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## Preface

Early in 1937, fifty people in different parts of the country agreed to co-operate in making observations on how they and other people spend their daily lives. These fifty Observers were the vanguard of a developing movement, aiming to apply the methods of science to the complexity of a modern culture. In June 1937, a pamphlet called *Mass-Observation* was published (Muller, price 1s.), outlining this experiment in its theory and practice, and stressing the need for a large number of Observers. This pamphlet, which is the fullest statement so far, was given astonishing publicity in the Press. Within a few weeks more than a thousand people had applied to be Observers and the number is steadily rising.

The Observers by this time cover the whole country. They are in the industrial centres, in rural and urban areas, in country towns, suburbs and villages. They include coalminers, factory hands, shopkeepers, salesmen, housewives, hospital nurses, bank clerks, businessmen, doctors and schoolmasters, scientists and technicians. A large proportion of them have already shown themselves able to write really useful reports. Prof. Julian Huxley has written of some of these that they 'would put many orthodox scientists to shame in their simplicity, clearness and objectivity.'

Since February, these Observers have been making reports about what happened to them on a given day, namely the twelfth of each month. They have concentrated on normal routine events. The survey of May 12

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which takes up most of this book was therefore exceptional: it is almost wholly concerned with one event, which affected the whole country. This gives a unity to the reports which is an advantage in the first published example of the method in action. It also gives scope for the study of crowd behaviour, to which the method is well suited. As a rule, however, Mass-Observation will be dealing with everyday things rather than special occasions.

It seems to us that the organisation gives a meeting point between many fields. The results that should be obtainable when the method is fully developed should be of interest to the social worker, the field anthropologist, the politician, the historian, the advertising agent, the realistic novelist and indeed any person who is concerned to know what people really want and think. We propose to hold our files open to any serious worker. But in addition to special scientific uses, we believe that observing is itself of real value to the Observer. It heightens his power of seeing what is around him and gives him new interest in and understanding of it. He also benefits by seeing specimens of others' reports. Results must be issued in a form that will be available and interesting to the non-specialist. Moreover Mass-Observation depends for its vitality on the criticisms and suggestions of the whole body of its Observers, who must be more than mere recording instruments.

The main development of Mass-Observation has been two-fold, firstly the network of Observers all over the country; secondly an intensive survey of a single town. Charles Madge runs the former, Tom Harrisson the latter. Humphrey Jennings is responsible for the business of presenting results. These three activities are closely linked. The local survey starts with whole-time research workers studying a place from the outside and working inwards, getting into the society, and so coming to the individual. The national plan starts from the

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individual Observers and works outwards from them into their social surroundings. One aim of Mass-Observation is to see how, and how far, the individual is linked up with society and its institutions. The third important task is that of issuing our reports and findings in a form which will be of interest and value to Observers, the general public, and scientists.

The final responsibility for presenting the material must in the case of this book rest on the whole-time editors, Charles Madge and Humphrey Jennings. Many others worked hard over shorter periods and on special problems. They include T. O. Beachcroft, Julian Blackburn, William Empson, Stuart Legg and Kathleen Raine. Ruthven Todd compiled the index. The real authors of the book are the Observers, who must be anonymous, but without whose help nothing could have been done.

*August 1937.*

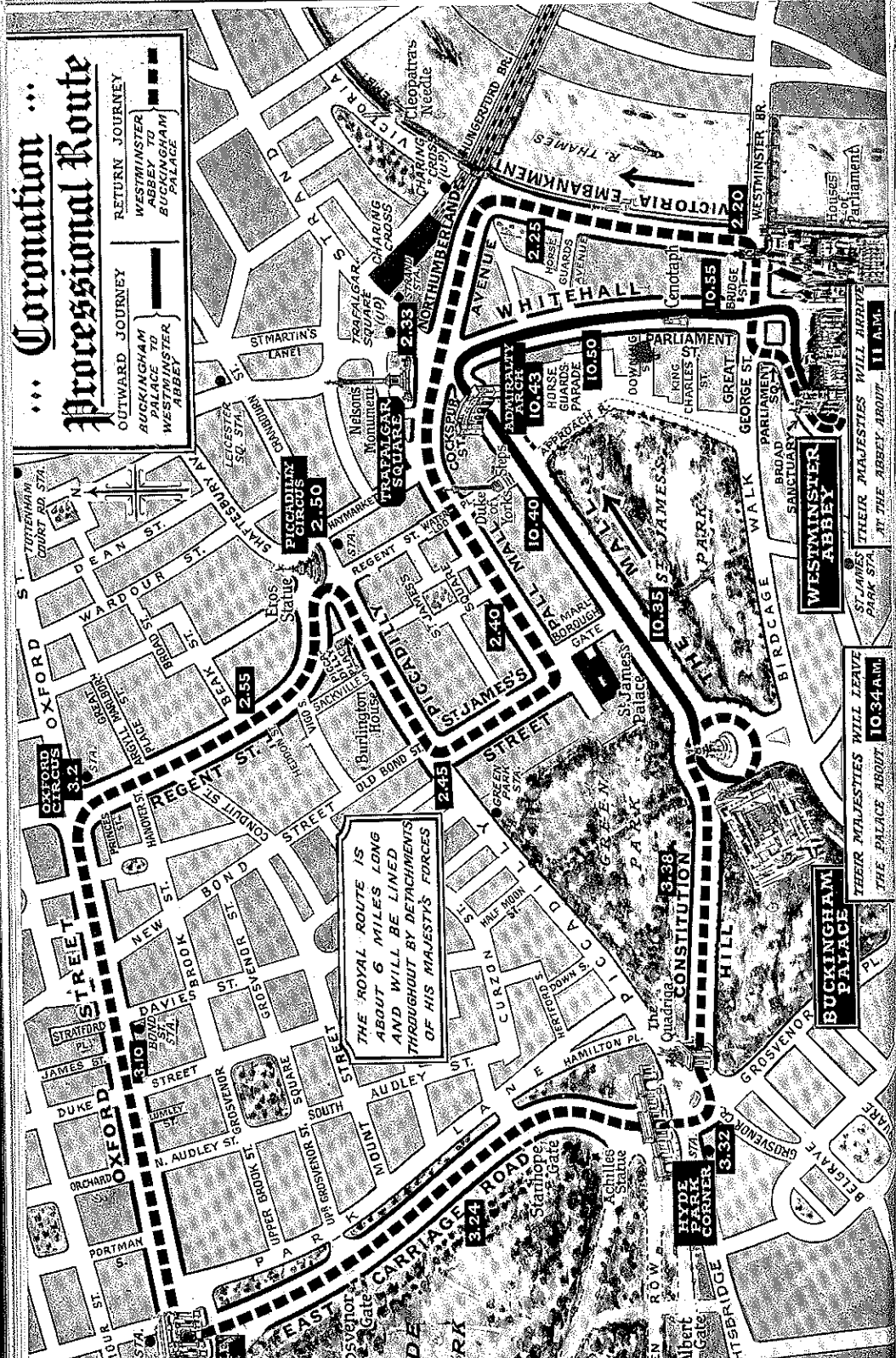
*Anyone can be a Mass-Observer. If after reading this you wish to take part in the experiment, write to*

**MASS-OBSERVATION**  
6 Grottes Buildings  
Blackheath  
London  
S.E.3

# Coronation ... Processional Route

OUTWARD JOURNEY  
BUCKINGHAM  
PALACE TO  
WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY

RETURN JOURNEY  
WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY TO  
BUCKINGHAM  
PALACE



THE ROYAL ROUTE IS ABOUT 6 MILES LONG AND WILL BE LINED THROUGHOUT BY DETACHMENTS OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES

1. In making a survey of May 12, Coronation Day, various kinds of phenomena had to be observed. There was the life of the streets, existing for that day only, called into being by an exceptional occasion. There was life at home, and in routine environments, disturbed and modified by the demands of the day. More difficult to grasp and define, there was the mass reaction to the events, the floating opinions and counter-opinions which they provoked, and the interactions of opinion among individuals and among groups. Such was the varied field to be explored, and in order to make as round a picture as the forces of Mass-Observation would allow, three distinct lines of attack were adopted.

2. Firstly there were the Observers, who having made surveys on the twelfth of February, March and April, could now bring most useful experience to bear on the peculiar problems of the twelfth of May. 43 of them sent in reports, many of them of 10,000 words or more, showing a marked increase in accuracy and control of the subjective elements over their earlier efforts. These are numbered CO.1—CO.43 when quoted in the text.

Secondly, several thousand leaflets were issued, headed

WHERE WERE YOU ON MAY 12?  
MASS-OBSERVATION WANTS YOUR STORY  
and asking for answers to the following questions:

1. Name, address, age, sex, occupation? Married or single Religious or political views if any?

2. Did you yourself see, or did you want to see, the Coronation procession?

3. What did you do on May 12? Give a *short* hour by hour description of your day.

4. Do you think it benefits the country to have a Coronation?

5. What was the most stirring incident, the most peculiar incident and the funniest incident that you saw or that you heard of during the day? (Say whether you saw it, or heard of it; and if you heard of it, from whom.)

6. Were your neighbours mostly keen on the Coronation? What did they say to you about it?

To this questionnaire 77 answers were received, a return of about 3% plus a certain amount of material on other people's opinions and days collected by Observers. Some of the answers were several thousand words in length, and the opinions represented were of all kinds, from 'Conservative and Church of England' to 'Communist and Atheist', though the bulk of them lay between these two extremes. They are numbered CL.1—CL.109.

Thirdly, a Mobile Squad of 12 Observers was set to work to cover happenings in the streets of London from midnight on May 11 till after midnight on May 12. They worked in shifts, and kept in touch with the Mass-Observation headquarters by telephone, like reporters and a newspaper office. During the time they were working they took notes almost continuously, and from their notes wrote up lengthy reports, numbered CM.1—12.

3. By these three methods, three kinds of focus were obtained, not to mention the individual differences of focus between each of the Observers. Close-up and long shot, detail and ensemble, were all provided. Some recorded just what reaches the threshold of a normal consciousness, others by concentrated effort saw and heard far more than they were normally accustomed

to. On the whole, the excitement of the day seems to have stimulated most people's powers of observation to an unusual degree.

The survey of May 12 is divided into three parts. The first, Chapter 2, is based mainly on the work done by the Mobile Squad, with additions from CO and CL. It gives a panorama of London, and especially of the route of the Coronation procession, the area in which took place those events which gave the day its exceptional character over large parts of the world.

4. Some general points can be made about the celebrations, points which are well illustrated by the Observers but might have been expected anyway. They were unescapable; people who tried to avoid them found themselves going back to the radio on one ground or another, or showed a sense of guilt, or found themselves interested after all. However, in many ways it was treated as a public holiday and festival like any other, to be enjoyed in the usual ways, carrying the emotional weight natural to the special days of a large society, but no extreme interest in what the function of a King may be or the significance of his Coronation. Even when people find themselves suddenly and powerfully moved by the sight of one of the processions they may not be clear *what* has moved them—the symbolism of a procession and a crowd and a band, in themselves; a patriotic feeling about the country as a whole; or some feeling that refers to this particular Coronation.

5. It is notable that any break-up of the routine of life is satisfactory to most people; thus they forgot to be angry with the busmen for being on strike—they added somehow to the drama of the occasion by making it more unusual, or even more inconvenient. A curious record-hunting ascetic feeling always appears on such days, as in the people who sat for 25 hours, though it must have been obvious that there was no need to. This may be connected with the idea that you have a duty

to enjoy yourself on a public holiday very thoroughly. However the curiously sinister effect of the reports of the night before the Coronation seems to show feelings of a more special kind. The Observers note a revival of war-time atmosphere and the *Evening Standard* ran a 'Coronation Camp Fire' which printed stories of the war. This is partly because the war gave a great deal of companionship and change of routine, so that people swap war-stories whenever these conditions hold. The feeling about war, if present, is however passive; nobody seems to conceive the troops so prominent in the day as doing any actual fighting. And so far as the King himself becomes an object of emotion he is conceived in family or 'Freudian' relations, not as a person who might do anything and hardly even as representing a country or a class. The performance in fact was viewed very largely in an aesthetic way, and this was the way which involved least strain and was for the majority the best social adaptation to the circumstances.

### What Central London was like from midnight to 5 a.m.

6. (CM.7.) 11.45 p.m. Euston full of people staying the night on waiting-room benches. Refreshment room and Enquiry Hall full. In waiting room drunk man knocks chair over, sits on floor, policeman says 'Hey, sit up,' but leaves him to lie there. Man drinking beer and eating sandwiches in a telephone box. Rush of excursionists arriving from Macclesfield to engage seats for their return journey.

Accidentally met a friend from Cambridge come up with his mother, 'A great show' he says.

'This is what London is,' says North countrywoman jostled by crowd.

People waiting to meet friends on Liverpool excursion.

'A lot of soldiers,' says one and his wife goes on to talk about Willy, whose regiment has been drafted to Malta.

Young men go by shouting, old lady says: 'Somebody lit', apparently talking to herself, or rather to the world in general for everybody here is talking to nobody in particular—the effect perhaps of having to shout so much to make oneself heard.

Refreshment room, man and fiancée talk over Coronation Gold Cup runners, they go on to play This year, Next year, Sometime, Never, with the rolls arranged along the counter. Later the fiancée says that it is a prejudice that one should always sleep at night time. He begins to sing 'Night and Day you are the one.'

Train departure platforms silent except for porters loading mail-bags.

Outside the station thick fog. Euston Road very quiet, only a few drunks on the running boards of taxis.

7. 12.40 a.m. Baker Street. Scouts selling programmes, worried about their collecting boxes being full. One small pale scout with glasses complaining that he has lost his collecting box, his chief helps him to look for it.

Welshman from Aberystwyth asks me the way to Paddington. 'Very handy these tubes' he says. I mention the bus strike, he looks blank. Curious nobody mentions the bus strike.\*

Regent's Park. Cars on wrong side of road because of fog. Man earning coppers at gate by directing fog-bound cars.

I try to enter park and find it locked on west side. Get into Bedford College for Women by mistake, porter stops me, I say I thought people were allowed to sleep in the park, he says there are some sleeping in there (indicating the College) but I am not allowed in. The east side of the park is apparently occupied entirely by soldiers and I am not allowed in there either.

\*There is no discussion of the bus-strike in the reports, and only a few casual mentions that it was going on at all.

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Very few people on the circular drive because of the fog and damp.

At top Baker Street drunk man goes to sleep in sand and gravel box. Policeman observes to passers-by that he is safer there than in the road.

Traffic jam at Marylebone Circus. People leaning out of taxis shouting at each other; people on top of car roofs; one taxi with about ten people on it singing 'Hallelujah, I'm a bum.' Man standing by traffic lights offers to chaperone (*sic*) girls leaning out of back of taxi, they answer that they are going home. He says 'Where?' They answer their home is on the streets and laugh, of course their home is obviously, from their dress and accent, not on the streets.

*Evening News* placard 'All about it', It being understood.

Marylebone Station deserted, L.N.E.R. excursions apparently all arriving at King's Cross.

Immense motor van passes bearing sign 'Bladen Milk for 4,500 Children at Coronation of King George VI. Long May He Reign.'

Edgware Road, two closed buses full of Scottish soldiers. Groups pass singing *Alone on this night of romance* and *A bicycle made for Two*.

Two sailors, Edgware Road Station, chaffed with *Popeye, The Sailor Man*.

8. 1.45. Paddington. All seats crowded, people eating, sleeping, reading, on seats and porters' trucks. Looking at Arrival Indicator, woman says 'Trains not a bit late yet, the organization's wonderful!' People generally not talking about the Coronation but about trains, food, drinks, relatives, etc.

Boy in tube: 'The train's going this way.'

Father nods and grins.

Boy: 'I thought it was going the other way.'

Father: 'No, it's going this way,' etc.

Outside snack bar near Paddington, man says 'Not going home, are you?' Girl: 'No fear, just a walk.'

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Restaurant nearby with notice 'Breakfast served now'—time about 2.15.

9. Lancaster Gate. 2.20. Kensington Gardens shut, full of soldiers, girls leaning over park railings calling to them, soldiers indicate guards at gate despairingly.

Indians arguing in tube about the necessity of the Bakerloo extension to Stanmore, one says 'People in suburbs are scarcely human, they should be kept as far out of London as possible.' Every time train enters tunnel people make animal noises. Others unscrew light-bulbs; they are all doing the sort of things Undergraduates do when canned, but they are not Undergraduates, they seem to be aged between about 25 and 35 and they look like clerks, typists, etc.

Terrific jam at Oxford Circus, takes about 15 minutes to get up escalators. Singing coming from every part of Oxford Street. Fruit barrows, sellers of rosettes and newspapers, no motors. People camping on the pavement all the way down Regent Street, four deep from the pavement edge.

Young man to girls 'Hey, have you got to go home tonight?'—This seems to be the most frequent question asked, answer always in the negative; apparently even in moments of great excitement people are still thinking of their homes as their centres of life.

10. Continual processions of 20-50 people all the way down Regent Street, one going round Oxford Circus till leader with Union Jack gets dizzy and stumbles, someone else snatches the flag and carries on exactly as in boys' story-books of pre-trench-warfare days.

Old lady in red, white and blue trousers selling rosettes.

Police appear to be acting as entertainers to the crowd, chatting with pavement-sleepers.

Black Maria full of police goes slowly up the street, crowd hoots and jeers at it, policemen's heads grinning through grille. Well-dressed people, upper middle class, elderly, sitting in shop-windows, watch antics of crowd. Some of crowd make faces at them from outside, everybody laughs.

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Man with very large mouth singing 'Aaaaah, I kinda make you laugh', and selling pamphlets full of jokes.

Groups singing *Shoe-Shine Boy* and *Annie Laurie* next to each other.

Three fire engines in street off Regent Street, fireman asleep on pavement.

Band—trumpets, saxophone, drums—players dressed as negroes, marches by. Two real negroes on pavement mistaken for part of the band by crowd, which gathers round waiting for negroes to perform. One negress just stares back, the other combs her hair, back-chatting. Police approach, doubting their sexual intentions, but retire reassured when one negress points out her husband.

11. 3 a.m. Piccadilly Circus. Several bands, people dancing, playing 'Nuts and May'. *Pennies from Heaven* the most audible song. Man and girl begin to undress in front of Regent Palace, man has taken off his shirt and girl pulled up dress when police stop them, they protest they are doing a strip-tease act and point to flash-light photographer who has camera ready to shoot them. Police make them put on their clothes and leads the photographer away. Hard luck on him, says someone.

40 policemen marching down Shaftesbury Avenue, they look as if they would be happier if they could burst into song like everyone else.

3.15. Cambridge Circus. I am accosted. I say 'You look as if you've done enough for to-night.' Reply: 'None of your sauce, me lad.'\*

More crowds at Leicester Square. By this time I am a little canned and can't hear much.

In tube: 'Funny how you don't mind waiting when there's something to look at.' (Midlander speaking.)

Argument as to whether the train is going to Edgware or

\*Cf. para. 16.

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Kennington only settled by our arrival at Euston where the arguers hurry out, apparently wanting to go to Charing Cross.

'Aren't some of these girls' faces awful?' says middle-aged Northern woman, jerking her head at very red-lipped revellers.

3.45. Belsize Park. People sleeping in train, apparently being carried from one terminus to the other continually.

12. (CO.38.)\* (About 12.40 a.m.) In Shaftesbury Avenue, a file of about 30 policemen marching to take up position in Piccadilly Circus are greeted with spontaneous cheers, bottles of beer are offered them from a taxi and two hatless youths carrying a crate of beer fall in behind police, in step, to get safe conduct through crowd. Crowd knows that police are instructed to be more than usually 'blind-eyed' for the occasion, and crossing Piccadilly Circus the outburst of cheers and clapping is heavy and quite sincere—probably a few in the crowd realize that these men are to take up position with little chance of break or rest, until 4 or 5 p.m. and sympathize. The steps around Eros statue are filled with an excited crowd, coster's barrows stand around selling fruit, chocolate, etc. Hot chestnuts, roasted potatoes and peanuts are selling fast. It is 1 a.m. and most of the roadway is filled with people who read aloud the slowly spelled news reports on the running electric signboard over the end of Glasshouse Street. When the rain is indicated in the report, a few hoots and derisive cheers occur. At 1.15 a.m. walk slowly westward in Piccadilly, in roadway. Kerb edge is filled already, almost all people sitting. A coster is selling empty apple boxes at 1s. each; but most people have folding stools, rugs, raincoats and groundsheets.

13. Walk through the temporary gateway across Piccadilly near the Ritz Hotel and at about 2 a.m. am in Berkeley

\*M: agent: now out of work: lived in East End.

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Street watching four semi-drunken sailors dancing with untidily-dressed and well-drunk poor factory-girl types, to music of bagpipes played by 6 ft. 3 in. immaculate Guardee in tails, who has borrowed pipes from one of a taxi-party. Sellers of flags, whistles, etc., are doing brisk trade but no foodstuffs being sold here. Look at crowd on pavement, and decide it's because they are 'good' near-middle-class people who have brought plenty of food from home. The women are mostly sensibly dressed—heavy shoes and tweeds, or big tweed or leather coats, quite a few in breeches and rubber boots; very few hats, most women wearing scarves of bright colours on heads giving scene an odd reference to a Russian occasion. The males are already mostly lying down, on coats, newspapers, rubber sheets and women are using *them* as mattresses. Whole of kerb both sides of St. James Street full at 2.15 a.m.

Find policeman acquaintance on a corner who tells me that groups of about 24 or 30 have already been turned out from most stations within five miles, and have been in position since 11.30 p.m. They had been called only during the evening, most of them expecting to start not before 3.30 a.m. or 5 a.m. from their respective stations. I ask him how long he is there for, and if they have any special instructions. He expects to be relieved shortly, and many of them get food and drink in marquee in Green Park, and can rest until 5.30 a.m., when certainly *all* of them will be out amongst the crowd for the rest of the day. They have been instructed that the crowd is being mostly well-behaved, so that they must be lenient about everything. No interference for mere drunkenness, they must only intervene in case of fighting or bad disorder or very obstructive crowds. All the policemen have pockets full of iron rations (biscuits, chocolate, and thirst-quenching tablets); as they are wearing ceremonial dress (tunic, leather belt, white gloves, etc.) they are feeling the cold already—not much chance to move about very

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freely—many of the crowd are already establishing good relations with them, and an occasional one is seen accepting a sandwich or a cup from a thermos, hiding in the crowd from the eyes of inquisitive superiors.

14. Just after 2.40 a.m. I have walked down Piccadilly and through the Circus into Regent Street. Crowd filling footways, but very few arriving; no one walks on footways, we all progress along the road, pedestrians in a hurry, slow-moving groups who've come to see the fun almost all accompanied by a trumpeter or piano-accordionist who plays continuously. Sellers of hot pies, buttered rolls and other substantial foods doing well here; people now beginning to feel the cold, fog almost entirely gone. Oxford Circus much quieter than Piccadilly (time now about 3 a.m.). Along Oxford Street westward I meet groups of revellers, obviously from poor quarters (overdressed factory operatives, good-looking partly-drunken girls, youths about twenty, all hatless) and most of them have picked up sailors or soldiers revelling who have all lent hats to girls. Everybody sings and here and there an accordion or even a four-part good band (trumpet, saxophone, accordion and banjo) stands under one of the island lamp-posts playing for a group who dance in the midst of a knot of a hundred or so persons. Selfridge's rather vulgar décor scheme attracts a fringe along the opposite pavement, who crane necks, and one knowledgeable youth recites subject matter of each panel to group of girls, one of whom says repeatedly in a dazed way, 'Lovely, lovely—but what a lot of money' and 'How do they build all them things up there?'—the young man apparently can't answer this. Outside Mount Royal residential flats, notice that women much superior numerically to men. Very few standing, and everything that can keep cold out is in use. Most people seem to be here in couples, or groups of 8 or 10, etc.—not many small parties noticeable. Newest foodstuff venture is the sale of cups of tea from a complete apparatus (spirit stove, enormous



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teapot, jugs, sugar box, etc.) carried in shallow box by one man, whilst other has converted orange-box with about 40 cups slung on shoulders. How—and if—the cups are washed doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone. Reach Marble Arch at 3.40 a.m.

15. People thronging towards route from Edgware Road, carrying parcels, boxes, rugs, children, flags, rucksacks, etc. Lots of shocked comments on discovering that they are not the first on the scene. I walk very quickly through Hyde Park section of route—identical scenes as Oxford Street—and here, in addition, the crowds are camping on the grass-verge as well as the footway, so a few may sleep in a little comfort. By now a pathetic and sordid spectacle: everyone's weariness is apparent, couples mutter in each other's ears, close-folded in one another's arms under rugs and coats, children weep or mutter sleepily, young girls of 12 or so run about to keep warm and shout irritably to one another.

16. The clock at Hyde Park Corner shows 4.8 a.m. as I turn away from the route and go east along Piccadilly. Arrivals now pouring in, having walked possibly miles, some being decanted from cars or motor coaches. In St. James's Street police are combing crowd to seize all boxes, stools or other devices for standing clear of the kerb: a motor van crammed full of them is being more tightly packed by three men—and many of the crowd have only bought the stools an hour or so ago from hawkers.\* At 4.35 a.m. I cross Piccadilly Circus and am swept some yards back by a crowd rushing from the Underground, which has now begun to disgorge arrivals; I cannot board a train here, have to walk to Leicester Square Tube Station. On way push against somebody, say 'Sorry' and hear 'That's all right, dearie, don't be in such a hurry.' Look round and think it possibly someone who knows me and whom I can't place—in spite of lack of make-up and neat well-cut coat, I realize that I am being quite

\*Cf. para. 21.

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nicely accosted by a prostitute, quiet-voiced, good accent, etc. Ask her why she's out so late—or so early? and she says business is not so good as it might be. Before she can decide whether I'm a potential client or not, I cut across the road and into Underground station.

17. (CL.65.)\* I am in the employ of a large firm of chemists, and was sent by them to do special duties in London during Coronation week. My station was their 'Oxford Street' branch, five minutes' walk from Tottenham Court Road and I had to work there from seven o'clock on Coronation eve to six o'clock Coronation morning, the shop being kept open specially all night. After six I was free till twelve midnight the next night.

The first two hours of Coronation Day, 12-2, were my turn to rest and were occupied in sleep in the cellar.

Between two and three we had four people in the shop, three to buy aspirins and one, a Cambridge undergraduate, to buy a draught for his friend outside who had just swallowed two bottles of sherry. By this time there was a steady tramp of people towards the Marble Arch. They were quiet but looked happy. A few carried camp stools, but most of them just food and overcoats. Outside the shop three young people were selling the *Daily Worker*. They seemed to treat the situation as rather a joke.

Between three and four I got someone from Manchester who had twisted a knee, but who was still determined to hobble along to see the procession. Another girl had the skin taken from her heels by walking, but after patching up said she was still going to try to see the show. The most popular sale now was films. Few of the people seemed to think preventative medicines necessary and all were very optimistic about the weather.

\*M: 24: single.

Between four and five two 'St. John's Ambulance' nurses came in. They said they would be glad when it was over but were rather looking forward to it all the same. My two colleagues in the shop differed in their plans for the day. One said he was going to go home to bed and the other said he was going to come to town at two o'clock and 'chance his luck'. Both disapproved of long waits.

All the time the tramp of people got louder and between five and six a veritable army were marching towards the Marble Arch and Oxford Circus. All were quiet, however.

18. (CL.25.)\* On Wednesday, May 12, 1937, I was awakened at 2.10 a.m. by a newsboy yelling *Daily Mail*. I crawled out of bed and was quite surprised to see that the Hotel opposite and the streets were alive with all types of people. I admit I thought London had gone crazy and felt annoyed with the world in general. I returned to my bed, determined to sleep. It was impossible, the rush of cars and noise of heavy traffic was deafening. I tried counting sheep but to my horror found I was counting human footsteps. I think I must have dozed off when I was suddenly awakened by a man's voice shouting through the keyhole, 'Nurse, it's a quarter to five.' It was the cook. That seemed to me the last straw. For a moment I wondered if he had taken leave of his senses, but the steady tramp of feet on the pavement outside brought home to me in a flash that the Great Day had dawned. 'At least', I said to myself 'I hope their Majesties are also getting up at this unearthly hour.' I dressed and after the inevitable cup of tea I went to the nursery.

\*F: 28; single: children's nurse; C. of E.: Conservative.

Journeys to the Route from three points:  
2.30-6.15 a.m.

19. (CL.83.)\* On this memorable day of May 12th my friends and I got up at 2.30 a.m. all bright and ready for the coming day's work. One of my friends, a young fellow named D—, was on duty selling Official Souvenir Programmes. As for my other friend and myself we were special depot 'runners' with some important messages to take from the Home Office as quick as possible to the Admiralty. Quickly we got dressed in our smart, spotless uniforms and had some breakfast which was kindly prepared for us by 'Mrs. Chief'. Then off we went in Mr. M—'s car after having picked up Jack and Eric. When we arrived at Liverpool Street Station Jack suggested that we should walk to our depot. The idea soon caught up with us, and with the accompaniment of whistling we set out. Starting to whistle *Tipperary* we were surprised to hear that all the passers-by and the road sweepers had joined in.

When we arrived at the depot we found a large amount of money tins and about 1,000 programmes in neat piles of twenty, each with its own paper carrier. The next thing to do was to issue the programmes to the boys. Having done this we were told that we could go and see the procession which was just about to come. We had been given badges which could be used to enable us to go to front of the police.

20. (CM.1.)† My wife set the alarm for 3 o'clock, the first train to Town being at 3.49. I woke up without hearing it; lay awake for some while and then heard the church clock strike 4. I got up bad tempered. The alarm had not gone off. My wife got me some hot coffee, and packed my sandwiches. At

\*Schoolboy: 13; Ilford.

†Blackheath.

## The Normal Day-Survey

3 shoe-horn is lying on the grate. Read *Spectator*. Keep fires going. Another bowel evacuation. Voice from without—'whoopee' (I think it's that). Wind blowing. Head comes off long poker. I look out of back window and see the electric sign of the Broadway in distance. I am alone in the house. Everything is quiet, save for the wind.

53. 6.7. I make myself some tea. 6.40. I take the *Glasgow Herald* into the grocer's. (I always give grocer *Herald* when I have finished with it.) It is snowing. I go down the road. Two upper working-class ladies (they can be described as ladies; they look superior in general appearance) make remarks about something. I don't catch the words but one of the ladies says 'like a parachute'. A youngish girl (upper working class appearance) calls to her dog 'Come on, Son.' It is now dark. I am judging appearances by light from street lamps and shops. I meet Mr. W. again. He says 'Don't stand: see you soon.' People in doorways. Quite a stir now, but of course no 'buses. Bareheaded youth (working class by general appearance) standing in doorway. Shops have good displays but seem to have few customers. I go home by — Road—a lane. Time 6.56. I read *Spectator*. Someone outside gives shrill whistle. Evening paper comes—*Glasgow Evening Citizen*. I glance at it and notice photograph of Mary Pickford and advertisement with illustration of woman—'I have lost 38 lbs. of fat.' Also reference to women 'All-in' wrestlers, and 'bus strike. Stop press column very full. Great many items. Back page of paper. My back gets itchy. I notice the time: 7.30 (may have been a minute before or after). Gramophone. Dance records again. From now till 8.50 I read. *Spectator*, *New Statesman*, including book advertisements. Wind howling. Slight itchiness, back of neck. I wind the clock. Gramophone again. I say auto-suggestions.

54. 9.14. Mother returns from Ayr. Snow blows in. I smoke and read. I have been smoking all day.

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9.50. Supper. My mother tells me that my aunt had heard that my uncle had been snowed up and his telephone put out of order. My aunt is not very cheerful. I am glad my mother does not see her too often. We discuss the 'bus strike.

I brush my teeth with Calvert's Carbolec tooth-powder. Third time to-day. I stand near fire and feel heat on my trousers. I glance at my hair in mirror. Am I losing more of my hair? I laugh at the thought of old gentlemen with sticks. Gramophone. I listen to 'hot' trumpet in fox-trots. Read and smoke.

10.50. Prepare for bed. Hair lotion, a few of Muller's exercises. I think I fell asleep about 11.35.

55. *Remarks*: Notes taken in pencil continuously throughout the day. I cannot write shorthand.

Notes written up on Tuesday, Wednesday, 16th, 17th March.

Exact conversations not given. Those in inverted commas are fairly accurate. The gist is quite accurate, I think.

Health moderately good. During the evening I felt rather depressed and lonely. Slightly deaf in right ear (cold). Sometimes a little 'absent minded'.

I felt fairly happy during the day, if not exactly cheerful. After 5.30 I was in a rather 'negative' condition, and bored.

A 'mixed' day for me. Not very interesting as far as the emotions are concerned. A few erotic thoughts. I thought a good deal about psycho-analysis and surrealism.

No outstanding events, except 'bus strike. The emotional tone of — was 'grey' and everywhere there was an aimless and disappointing 'atmosphere', but I enjoyed the observations.

*Clerk, Liverpool*

56. (1) Age: 24. Male. Single. Politics: Member C.P., trade union (Shop assistants).

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- (2) Clerk—particularly: cable clerk and foreign correspondent. Normal day.
- (3) Health: good. Slight inflammation of the throat on waking; also slight rheumatism left shoulder. Indigestion after lunch.
- (4) Weather—steady rain from 7 to 9 a.m. Sky cleared. Cold with some sun. Wind easterly, dropping. Air humid; streets slimy whole day.
- (5) Sport: Wrestling at Stadium. (For other sport, crime; political and club meetings, see cuttings.)

*Note:* The difficulty with crimes is that they are not discovered as soon as committed; there must have been several committed to-day in Liverpool which will only come to light later.

57. (6) Wakened by alarm at 7 a.m. from dream of which the central feature was that of filling large vats with oil pumped from a distance through a flexible pipe running uphill, I with someone else vague was in charge of keeping the metal end of the pipe in the vat. It was near a factory but the dominant colour seemed to be country green. I dozed until 7.25 when I got up to perform the routine of dressing and getting breakfast at the same time. Put on slippers and dressing gown. Filled kettle and egg pan and lit gas in kitchenette. Cut 4 pieces bread and put them to toast. Banged on K.'s door, the girl in the next room and went to bathroom. When I came out she had laid cloth in her room—she has an electric fire. I watched the toast, etc. while she went to the bathroom.

58. Breakfast ready and finished dressing 7.45. Read *Daily Worker*. Conversation about Labour International Conference on Spain. Said I didn't understand how Bevin could resist unity after hearing in conference and conversation experiences of French and Spanish Socialist delegates. She replied that all Labour Parties where she spoke were en-

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thusiastic for Spain and perplexed by inaction of leadership. She told a Catholic ward last night that if they wanted to move Bevin it was up to them, and there was applause. K. is a secondary school mathematics teacher. Father an elementary school teacher with large family. She worked her way by scholarships from elementary school to London University. Aged 26. Highly intelligent. I have known her 13 months.

I mentioned relief that the Italians had been checked N.E. of Madrid. She said that after November she wouldn't be surprised at anything. <sup>3<sup>a</sup></sup>

59. I complained of the weather. It was cold and raining steadily. I would get wet going to work on my bicycle, but it was too late to take a tram.

It is downhill nearly all the way to work. I left the house at 8 a.m. Coming down Bold Street I knocked down an old woman.\* Probably my fault, but she was crossing the road without looking at the traffic. I saw her plainly, though the rain blurred my glasses (I was not wearing a hat). In wondering whether to go in front of her or behind her, whether there was room behind her between her and the man following her, whether I could get past in front of her before she reached the pavement and how far my back wheel would skid if I braked any harder, I quite forgot to ring my bell, tried to slip in front of her too late, braked and skidded gently into her and the curb. The man behind her—probably an unskilled labourer, rough skin on face; heavy boots and clothes—picked her up and her umbrella and asked me what I thought I was doing not ringing my bell. Why didn't I brake? I should be more careful. I admitted I didn't ring my bell but was too hypnotized to do more than apologize to the old woman. She looked like an office-cleaner. A labourer carrying a 30 m.p.h. speed limit signpost over his sack-protected left shoulder called out as he passed up the

\*2a. This whole story is a model description of social incident. Weather was an important causal factor.

hill: 'You have to be very careful, mate, these wet mornings.'  
I agreed. The old woman was also dumb—with shock; and  
2 as a passer-by was brushing her coat, and asking her if she was  
hurt, there didn't seem to be anything to do but get on my  
bicycle and ride off. This made me late at the office.\*

60. My legs and feet were soaked and the rain was running  
down my neck. I put my bike in the cellar and went into the  
office and shouted: 'Who the hell would live in bloody Eng-  
land if they could help it?' There were screams from the two  
1 cleaners dusting the desks, and laughter from the clerks  
1 opening the mail. The clerk in charge didn't say anything—  
but I was not so late that I would get him into trouble with  
the man above him, so he did not mind my lateness. I de-  
ciphered the first ten letters of the cable—in code—and told  
3<sup>2</sup> the clerk in charge the result. In cable No. 37 — & Co. Inc.  
3<sup>2</sup> U.S.A., offered — & Co. Ltd., Liverpool, 2000 boxes of  
2/28 lb. blocks of refined American lard for 63/9 per cwt.  
prompt shipment. Net cost to-day 63/11. Exchange \$4.87.

To ease my irritation at the weather I began to cough and  
1 snort. Mrs. O. said to Miss D. 'He's in a bad way.'

1 Miss D.: 'But he's got a good pair of lungs has our Donald,  
he's got a good pair of lungs anyway.'

Mrs. O.: 'Well, I think he's bad myself.'

1 A clerk: 'Rotten, absolutely.'

Mrs. O.: 'Oh, I mean bad.' (Lancashire for ill.)

There was more banter which I forget.†

61. Mrs. O. is a widow on the P.A.C. drawing her old age  
pension. She is kind-hearted, generous, lively and never bad  
tempered. Yet her baker son-in-law is out of work; she has an  
invalid son at home; and I think the firm gives her 11s. a  
week. Her husband was a ships painter, disabled by a fall;

\*1a.

†The fact that it was forgotten indicates that it was routine-conversa-  
tion, and suggests that the part which was remembered is hardly to be  
placed in the 1a category.

spine injury and long illness affected his mind and he hanged  
himself in the bedroom. His wife was at work when they came  
to tell her. She told me this without any false emphasis.

Miss D. is Irish, strong-willed, devout Catholic, aggressive,  
sharp tongued and short tempered.

They both treat me like a favourite nephew.

62. My firm imports provisions from America and the  
Continent. The Office staff consists of some fifty clerks and  
typists who are deceived and deluded by the American Com-  
pany Union Paternally Benevolent manner. Everyone known  
by Christian name; encouraged to state all grievances but not  
to join a union. No one knows what anyone else is paid, there  
being no fixed grades and scales. I am left a good deal to  
myself, have a desk of my own and a typewriter. I can step  
out of the office when I like. One of the junior clerks—public 1  
school boy, St. Bede's—stopped singing and said to the clerk  
in charge, Mr. P. 'I think the intermezzo from the *Rusticana*  
is one of the loveliest things I know.'

Mr. P. agreed. Both sang. Different tunes.

I said: 'I suppose you've been to the Opera.'

Yes, Mr. P. had been to see *Cav.* and *Pag.* at the Empire. 3

I said: 'Those are the two they always do together, aren't  
'they?'

Mr. P. nodded. A local salesman. Full of 'good stories' and  
party tricks. Irish. Lower, lower middle-class. He behaves  
affably to everyone, except when the directors want something.

63. I finished the cable and took the *Daily Worker* and  
went downstairs to read while drying my trousers at the  
central heating furnace. Two men from the warehouse were 1, 1  
there, doing nothing. Working class. They used to laugh at  
me and I'm still awkward with them.\*

I: 'Christ, what a morning.'

A.: 'Come down on your bike?'

\*1a. Social problem due to class distinction.

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I: 'Yes, and I want to dry my trousers. How can I get at the fire?'

B: 'Just open the door at the top.'

I did so and held up my leg to dry sock and trouser bottom.

I: 'What's the smell? Have you been putting onions in it?'

B: 'No, it's the wood—pitch-pine.'

As the steam rose from my trousers A said: 'That's bad, you shouldn't do that; all that steam'll rise into your leg.'

I pointed out it was rising away from my leg, and wouldn't harm me, and then someone on our pavement outside kicked the shutter where they shoot the coke through, and the two men moved away. I dried myself, went upstairs at 8.45. Wrote these notes undisturbed.

64. The rest of the staff came in at 9 a.m., but I was too busy to talk to anyone except N. my friend, who said good-morning and put an R.A.C. guide book on my desk. She is an upper middle-class girl. Only working because her father is too mean to give her enough money to use her leisure intelligently. She has unfortunately inherited this meanness and calculates every penny of her money. She pretends to be uninterested in politics but is in her heart fascist.

At about 10.20 I had some discussion with her over hotels in Worcester.

I have known N. since childhood.

65. Mr. A., insurance agent and Labour city councillor, called me up about a note I sent him to put in the press. A description of the film *Defence of Madrid*, which we are organizing. He said it would probably be in to-night's *Echo*. I had put the advert. in yesterday.

Then for two hours I wrote letters connected with the *Defence of Madrid* and the Party of which I am the local treasurer.

At 11.30 the cashier distributed the wages in pay envelopes. I did not speak to him but he has a series of ritual jokes connected with this ceremony. Such as: 'Nothing for you this

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week,' 'I suppose you don't want any this week,' 'There's a bonus for you—I don't think,' 'There's a nice billy doo (*billet doux*) in there'—meaning an I.O.U. for a sub.

66. By 12.30 the weather was clear and warm so I took some money, a party card and stamps and left the office, to go to the party room which is just along the street about 150 yards.\* I ran past Mr. M., a member of the office staff, because I did not want him to see where I went. In the party room which is large and well-lit but rather dilapidated, three men were sitting round a small table near the fire, addressing envelopes from a list, and counting out money.† Standing near was another unshaven, untidy, unemployed man with a glaucoma of the left eye. Of the three sitting, one was the party organizer and the other two unemployed full-time helpers. One used to be a builder's labourer the other a Neon sign fitter.

The organizer asked me for change of a pound, had I brought stamps for him? He gave me 3s.

The man with the glaucoma handed me a printer's bill and said 'Here, I think this is yours. He says he wants it paying.' It was for some handbills and tickets for the group of which I'm a member. B., the organizer, an ex-miner, took the bill and pointed out an error asking P. to take it back.† He said he would do so to-morrow, he was going to get some lunch.

67. B.: 'C. (one of his assistants), deduct 2s. 6d. from Mrs. X. and see how she takes it. Tell her that's the first 2s. 6d. of the 30s.'§

\*This Observer's political activities break in on his office routine, and then establish a parallel routine of their own.

†The political allies here mentioned are probably to be placed in area 1, but there appear to be signs that the Observer still finds a certain strangeness in them which suggests area 2; e.g. the phrase 'Three men were sitting round a small table.' The disturbance, through politics, of the boundary between areas 1 and 2 is a striking feature of this report.

‡1a.

§1a.

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I (bantering) to C.: 'Hey, I notice he gives you the dirty work. "See how she takes it!"'

But B. is a little ponderous and took me seriously. He said: 'Not at all'—and was taken up by C.: 'Yes, it is a piece of dirty work when a woman swears she has nothing and she has the money in the house all the time she's talking to you.'

I: 'God, did she do that?'

I understood they were making up the payments to the dependents of the local comrades fighting in Spain.

C.: 'Aye, and then comes down here and abuses us. She's had more money out of us, man. . . .'

R.—the other assistant interrupted: 'Donald, can you deliver this to S. and have you sent that statement to ———  
3<sup>2</sup> Group?'

I replied that I could and had.

3<sup>2</sup> 68. P. as he was going out said that none of his group would be taking part in the poster parade for the Unity Campaign meeting to-morrow; it was too far for them to come; they could give out leaflets at the cinemas. He also suggested that the afternoon meeting on Sunday should start promptly in order to ensure that the evening meeting began promptly also. (The Unity meeting was to take place at the Stadium and we are rather anxious about filling it successfully; if we don't, it will be a political setback for us in Liverpool.) B. agreed and this reminded him to give R. his steward's credentials. I paid B. three £1 notes and stuck the stamps on his card and he said 'You come here to rob me of money', and I laughed and said I would come in about 12 noon to-morrow when he would have a list of expenses ready. I picked up a pile of leaflets advertising the Unity meeting and went back to the office. It was 1 o'clock.

69. At ten minutes past I went out to lunch with N. I said I had to post some letters, get a postal order and buy a hat. Walking to the Post Office we spoke of the weather which was

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still clear and fine. We decided that first hat shop we looked at was too expensive; the second did not contain anything in my size, the young man said if I cared to wait for three 2 minutes he would get one from another branch. I said I would wait, but presently he returned to say there was nothing in that shop either.

70. Next we went to a ready-made tailor store which I hoped would have cheap hats. It is very vulgarly ornately planned and the attendants are unpleasantly servile. I said I wanted a hat to the first assistant I saw.

'Hat, sir? First floor, sir.' Then shouted 'Lift! lift!' 2

Another assistant showed me to the lift and a lift boy took 2, 2 us up in the lift. N. noted that the lino. on the floor was the same pattern as that in the sun-parlour at home.\* The lift-boy explained that the hats were on the right. I explained to the hat salesman that I wanted something brown, size about 7, and he said would I put this on my head. And without saying what 'this' was he placed a patent hat-fitter on my head and asked me at what angle did I usually wear hats. I adjusted it and he carefully removed it. From the middle he took a sheet of paper which was punctured by hundreds of points, outlining the shape of my head. He cut out this outline. 'This is for the shape, Sir; we'll now try the size.'

'Is this what you want, Sir, try it in front of this mirror; that is a good hard wearing hat and works out at 12/6.' I asked what else he had. He brought one priced 16/6 and I said it wasn't worth paying 4/- for the difference it made. He assured me that he knew exactly what I wanted, and that though the 12/6 hat might be a little bulky in the crown at present, yet when he had moulded it on his hat-fitting machine it would suit me perfectly. If it didn't, I could choose another. I agreed and he retired behind a screen to mould the hat.

\*1a. Coincidence.

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1 71. While he was waiting, a cutter from the tailoring dept. whom I know quite well as an active but not very militant member of the Shop Assistants Union approached.\*

He said: 'Hallo, Mr. T., what are you doing here?'

I said I had come to buy a hat and was now waiting for it to be moulded.

'Did you know I worked here?'

I said yes, he had told me so.

3<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>b</sup> 'Have you heard about the NUDAW? I believe H. has been attacking us again. It's awful, it is really! And he's called a meeting of all those in the drapery trade.'

'Oh, yes. But that's at Blackpool.'

2 72. After more gossip which I can't remember, a customer went past and the cutter pursued him. The salesman returned with the hat and placed it carefully on my head. As it was fairly satisfactory I took it and paid for it. Going out, N. noted that they were not nearly as fawning after you had bought something as before. We ate at a Lyons. I related how I had knocked the old woman down and she told me a story

2<sup>a</sup> about her mother's ring which I forget. I cannot remember anything else about our conversation during lunch except that the main heads were the Husband Enticement case, the prospect of cruising in the Mediterranean if the Spanish War did not end, the attractions of Vienna as a holiday resort

3<sup>a</sup> and the dance organized by the Young Teachers Association which I had promised to go to this evening. As we walked

3 back to the office I saw from the placards outside the *Liverpool Post* and *Echo* offices that Madrid was being heavily shelled. N. also related how a friend of her young brother had had

2<sup>a</sup> his gloves stolen in a curious manner. †

1 73. As I went through the office the telephone operator remarked on my new hat. ‡ I told her I had bought it to

\*This incident shows an encounter with a man who belongs to the political section of area 1 in a strange (2) environment.

†An example of the relatively uncommon x<sup>a</sup> incident.

‡1a.

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go to a wedding. She said: 'A wedding! Are you getting married?'

I said: 'Yes, on Thursday.' She laughed and said: 'Go on, I couldn't imagine you married. You're too serious. You couldn't let yourself go. Mr. M. can you imagine this man married?'

Mr. M. said: 'Yes,' so she was rather nonplussed and didn't say anything.

Mr. M. said: 'I saw you running along — Street, and across the old Haymarket and into a door and up the stairs.'

I laughed and told him that I had run because I did not mean him to see where I went.\*

74. At 3 p.m. I started writing up these notes.

One of the directors passed my desk and I said: 'Mr. T. I forgot to ask you if you were going to buy any lard to-day.'

'No, I don't want it.'

'Not even after this morning's drop?'

'No, you can keep it. I'm not having any till it gets below 60s. Didn't I tell you?'

'It'll not go that far.'

'Well, we'll see.' †

I wrote two more letters and six postcards to hotels in Worcester for Easter.

At about 4.20 tea was brought round and then I wrote up some more notes.

At 5 I broke off to send out cables and did not finish until 5.45. I could not note and do not remember conversations during this period.

75. At 6.20 I left the office on foot with the Unity leaflets under my arm. At the Stadium I found a friend, L., whom I had arranged to meet here. He stood on one side of the street and I on the other and we handed out leaflets to the passers going into the Stadium. ‡ After roughly 15 minutes a police-

\*Sequel to previous 1a incident. †Possibly 1a. ‡A routine in the 2 area.



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2 man approached L. and said something which made L. reluctantly pick up his case and walk across to me.

'What's the matter?'

'He says there's a bye-law against it but I don't bloody well believe it.\*'

'A bye-law? Since when?'

2 While we were wondering what to do next a young man† on a bicycle glided up to us and grinned. He had more yellow leaflets sticking out of the bag behind his saddle. He asked: 'Are you Donald T.?'

'Yes.'

'I'm W. R. B. told me at the office that you would be here.'

'Well, the bobby's just told us we can't distribute them here.'

'Why not?'

'Says there's a bye-law.'

'Well, that's easy: we just go further down the road.'

But I was uneasy. Neither I nor L. wanted a row with the bobby. We walked away. A hundred yards away.

W. R. said: 'You can do what you like of course but I'm going to stop here and dish 'em out.'

L. said he had an idea. So he and I went back to the bobby, leaving W. R. handing out leaflets as fast as he could.

76. I asked the bobby: 'How long has this bye-law been in force?'

B.: 'About'—deliberately swinging forward on his toes and back on his heels—'two years.'

L.: 'Does it apply all over Liverpool? We've always dished out bills here before.'

B.: 'I don't care whether ye have or not; ye're littering the streets and it's got to be stopped.'

\*An interruption to the routine.

†This young man comes from area 2, but after introducing himself as a political ally joins up with area 1.

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I: 'And how is it that commercial firms give out leaflets by sandwich men in Lord Street?' <sup>2p2</sup>

B.: (flushing and sticking his Irish chin out still further) 'I'm not here to argue. I've told you not to do it. If you go on I'll have to report you and if you want to see anyone above me you know where to go.'

L.: 'Where?'

B.: 'The police station in Dale Street and there'll be an inspector along here any minute.' <sup>2p3</sup>

L.: 'But if we stand close to the entrances and hand bills to people as they are going in they can't very well litter the streets even if they do throw them away, can they?'

B.: 'If the management will allow it, I shall not stop you.' <sup>3</sup>

L.: 'Oh, bugger the management.'

And we gave out leaflets at the entrances until we had no more.

L. is petty-bourgeois: old public school boy. I have known him well for about 6 years.

At 7.25 I left the Stadium, passing W. R. who had also run out of leaflets. The policeman was right about the litter; the street was a bad mess. It was cold and damp. I took my bike from the office and rode home.\*

## 77. Schoolmaster, Northern Ireland

(1) Age: 26. Male. Single. No orthodox religion; agnostic, perhaps atheist. Politics: none.

(2) Assistant master in a boys' boarding and day school. The day was normal, except that my work consisted in supervising term examinations instead of actual teaching.

\*This long report, which has had to be cut here for reasons of space, concludes with two political discussions with friends, a drink in a public house, and an account of the Y.T.A. dance and conversation which took place there.