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.156 & 160.
- ³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.189.
- ³⁹² John Roberts *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), p.75.
- ³⁹³ David Levi Strauss, *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (Singapore, 2003), p.8.
- ³⁹⁴ Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions: Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (London, 2004), p.196.
- ³⁹⁵ Jacques Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London, 2009), pp. 33-35.
- ³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- ³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.72.
- ³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.81.
- ³⁹⁹ David Levi Strauss, *Between the Eyes*, p.22.
- ⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-46.
- ⁴⁰¹ Martin Childs, Obituary, *The Independent*, November 9th, 2014.
- ⁴⁰² Eds. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Newell Smith, *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London, 1998), p.18.
- ⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.47.
- ⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.109.
- ⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.172.
- ⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5.
- ⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Quoted in James Joll, *Gramsci* (Glasgow, 1979), p.101.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Stuart Hall, 'What is Visual Culture?' in Eds. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, *Visual Culture: the Reader* (London, 1999), pp310-311.
- ⁴¹⁰ It is difficult to see, from the evidence used here, the exact process by which this exchange, between a private, family photography and a more public, press photography, took place. However the boundaries between amateur and professional photography do seem to have been quite fluid at this time. Helen Muspratt (Chapter3), for example, was self-taught. She earned a living from portrait photography, but became concerned with a

more social documentation in her spare time and not for money. J. Allen Cash (Chapter 2) was forced from a career in radio by the Depression and taught himself photography in order to survive. While Harry Cartlidge (Chapter 2) was employed by the Hull Docks Authority as a photographer, but in his own time did occasional work for the local press and regularly entered amateur photographic competitions. Bert Hardy (this Chapter), of course, started as an errand boy at a photographic business and gradually acquired the skills that took him to the top of his profession. At this time photography does not seem to have been a profession that required formal training or qualifications. This facilitated entry into the profession by people from all sorts of backgrounds, as well a relatively free movement of individuals backwards and forward between amateur and professional status. The transfer of these distinct modes of representation from the private to the public domain may be, at least partially, explained by this sort of fluidity.

⁴¹¹ Quoted in Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left* (London, 1997), p.71.

⁴¹² In 1926 AIZ stated that it wanted to develop a photography which reflected the revolutionary movements of the workers, their social conditions and everyday lives, their workplaces and new industrial and technological environments, the beauty of labour and the horrors of social misery. Jorge Ribalta, *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926-1936: Essays and Documents* (Madrid, 2011), p.12.

⁴¹³ Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p.64.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.58.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.69.

⁴¹⁶ Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas* (London, 1937).

⁴¹⁷ See Chapter 3, Photos 18-21.

⁴¹⁸ See Chapter 3, Photos 12-15.

⁴¹⁹ Stuart Hall, 'The Social Eye of Picture Post' in *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2, 1972, (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies), p.88.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.88.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p.88.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p.89.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p.96.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.99.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.102.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.73.

⁴²⁷ *List of newspapers in the United Kingdom by circulation* (Wikipedia)

⁴²⁸ Stuart Hall, *The Social Eye of Picture Post*, p.109.

⁴²⁸ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998), John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (New York, 1988).

⁴²⁹ John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester, 1998). John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York, 1988).

⁴³⁰ Chris Pinney, 'Crisis and Critique,' in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, May 2016.