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Social Condensation in the Metropole: Locating the First New Left

Beech, N.

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Nick Beech

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Figure 1: *The New Reasoner*, vol. 7 (Winter 1958/59). Cover illustrations by André François.

Figure 2: *Universities and Left Review*, vol. 7 (Autumn 1959). Cover designed by Germano Facietti, including photograph by Roger Mayne.

Figure 3: At the Partisan Coffee House. Raphael Samuel Archive, Bishopsgate Library.

Figure 4: Douglas Stephen and Partner, Proposed Coffee Bar 7 Carlisle Street, Perspective Sketches, 17 February 1958.

Figure 5: Roger Mayne, 1959. Mary Evans Picture Library/Roger Mayne.

Figure 6: David Hurn, UK. London. Fifties cultural meeting place. The Partisan Coffee-Bar in Soho London. Meeting place of the left wing activists of the period. People in the street outside gaze through the large plate glass window at friends inside. 1957. David Hurn/Magnum Photos.

Figure 7: The Partisan Coffee House, Soho, London, 2nd December 1960. Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy Stock Photo.

Figure 8: Invitation to the opening night of *The Partisan*. Raphael Samuel Archive.

Figure 9: Telegram from Dorothy and Edward Thompson and John Saville. Raphael Samuel Archive.

[Figures 8 and 9 must be shown together]

Figure 10: Roger Mayne, 'Trendy Couple', 1959. Mary Evans Picture Library. Mayne regularly contributed to *Universities and Left Review* and provided six images for Stuart Hall's 'Absolute Beginnings' essay, as well as the cover illustration for the first publication of Colin McInnes, *Absolute Beginners*.

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A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Humanism

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International chronicle – stories – drawings – document – reviews – verse

THE NEW

Reasoner

Winter 1958-9

Four Shillings

Contributors include :

Ken Alexander

D. G. Arnott

V. G. Kiernan

Malcolm MacEwen

Alasdair MacIntyre

John Marshall

Ronald L. Meek

Tom Mboya

Iris Murdoch

J. T. Murphy

John Saville

Dora Scarlett
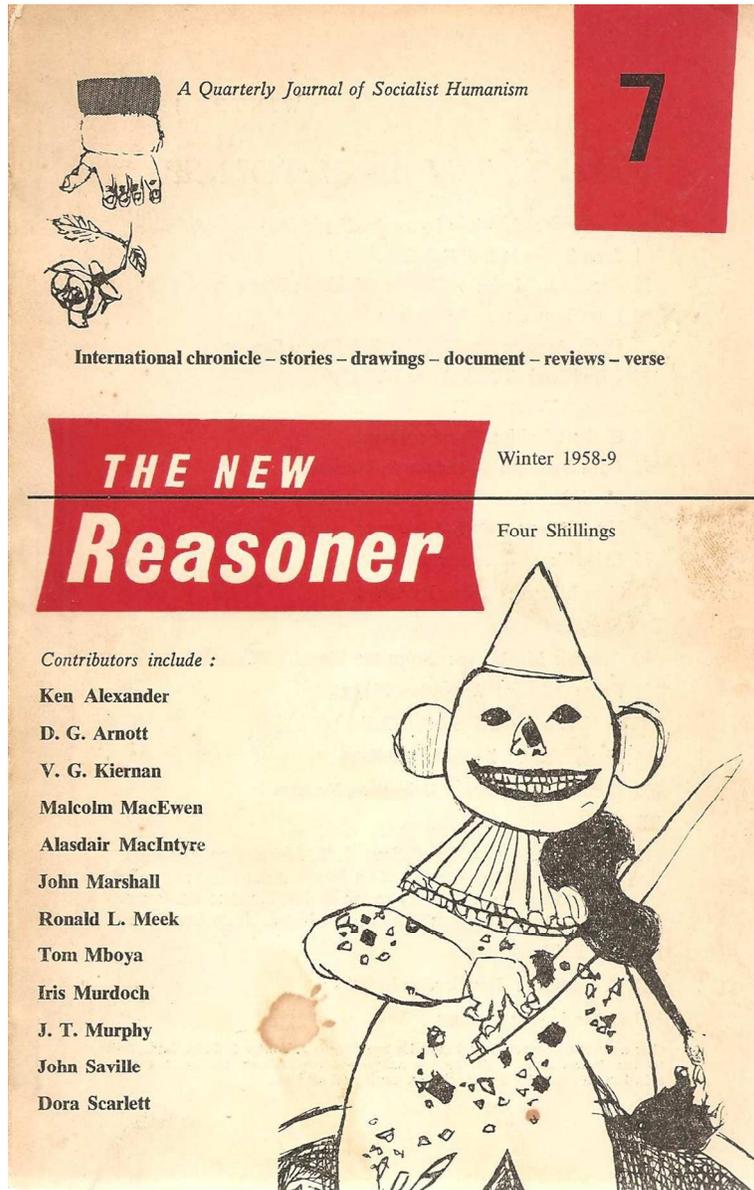
The New Reasoner, vol. 7 (Winter 1958/59). Cover illustrations by André François

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Universities and Left Review, vol. 7 (Autumn 1959). Cover designed by Germano Facietti, including photograph by Roger Mayne.

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At the Partisan Coffee House. Raphael Samuel Archive, Bishopsgate Library.

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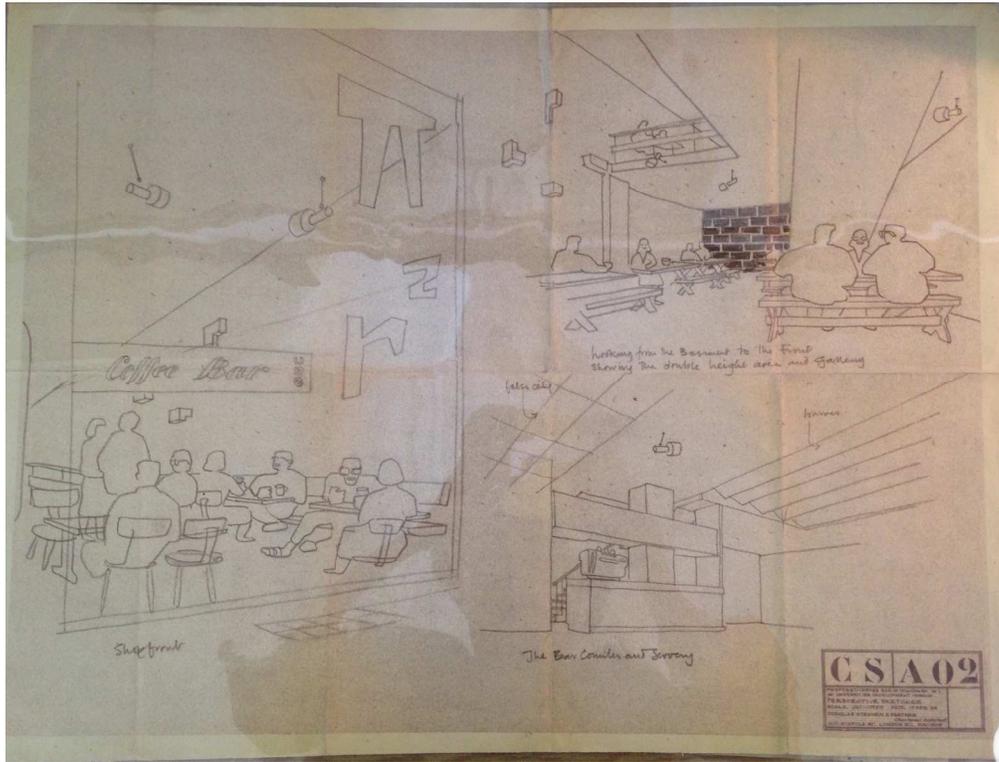
Douglas Stephen and Partner, Proposed Coffee Bar 7 Carlisle Street, Perspective Sketches, 17 February 1958.
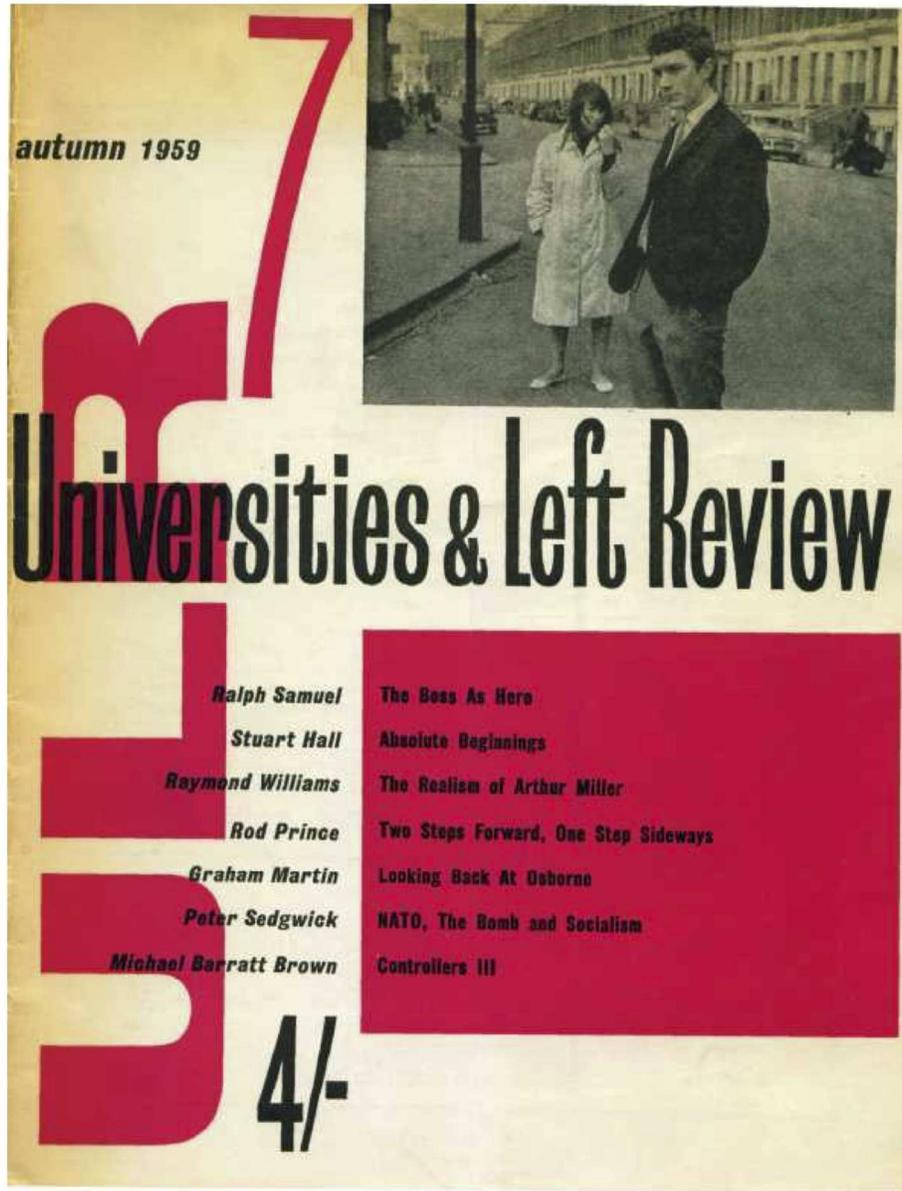
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Roger Mayne, Untitled, 1959. Mary Evans Picture Library/Roger Mayne.

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David Hurn, UK. London. Fifties cultural meeting place. The Partisan Coffee-Bar in Soho London. Meeting place of the left wing activists of the period. People in the street outside gaze through the large plate glass window at friends inside. 1957. David Hurn/Magnum Photos.

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The Partisan Coffee House, Soho, London, 2nd December 1960. Trinity Mirror/Mirrorpix/Alamy Stock Photo.

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this card admits two

the Partisan coffee house
7 Carlisle Street Soho Square W1

You are invited to the
opening party 5.30-7.30 pm
on Tuesday October 21st

rsvp Ralph Samuel
the Partisan coffee house
7 Carlisle Street W1

Invitation to the opening night of The Partisan. Raphael Samuel Archive.

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Telegram from Dorothy and Edward Thompson and John Saville. Raphael Samuel Archive.

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Roger Mayne, 'Trendy Couple', 1959. Mary Evans Picture Library. Mayne regularly contributed to Universities and Left Review and provided six images for Stuart Hall's 'Absolute Beginnings' essay, as well as the cover illustration for the first publication of Colin McInnes, Absolute Beginners.

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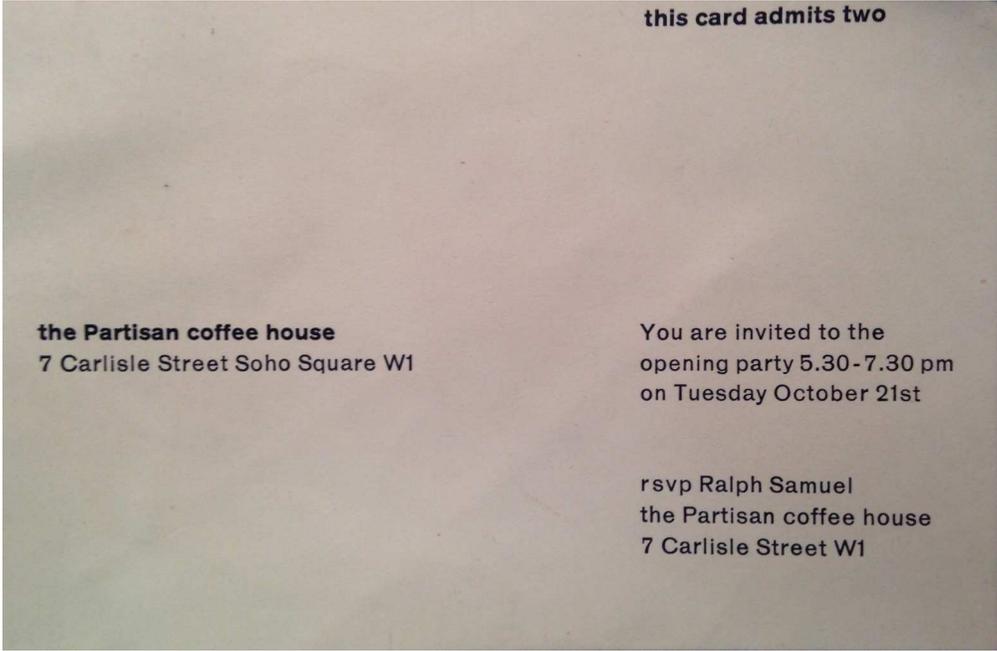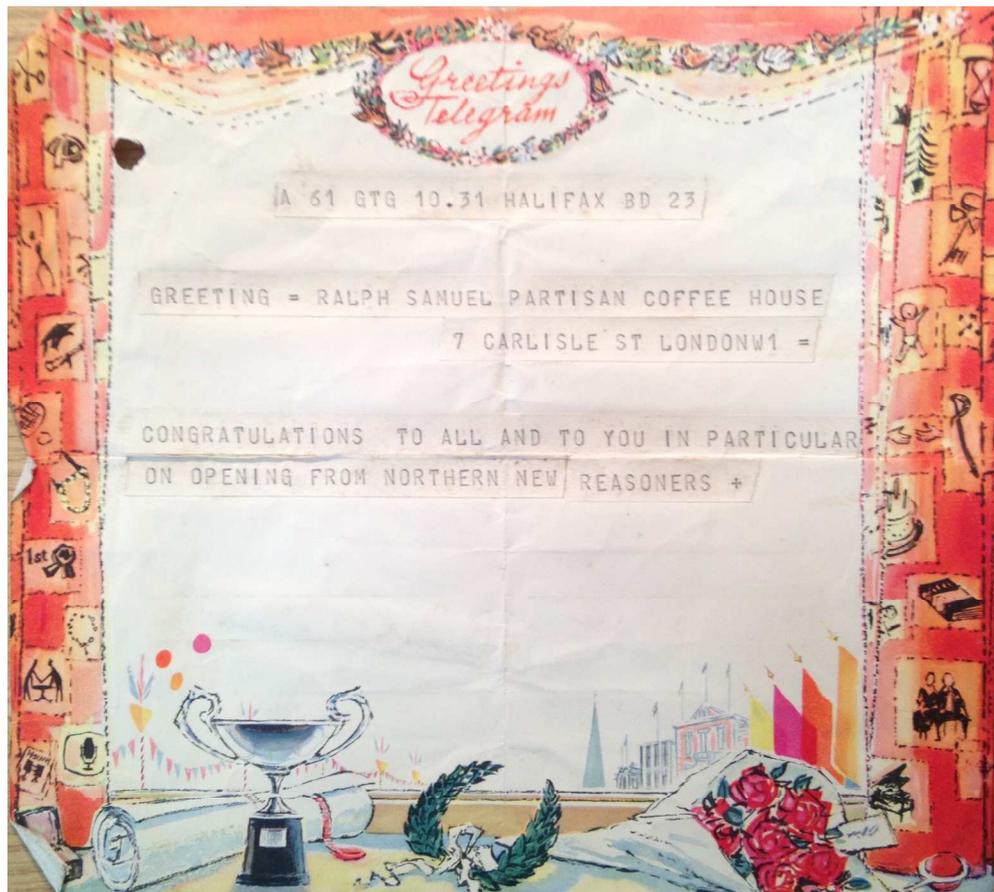41
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Social Condensation in the Metropole: Locating the First New Left

Nick Beech

'But do not think, for goodness sake, that I set out to build a symbol.' Konstantin Melnikov (Summer 1925).[1]

As a proposition, the 'social condenser' assumes a necessary relation between art and society. Just supposing that we could leave aside, for one moment, the vexed question of determination, we might discern in the historiography of the social condenser an excitement that derives from this singular, provisional, social premise: the social condenser does not 'represent' a new social life; the social condenser is not the utility or instrument of a new social life; the social condenser is not an 'expression' or any kind of 'outward appearance' of a new social life. What seems to be proposed with the social condenser is, rather, coterminous with a new social life. What that new social life might be, even the architects of the social condenser were cautious not to fix.

> Concerning [this new social life] none can tell us, neither those who have
> proclaimed it, nor theorists of its development, nor party directives and
> discipline, for life does not merely depend on such, but on the thousands
> of small details that quickly disappear from sight. Consequently [...]
> avenues of investigation may develop diversely, depending on
> temperament, powers of imagination, the mass of accidentally emerging
> creative moments, even on words overheard on a bus. And it is possible
> that every step will be at one and the same time correct and absolutely
> wrong.[2]

So, what the social condenser might be remains radically open. Still, the social condenser proposes a critical spatial construction, immanent to the transformation of social life itself—a transformation of everyday life, or, in the Russian terminology of the period, a transformation of *byt*—instituted by the revolution of 1917.[3] In what follows, I will illuminate this specific, revolutionary Russian Soviet proposition not one bit.

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~~Rather, I want to~~I will, however, suggest that one can register, in the debates and subsequent historiography of modern architecture in Britain, a similar supposition—that certain forms of architecture and urbanism were appropriate to the post-Second World War welfare state, recognised as a moment of transformation of everyday life. That beyond the specifically 'architectural' (the technical practice of projecting space onto two dimensional planes and providing instruction for building work) a broader set of everyday spatial practices were developed in that post-Second World War period—changes in the perception and reproduction of urban space. Further, that these changed perceptions and reproductions of space in turn produced imaginative, critical responses from political actors, and therefore developed dialectically.[4] In that sense, the concept of the social condenser acts as a prompt, to reconsider architecture as active (as socially effective, even if not determining) and social action as spatial (as spatially effective).[5] That a~~A~~longside the 'urban imagination' of the period, we can discern a 'social imagination' ~~in these architectural~~at work in the period, and that these two imaginative planes are imbricated~~s~~.[6]

But the horizon of the social imagination of architects and planners at any given historical moment may be extended or truncated in ways altogether distinct from other ~~historical~~ actors. In what follows, I offer a reading of two projects that, strictly speaking~~,~~ were generated outside the discourse of architecture, but that provoke a reconsideration of both the social and urban imagination of the period. The following presents two minor episodes in the activity of the 'First New Left' (from here 'New Left'[7]) and nascent 'cultural studies' in Britain.

In the first instance, I will examine how the New Left initiated a specific architectural project—the interior of the Partisan Coffee House—and how this project was informed by, and can be understood in terms of, the moral and aesthetic problems of the New Left. In the second instance, I will examine an emergent condition of urban life in Britain—the racialisation of urban conflict—and how the structure of urban space informed the New Left's responses to that. The Partisan Coffee House, I will argue, was a project analogous to the social condenser in the sense that it sought to generate an active social space. But in examining this space, it is necessary to register the project's limitations, the result of antinomies within the New Left. Thus, the second part, in which the consequences of a

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changing imperial landscape bearing down on the metropole are shown to affect a new set of spatial and social problematics for the New Left.

Before doing so, I will briefly set out the broad political position of the New Left in Britain in the period. In presenting the New Left and identifying spatial projects within it, I am less concerned with recovering a hidden history of 'architecture', than to consider how architectural, urban and broadly spatial questions were engaged by the New Left in the late-1950s, and in turn how these reveal social transformations that occurred in the period.[8] ~~In presenting such, I am less concerned with recovering a hidden history of 'architecture, than to consider how architectural, urban and broadly 'spatial' questions were engaged by the New Left in the late-1950s, revealing social transformations occurring in the period. In particular, I will examine how the New Left imaginatively and practically engaged with the conditions of the primary metropole of London.~~ In the conclusion I will return to the necessary relation of art and society, and that vexed question of determination.

[Insert Figures 1 and 2 near here]

The First New Left

From 1956 to 1962 intellectuals from across the British Isles developed a platform for deep critical intervention in debates on the nature and status of the welfare state and post-war 'settlement'. This New Left was composed of two initially distinct groups, identifiable through the print forums they established—the group following the *New Reasoner: A journal of socialist humanism*, edited by Edward Thompson and John Saville, and a younger group following *Universities and Left Review* (ULR), edited by Stuart Hall, Gabriel Pearson, Ralph (later Raphael) Samuel, and Charles 'Chuck' Taylor. The intellectual history of this New Left has been well covered.[9] One can identify in that history at least four distinct problematics that exercised those involved, to varying degrees of intensity: a critique of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and Stalinism; the elaboration of national liberation and anti-colonial politics; the development of a pedagogy directed toward class consciousness and liberation; and, a radical development of analytical tools for cultural critique extending from work in English literature (that of F. R. Leavis in particular). Strange, sometimes strained, bedfellows. The origin and development of the New Left has often

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been framed in purely intellectual terms, producing two distinct results. On the one hand, understanding the New Left as a contradictory development of struggle with (or beyond) Marxism, and producing 'cultural studies'.[10] On the other hand, understanding the New Left as a field of competing, antimonious, incommensurable intellectual positions.[11]

The protagonists of the New Left understood what they were doing in more concrete terms, their undoubtedly intellectual work informed by and predicated upon a practical political project, often presented as a reaction and response to potent world events:

> The 'first' New Left was born in 1956, a conjuncture—not just a year—
> bounded on one side by the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by
> Soviet tanks and on the other by the British and French invasion of the
> Suez Canal zone. These two events […] unmasked the underlying violence
> and aggression latent in the two systems that dominated political life at
> the time—Western imperialism and Stalinism—and sent a shock wave
> through the political world. In a deeper sense, they defined for people of
> my generation the boundaries and limits of the tolerable in politics.[12]

The New Left, then, was understood by those who provided its intellectual leadership, as composed of a widespread, socially comprehensive, body of people (a shock wave does not register if felt by only a fraction, a historical conjuncture is not marked by the intellectual pursuits of a minority alone). The main motivation—to develop an alternative to either state socialism or state capitalism, and the main target—imperialism—are also clearly spelled out. What such a short quotation necessarily excludes is the concrete political practices the reaction instituted. And, though rhetorically powerful—and useful for anchoring the 'moment' of the New Left not in a British, but in a global historical context—the emphasis on the punctual events of the conjuncture elides a longer history of political activity (either in national liberation movements in British colonial territories and/or the CPGB), cultural analysis (in essays, novels and poems) and pedagogical engagement (in extra-mural education and the Workers Educational Association [WEA]). Indeed, the intellectual pursuits of the New Left, whether understood as a reformulation of Marxism or an original project of

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cultural studies, is better understood in the context of an ongoing practical political practice.[13]

The central theoretical development for the New Left was a distinct version of humanist Marxism, initiated in a seminal text by Thompson, 'Socialist Humanism'.[14] Through a critique of Stalinism, Thompson re-grounded Marxism in a moral supposition—that the 'objective' movement of history does not occur through autonomous structural transformations in economic relations, but rather that any structural transformation in economic relations is produced by individual and collective human action:

> Stalinism attempts to short-circuit the processes of social life by disclosing 'economic necessity', by asserting economic, i.e. class, interests as the only 'real' sources of human motivation […] Economic changes impel changes in social relationships, in relations between real men and women; and these are apprehended, felt, reveal themselves in feelings of injustice, frustration, aspirations for social change; all is fought out in the human consciousness, including the moral consciousness […] it is precisely the element of *agency* […] *which it is the business of our consciousness to increase*.[15]

Thompson's attempt at providing a moral foundation to Marxism drew critical responses from across the New Left at the time.[16] His unique version of socialist humanism—clearly drawing on William Morris[17]—subsequently drew the ire of the 'second' New Left in Britain (particularly Perry Anderson) for a failure of conceptual rigour, and it was later, from the mid-1960s, unable to withstand the turn to anti-humanist and structuralist analytical frameworks.[18] However, developing an argument presented by Madeleine Davis,[19] I would suggest that treating Thompson's work on socialist humanism as a purely intellectual or theoretical critique of Stalinism distorts his intent, and ignores the contribution made by the wider New Left movement, not through theorization and analysis, but concrete, material practices. As an ethical and moral project, socialist humanism was immanent to this material practice. Davis identifies, in particular, the New Left's engagement with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the establishment of Left 'Clubs' across Britain,

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and the support of industrial democracy and workers' control.[20] It is in these key political practices that the possibilities and limits of socialist humanism can be calculated.

I would add to Davis's reading, that a significant corollary to Thompson's version of socialist humanism is strictly materialist in regard to human consciousness—emotions, practices, institutions, techniques, and media, these set the possibilities and limits of consciousness.[21] Art then becomes *the* primary site at which consciousness is both exercised and developed, the material site for establishing the horizon of the possible. Thompson's emphasis on art is, in the 'Socialist Humanism' essay, conjoined with a statement on action: that this is not to be *deferred*—either to a vanguard party or to an auspicious moment in the future—but must always already be available in the lived present, hence the extreme ethical pressure placed on the 'means' by which any putative socialist 'end' is achieved.[22] I would suggest that urban environments, and the architecture of the same, are precisely 'media' through which the possibilities and limits of consciousness are conditioned—architecture, in such a perspective, is not a 'product' of an already conscious, prior, agency, but is, to restate my introductory remarks on the social condenser, coterminous with social life. In this instance, I read Thompson's socialist humanism as remarkably convergent with the aesthetic-political perspective of the proponents of the social condenser.

Thompson's developed this argument was developed within the *New Reasoner*, which published a number of works of creative writing and some reproductions of visual art. However, it was the other New Left group of the period—the ULR group—who made a concerted effort to engage with new, emerging popular arts of jazz music, cinema, theatre, television, and mass print media.[23] The ULR group were less concerned with a direct confrontation with Stalinism than with Labourism and Anthony Crosland's revisionist reading of social democracy (influenced by indices of affluence and consumer spending[24]) and the structure of the welfare state itself. They were also as influenced by Raymond Williams—whose studies *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961) were treated as of signal importance—and Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957) as they were by Thompson.[25]

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ULR also paid significant attention to questions of architecture—a number of articles in ULR, including those by architects working at the London County Council (LCC) Architect's Department, critique the condition of planning and architecture under the welfare state.[26] These follow lines of criticism that ~~are~~ were well known in architectural discourse at the time and in subsequent architectural historiography—the continuation of speculative building; misunderstanding and incoherent responses to the different kinds of metropolitan, town, rural and countryside environments; dominance of reductive, sociological statistical modelling and space planning based on slum analysis; abandonment of progressive modern architecture and constructional technology—these criticisms all echo~~ing tho~~see critiques presented in the pages of *Architectural Review* in their 'Townscape' and 'Outrage' campaigns.[27] These won't be examined in detail here, having less to say about the actual spatial conditions the New Left constituted and were constituted within—the environments, the sites, the *locations* which informed and were produced by New Left material activity.

Thompson was uncomfortable with many of the emphases and interests of the ULR group. He was scathing of the contributions made to ULR by the architect Gordon Redfern.[28] And he was critical of the influence exerted by both Hoggart and Williams on the younger ULR group—anxious about the particularism of *Uses of Literacy* and political ambivalence of Hoggart and the absence of political conflict and struggle presented in Williams's conception of culture as a 'whole way of life' that transcended the particularities of class.[29] Nevertheless, Williams's intellectual project in particular, shared many of the features of socialist humanism as presented by Thompson, in attempting to grasp the concrete, lived dimension in which historical action is produced:

> We can learn a great deal of the life of other places and times, but certain elements, it seems to me, will always be irrecoverable. Even those that can be recovered are recovered in abstraction, and this is of crucial importance. We learn each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole.[30]

This was offered by Williams as a provisional statement in 1961 as to what a study of culture, in an expanded sense, entails. We can note the stress that Williams places on a

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19   concrete *located-ness* of culture. In addition to Thompson's 'Socialist Humanism' essay, we
20   can utilise Williams' statement as a guide to the analysis of New Left spaces in the period:
        that is, not to seek a distinct attitude toward 'architecture' or 'planning' within the New
21   Left, but to determine the spatial conditions (an aspect of the 'culture') afforded by the
22   welfare state, and how the New Left sought to determine the possibilities and limits of
        those spaces for proving the ground of a new politics—not as theoretical exercises, but as
23   practiced. To develop this requires examination of the 'spaces' themselves.
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25   **[Insert Figure 3 near here]**
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        Samuel and The Partisan Coffee House
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28   The idea of calling a meeting of [ULR] journal readers in London to hear
                [Isaac] Deutscher speak—the beginning of the New Left Club movement—
29   was also [Samuel's], as was the layout of the room we hired for the
30   occasion in a Bloomsbury hotel: casually arranged for informal political
                exchange around tables for about sixty people, in a style, [Samuel] assured
31   us, somewhere between the Parisian Left Bank cafe and the inter-war
32   Berlin cabaret scene. When we returned from a leisurely Indian meal, 700
33   people were standing impatiently in a queue outside.[31]

34   In recollections of the various kinds of public event—political and cultural—developed by
35   the New Left, and particularly those conceived by Samuel, there is often related a sense of
        surprise, excitement, and not a little confusion. The Left Clubs (only later 'New Left Clubs',
36   and in this instance 'ULR London Club') had a longer history than is recalled by Hall here.[32]
37   Yet this first 'ULR Club Open Meeting', on 5 April 1957, at which Deutscher would provide an
38   introduction to the topic 'Russia in Transition' at the comfortable Royal Hotel, Woburn
        Place, was the *kind* of Club that became associated with the New Left.
39
40   The references to the 'Parisian Left Bank' and the 'Berlin cabaret' were intended to evoke a
41   cosmopolitanism that Samuel actively sought to foster within the New Left—against the
        default anti-intellectualism and parochialism of the English (particularly Oxford)
42   establishment. At the same time, the spatial layout—in its informality, clustering of shared
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space (around the tables) within a larger shared space (within the hall), and emphasis on the group over the individual speaker—all suggest how Samuel sought a non-hierarchical space, or space without dominance. The focus of such a space was precisely not the established, representative speaker (Deutscher), but the ambience and the 'milieu' (the 700!)[33]

The large numbers of unexpected attendees, at the improvised location, also indicate how loose Samuel's strategy was and how open the ULR group's constituency turned out to be.[34] Operating outside of the CPGB, or the Labour Party and affiliated groups such as the Fabian Society, or any organised labour institution, the New Left of the ULR nevertheless attracted a 'broad base' through extensive mailing lists and contacts within those groups, and advertisements in centre-Left political journals such as the *New Statesman*.[35] Meetings continued to be arranged on a weekly basis in a variety of locations, attracting between 'three and four hundred people' at a time.[36] These reached a climax at the 'Cry Europe' meeting—held on Bastille Day (14 July) 1958 in St Pancras Town Hall, to debate French aggression in Algeria and the May 1958 crisis—which attracted as many as 3,000 people.[37]

Encouraged by the large numbers of attendees at ULR Club events, Samuel argued that the ULR should establish a permanent ULR Club building in central London. This would include an editorial office, a library, and a public space for events. Samuel was proposing not only a venue within which the ULR could work, but one that would provide financial support for the ULR journal (which was always struggling). From the summer of 1957, Samuel began approaching a range of sympathetic potential backers, to secure loans (adding up to c.£3,000 in total), to refit a building at 7 Carlisle Street in Soho as an 'anti-espresso bar' 'Coffee House' called The Partisan.[38]

[Insert Figure 4 here]

Samuel instructed Redfern, then working at Douglas Stephen and Partners—at the time best known for high-end commercial and retail design—to provide designs for The Partisan in January 1958.[39] With the initial design proposals (see Figure 4) Redfern provided a written account and rationale, including:

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> a new shopfront in glass [...] seating [...] arranged primarily at the front [...]
> the central section predominantly used for circulation, and to one side a
> double height arrangement which serves the purpose of making it quite
> clear that there is a basement or lower section to the Coffee Bar which can
> be used when the upstairs part of the Bar is full up and also, in cases when
> the premises are used as a meeting hall. In this case, a speaker, standing
> on the platform, shewn on the drawing, could be seen from every part of
> the ground floor and basement [...][40]

The architect further proposed an 'achromatic colour scheme', and lighting that would provide 'definite chiaroscuro' effects, emphasising 'the double height area by means of a three dimensional mural arrangement'. The scheme indicated a ground floor capacity of seventy, a basement capacity of 120. The furniture provided large, comfortable chairs and broad tables, with room to work on papers and read. The architects took the brief—that this was to be an 'anti-expresso bar'—to heart, neither emphasising the 'wares', nor attempting to encourage rapid footfall through the café, but instead providing a frame for the visitors themselves. The completed design was rational, minimal and modernist (see Figures 5, 6 and 7) and it is clear in the proposal that the architects were navigating between a design request for something 'modern' and a strictly limited budget.[41]

[Insert Figure 5, 6 and 7 near here]

Coupled with Samuel's eclectic pan-European menu—'Old Fashioned Pea Soup' is probably the least dangerous, from the menu, 'Liver Dumplings' perhaps the more adventurous—the astoundingly poor quality coffee, Hall would later recall, drove him to escape from the offices above, and retreat to one of the very many alternative espresso bars in the area.[42] The Partisan sought to attract, and succeeded in attracting, many who would otherwise have nowhere to go—by day the homeless and by night those avoiding police.[43] The ULR Club—later, subsequent to merger with the *New Reasoner* in 1959, the London New Left Club—used The Partisan as a venue to hold a range of different political and cultural events. These included poetry and literature evenings, theatre, art exhibitions, music (folk, jazz, and

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'Skiffle'), CND meetings, and presentations of arguments and research by ULR, *New Reasoner* and later *New Left Review* (the merger journal edited by Stuart Hall) contributors.

It was, as Samuel had intended, a cosmopolitan space. However, a key constituency that the ULR Club hoped to reach—the working class—failed to engage, and the political efficacy of The Partisan—in galvanising and directing a New Left programme—remained deeply ambiguous if not entirely ambivalent. It was an outright commercial failure, collapsing within four years in 1962.[44] Samuel had persuaded his fellow editors on ULR that The Partisan would provide financial support for the journal. Instead, it had caused near financial ruin for those involved, and the draining of good-will from those who had stumped up the initial loan—many of whom were highly influential cultural and political operators. Eric Hobsbawm—who had been persuaded by Samuel to join a board of directors to the scheme—recalled the project with unvarnished scorn:

> It was a scheme designed for disaster. The then current fashion among architects preferred austere interiors looking like station waiting rooms. These attracted the more demoralized bums and the fringe hangers-on of Soho, who were neither welcomed in nor attracted by establishments with a more elaborate décor […] Only nostalgia and the need to maintain contact between the pre- and post-1956 generation of the left can explain why I found myself involved in this lunatic enterprise.[45]

The ULR group itself, even those opposed to Samuel, would later recall The Partisan with far less antipathy than Hobsbawm. But when The Partisan is discussed in the historiography of the New Left it is treated either as exemplary of organisational and financial failure, or more simply as a distraction. I ~~shall~~ would suggest an alternative summary of The Partisan environment ~~in conclusion~~.

The practical problem—how to generate profit from an anti-commercial enterprise—cannot be denied. ~~—I~~it seems more than unlikely that The Partisan would ever financially sustain the New Left. But Hobsbawm's visceral dislike of the project, particularly its architecture, seems rather contradictory—surely he did not mean to suggest that The Partisan should have been dressed in the 'amateur exoticism' of the commercial coffee shops of London in

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the period?[46] From Redfern's response to the brief, and from the photographic record, The Partisan design seems extremely well suited to its purpose, and one can easily imagine possible commercial success for the project (disregarding the catering).

The real contradiction lies in the motivations of Samuel and his understanding of the direction of travel for the New Left. On the one hand, the stark, bare, 'waiting room' of The Partisan is entirely appropriate to Samuel's desire for a modern, cosmopolitan and open movement—the 'space' of the Partisan required constant activation through events: speakers, musicians, visual artists. In that sense, Samuel's vision, and the realisation of the architecture of The Partisan align closely with the social condenser itself. Those who attended The Partisan events were not 'spectators' but active agents in generating the environment, in participating in the formation of a political milieu.

But this 'openness' belied a specific intent harboured by Samuel for the New Left—to sustain and recover where necessary, a particular culture of working class radicalism, linked through a historical chain from the twentieth century to the nineteenth, eighteenth, and seventeenth centuries, the history of British radicalism first fostered by the Communist Party Historian's Group (including Hobsbawm, and Christopher Hill, Samuel's PhD supervisor at Oxford). Hobsbawm articulates the disappointment of this strand of the New Left, in the attraction to The Partisan of a reactionary, conservative working class, of distracted youth sub-cultures, and of a wider '*lumpen proletariat*' or underclass. In that sense, perhaps Hobsbawm was right: The Partisan was doomed to failure, precisely because the architecture *did* contradict the deep motivations of Samuel for the New Left.

But what if both Samuel and Hobsbawm—generator and detractor—were unable to recognise that the culture of the working class and the urban environment of London were undergoing fundamental transformations, and that the contradictions of The Partisan were immanent to these transformations? Someone sensitive to such a possibility (quite apart from his concern for the financial well-being of the New Left) was Stuart Hall.

[Insert Figures 8 and 9 side by side near here]

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Hall and the Secondary Modern of the Metropole

~~Stuart~~ Hall was privately concerned about Samuel's *Partisan* project: that the commercial damage caused would be detrimental to progress on the New Left, that the energies consumed in maintaining the *Partisan* would drain from more urgent New Left projects (such as CND), and as pressingly, that the project was symptomatic of a personal crisis in the period for Samuel himself—a result of the problems within the CPGB (which Samuel was still a member of) and the wider Communist community.[47] Hall's concern was that Samuel had lost any discrimination in regard to steering the New Left—a new 'come one come all' approach was diluting the debates developing around the consequences of the radically shifting landscape of consumerism, so-called 'affluence', political 'apathy', and the emergence of a distinct 'youth' culture. These were the principle targets of the ULR group, which the *Partisan* appeared to be drowning in, rather than critically confronting.

Hall's most famous intervention in these debates came in the form of an essay titled 'A Sense of Classlessness', in which he attempted an ambitious synthetic reading of Marx, Hoggart, Williams and the American sociologist C. Wright Mills.[48] Hall's central argument was that the social structure in capitalism had significantly changed toward 'proletarianization', as Marx had predicted, but in a quite unforeseen manner—in which a classical 'working class' (engineers, shop floor workers, etc.) were economically located in the same place as 'white collar workers' (clerks, secretaries, administrators, lower level managers, etc.), but with distinct 'life styles', whilst the classical bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production) were culturally joined by a distinct (in pure economic terms) new 'managerial class'.[49] Hall's essay was an attempt at opening a debate as to the analytical problems this condition presented for the New Left, and the political consequences that followed.

Following a method derived from Hoggart and Mills—of presenting first-hand personal experience as material to be analysed in a wider public debate—the opening of the essay includes a very concrete description of 'new urban concentrations',[50] that Hall argued were evidence of an acceleration in this social change. In the essay, London is presented as exemplary, in part because it is a 'concentration' and catalyst for change elsewhere, but as

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importantly because of the way it demonstrates the necessarily 'uneven development' of the change:

> In the area of south London where I live, old and new physical environments coexist within a single borough. Here are the old two-storey brick dwellings of a working-class suburb, row after row in a dark street butting straight into the warehouse, lumber yard or factory gate: there are the new eight-storey flats of an LCC housing estate, enclosed in a grass-and-concrete jig-saw, offering the beginnings of a 'contemporary' urban facade. Along the Brixton Road, the barrow boys are hawking goods outside a 'utility' style British version of the supermarket. Some of the local children go to school at a Dickensian brick building constructed—and hardly retouched—since the 1880's: but not far away is the glass and steel compound of the local Comprehensive, not yet completed.[51]

Hall did not simply reside in this area of London. In this period he had left his doctoral studies in Oxford—abandoning a study of the 'international question' in the work of Henry James, examining identity and the cultural confrontations of the 'Old World' and the 'New'[52]—and moved to London to work on the editorship of ULR and the political project of the New Left.[53] In his late reflections on the period, Hall presented London as a privileged site for his imaginative horizon, a 'sign'—along with New York, jazz music, and American cinema—of modernity, distant from the psychic and social (racialized) binds of colonial Jamaica, opening a realm of new possibilities.[54] The personal and political tensions that resulted from Hall's confrontation with London as metropole—the moment of recognition in the heart of empire, re-bound within a racialized dynamic once more—was as an acute experience for him as it was for a generation of Caribbean migrants.[55]

This was also the location for a new job.

> So I thought well, what can you do? Practically, nothing! I couldn't then drive, so I couldn't drive a milk float. You can teach. So I got a job in a secondary school as a supply teacher […] at the Kennington Oval, for […] about three or four years […][56]

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Hall proceeds in this recollection to describe travelling between work at the school and work at the ULR—by train from Kennington to the *Partisan* at the end of the day, and from Soho to the school on a night bus in time for the start of classes. The school was not the 'glass and steel compound', but the 'Dickensian brick building' (a London School Board building), converted into a Secondary Modern. His interviewer—Les Back—then asks about a story he's heard—that Hall had kept an eye on a number of the school students, keeping them safe from racialized violence on London streets.

> *No, I followed them*. I was going to edit the journal and all of a sudden
> these kids, who were bedded down in south London — I wasn't sure
> they'd ever even been to Piccadilly Circus — were actually on a train. And I
> said, 'Where you going?' 'Oh sir, we're going across town.' I said, 'What do
> you mean ''across town''?' 'We're going to Notting Hill, Shepherd's Bush'. I
> said, 'What's going on?' 'A bit of argy-bargy' they said meaningfully. And
> so then I began to get interested in what was happening over there [...][57]

Hall goes on to describe how these boys were participating in the early stages of racialized violence that would culminate in the Notting Hill riots of August 1958.[58] Contrary to the story Back had been told, Hall had not led his black students in the class to safety, but had learned from his white students in the class, about their actions and their motivations:

> [...] my first awareness that something was happening in Notting Hill was
> before the riots, by kids in my school alerting me. So when we got back to
> school I said, 'What are you doing up there?' 'Oh, you know' I said, 'Why
> are you shouting at them?' 'Well, they're taking our women.' I said, 'What
> do you mean? If only you had had any women!' [Laughter] 'They're taking
> our things' etc. So I said, 'Do you mean these?' And I pointed to several
> black kids in the class and they looked at them as if they'd never seen
> them. 'No sir [...] They're one of us.' So I said, 'What about me?' 'No sir.
> Not you. Them.' It was a very important experience to me.[59]

A sense of the importance of this experience—of the complex, fraught but illuminating exchange between Hall and his students—can be found in the article that followed 'A Sense of Classlessness', published in the autumn of 1959—'Absolute Beginnings: Reflections on

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the Secondary Modern generation'.[60] Ostensibly a review article of novels by Colin MacInnes (*Absolute Beginners*) and E R Braithwaite (*To Sir, With Love*), a pedagogical memoire by the art teacher Margareta Berger-Hamerschlag (*Journey Into a Fog*) and an early socio-economic study of youth 'affluence' and consumer spending by Mark Abrams (*The Teenage Consumer*), 'Absolute Beginnings' is a development of the enquiries first raised in 'A Sense of Classlessness'.[61] Here Hall attempts to demonstrate the ways in which class distinctions—and the exploitations that result from such—are entrenched and reproduced by the structure of education in Britain, that the overt 'affluence' of the period disguises the extension of this class reproduction beyond schooling, but that the new 'youth culture'—mods interested in 'sharp' suits, 'cool' jazz, fast money, and identified and portrayed by MacInnes in particular—is evidence of a new set of political identities:

> Mr. MacInnes has done this generation more justice than others who have written about the same subject […] It is the sophisticated advance guard of the teenage revolution who are—at universities and training colleges and art schools and in apprenticeships—the most articulate in their protest about social issues, and who feel most strongly about South Africa or the Bomb. If the cool young men of today were to become the social conscience of tomorrow, it would be because they had seen sights in the Twentieth Century closed to many eyes before.[62]

No doubt, it was claims like this—that both on the surface of a new youth culture, and in the deeper commitments to a new set of political concerns, could be read a new social formation that rankled with Thompson and others within the West Riding of Yorkshire. However, following Hall—both in this observations of the social life of the time, and in his later reflections on his own inner experience—I would argue that a paradigmatic 'space' of the New Left is identified *in* the urban landscape of the Secondary Modern: one that would result in a new kind of pedagogical/political project.

[Insert Figure 10 near here]

The Secondary Modern was a key location for the New Left (using Hall here as exemplar of that group) because it was productive of the contradictions of social transformation—

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conflict and change—that the ULR group knew to be wholly ignored by economistic and Labourist arguments dominating debates around the welfare state, that assumed a 'progressive' development—from poverty, toward affluence. But affluence, as Hall put it, would not simply 'melt away' the structures of class domination and exploitation:

> It is ridiculous to talk of economic prosperity working, in the natural course of events, to break down established barriers between social classes. Class distinctions based upon attitudes, taste, education, and rooted in the educational system itself, do not wither away any more quickly than the State Department.

Of course, there is a literal, built, constructed, unevenness of 'affluence' in the London described by Hall (affluence itself was not made available to all). But his argument is much deeper—the 'culture' of affluence does not 'erase' these structural conditions either, even when there is access to new consumer goods, new kinds of transport, clothing, music, and so on. In that sense, Hall shares the scepticism toward Croslandite revisionism in the period as Hoggart, or Thompson. It also shares that temporal quality of Thompson's socialist humanism—in which there is an always recurring, re-engagement with the moral present. But Hall recognises this within the imaginative landscape of consumerism in the 1950s, the development of *new* desires and *new* obligations (to use the language of Thompson's 'Socialist Humanism'). This imaginative landscape, exercised within the urban environment of London, is both the access point to, and mechanism for acting upon, the deeply problematic metropolitan experience (the racialized violence of Notting Hill but one instance). Hall's sympathetic reading of this imaginative landscape, a product of his struggle with his own social formation, distinguished him at that moment from both Samuel and Thompson, though they shared the same political project. Hall appears to have shared the desires opened by the cosmopolitan culture of modernity in London, but also recognised the radical limits imposed by the metropolitan culture of empire.

Conclusion: spaces of possibility in the metropole

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To conclude, some observations (further questions) that derive from these brief sketches—of *The Partisan* and Hall's experience of the Secondary Modern—and some comments on how these could possibly relate (in any sensible way) to 'the social condenser'.

The arguments within the New Left over the *Partisan* were symptomatic of deep antinomies regarding modernity and the role of Modernism within the New Left. Though these appeared to rest on certain aesthetic qualities—the reductive 'railway station waiting room' of the design—they in fact attended to the 'organic' or 'inorganic' relation of the design to the New Left itself. It was not Modernism *per se* that was at stake (in whatever form that might take), as the constituencies to which that Modernism was supposed to respond to and excite. On the one hand, the arguments illuminate how a lingering distrust of populist commercial culture—as opposed to the 'popular' culture emergent from working class self-determination and struggle celebrated by Thompson and Hobsbawm, for example—cut into and across perspectives. This is exemplified in Hall's own position: that commercial culture provided the very material in which and through which new social formations were being constructed, shattering any lingering coherence in working class culture. However, where a social critic such as Hoggart perceived in this cultural transformation a necessarily negative movement, Hall was able to identify certain political potentialities. An all too easy assumption is that these antinomies reflects a geographical axis—between those members of the New Left in of the industrial north West Riding of Yorkshire and those based in London.63

But the question of popular culture and modernism was deeper, more fraught, going beyond geographic 'locations' of the New Left, and toward 'locations' within a social formation. Hilarious as the paradoxical history of The Partisan can seem (to establish an anti-commercial commercial space that contests populism through popular arts housed in an elite modernist interior), the arguments play through the problem of political strategy in confrontation with the field of 'culture'. In particular, the different responses to The Partisan—Samuel's advocacy, Hobsbawm's outright rejection, Hall's criticisms—highlight how the New Left sought to establish a socialist politics *within* the contradictions of the welfare state 'settlement' of which they were a part—in which material social conditions (of the city and its infrastructure for example) were already over-encoded with cultural

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signification. Many, including Hoggart and Thompson—who otherwise held completely distinct political positions (Hoggart a left social democrat, Thompson a left socialist)—were highly critical of populist metropolitan culture as corrosive, and thereby excluded that culture from strategic consideration. Others, including Hall, Samuel and Williams sought to positively engage the new imaginative landscape of popular youth culture, I would argue precisely because they were already 'dislocated' within the metropole.

This is made clear in Hall's attempt to both think through and practice a New Left pedagogy in the Secondary Modern school. There he recognized that the welfare state in Britain had produced a contradictory space of possibility. Hall recognises the disaffection and dislocation of the colonial immigrant—himself, but foremost the communities of Notting Hill and the black children in his class—but he also recognises the disaffection and dislocation of the child of the 'mother country'—who draws on tropes from cinema, popular music, print media, and mobilises these in the imaginative construction of a 'home' under threat from an 'outside'. Both figures become dislocated in the spaces of the welfare state metropole, and both figures must contend with the absolute limitations placed upon them by the material and social structures in which their consciousness is exercised. The New Left political project for Hall—in his pedagogical practice (and later with work within the Notting Hill Left Club[64])—was to show how a set of urban problems had become racialized, that this racialization was neither 'natural', nor purely 'ideological', but lived and practiced and open to contention and transformation.

Neither T the Partisan, nor Hall's teaching in the Secondary Modern in Kennington, can be said to act as 'social condensers' in the vanguardist sense that the term has so often been used to denote—a spatial technology that institutes or catalyses a new social life. However, returning to the introduction to this essay, if we treat the social condenser as a critical spatial practice immanent to social transformation, they are indeed analogous. the New Left practice of those spaces, can be said, I think, to constitute 'condensations' in the sense I suggested at the beginning. Following Williams, I would argue that these spatial practices they represent experiences 'in solution' rather than in 'precipitate', not 'means' towards specific 'ends', but lived moments. All well and good, one might say, but we are we not leftare left with a problem here—the problem of determination. Williams's formulation of

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'culture' in 1961, from which I have derived this notion of 'condensation' and which I have tried to show is both useful for thinking about the spaces of the New Left, and was itself a *product* of those spaces, was made as part of a wider analytical proposal—that one might discern a 'structure of feeling' at any given historical moment.[65] But Williams's analytic at that moment elides any consideration of 'determination'—culture is presented as a 'whole way of life', which cannot be grasped if determinates are abstracted out.

The key argument made by Thompson about Williams's proposition was precisely targeted at this absence of a determination of culture (Thompson forcefully arguing that culture should be understood as a 'whole way of struggle')—for without it, without consideration of the relation between 'art' and 'society', in what sense might the New Left act politically at all? How might it be prevented from falling apart into incommensurate individual positions on the one hand, and on the other, erecting an ahistorical 'ideal' culture above and beyond collective political action?. The arguments over the critical practices—and the spaces—spatial practices of the New Left offer the evidence of both an emerging understanding of this complex problem, and, in the end, the absence of an adequate response. Such would have to wait until the 1970s, when both Hall and Williams would engage with the question through distinct readings of Antonio Gramsci.[66] In this later 'theoretical' work, Hall and Williams would set out a field of concepts for the further development of New Left political practice, resting on the concept of 'hegemony'.[67]

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The value of holding on to those spaces produced in the late-1950s, as part of a radical history (i.e. one that informs political work today), is that they recall a trajectory that lies in the heart of socialism and can be captured within the sign of modernism—not the trajectory of progress, ever bound to looking backward, but instead the future tense of possibility.

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[1] Konstantin Melnikov, "USSR Pavilion," in *The Avant-Garde: Russian architecture in the twenties*, ed. Catherine Cooke, a special issue of *Architectural Design*, 9–10 (1991): 31. Originally published in *Le Bulletin de la Vie Artistique*, 1925.
[2] Aleksander Pasternak, "Novye formy sovremennogo žil'ja," *Sovremennaja architektura*, 4–5 (1927): 125–43 (126), as translated and cited in Hugh D. Hudson Jr. "'The Social Condenser of Our Epoch': The Association of Contemporary Architects and the creation of a new way of life in Revolutionary Russia," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 4 (1986): 557–58 (560).

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[3] On the meaning of *byt*, see Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 23–39; and, Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The socialist objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005), 53–71.

[4] I use the term 'spatial practice' in reference to the work of Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). I use the concept of a 'critical spatial practice' as that has been developed by Jane Rendell, see Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A place between* (London: IB Tauris, 2006).

[5] The necessary dialectics between everyday life, art, revolutionary praxis, and urban space can't be adumbrated here, but see John Roberts, *Philosophizing the Everyday: Revolutionary praxis and the fate of cultural theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2006).

[6] On the idea of an 'urban imagination' in the period, see John R. Gold, *The Experience of Modernism: Modern architects and the future city, 1928–1953* (London: E&FN Spon, 1997), 9.

[7] The 'first' New Left in Britain was soon distinguished from a 'second' New Left, usually marked with the assumption of editorial control over *New Left Review* by Perry Anderson in 1962. The British New Left was necessarily distinct, but related to, the various 'New Lefts' of Europe and North America. See, Stuart Hall, "The 'First' New Left," in *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left thirty years on*, ed. Oxford University Socialist Group (London: Verso, 1989), 11–38.

[8] The following is one part of a collaborative research project developed as part of "British Culture for Architecture, 1945–1975," a collaborative research project initiated by at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (2014–16).

[9] See, Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993); Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997); Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995); and, Richard E. Lee, *Life and Times of Cultural Studies: The politics and transformation of the structures of knowledge* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004).

[10] Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*, representative of the former, Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture* (London: Routledge, 2000), and Lee, *Life and Times* representative of the latter.

[11] See Kenny, *The First New Left*, for example.

[12] Hall, "The Life and Times of the First New Left," 177.

[13] Madeleine Davis makes this argument explicit, see Madeleine Davis, "Reappraising British Socialist Humanism," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1 (2013), 57–81. See also, Tom Steele, *The Emergence of Cultural Studies: Adult education, cultural politics, and the 'English' question* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997); Dorothy Thompson, "On the Trail of the New Left," *New Left Review* (First Series), 215 (January/February 1996), 93–100; and, Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: New Left Books, 1980).

[14] Edward Thompson, "Socialist Humanism: An epistle to the Philistines," *The New Reasoner* (NR), 1 (Summer 1957), 105–43.

[15] Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 122, my emphasis.

[16] Within the *New Reasoner* alone, see Tim Enright, "Materialism or Ecclecticism?" *NR*, 3 (Winter 1957/58), 105–12; Harry Hanson, "An Open Letter to E P Thompson," *NR*, 2

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(Autumn 1957), 79–91; Hanson, "How Wild is my Wildness?," *NR*, 9 (Summer 1959), 98–107; Mervyn Jones, "The Moral Wilderness," *NR*, 9 (Summer 1959), 107–10; Jack Lindsay, "Socialism and Humanism," *NR*, 3 (Winter 1957/58), 94–102; Alisdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness—1," *NR*, 7 (Winter 1958/9), 90–100; MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness—2," *NR*, 8 (Spring 1959), 89–97; John St John, "Response to Harry Hanson," *NR*, 3 (Winter 1957/58), 102–4; Charles Taylor, "Marxism and Humanism," *NR*, 2 (Autumn 1957), 92–8; and, Thompson, "Agency and Choice—1: A reply to criticism," *NR*, 5 (Summer 1958), 89–106.

[17] Thompson's first major work was the biography, *William Morris: From Romantic to revolutionary* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1955). Socialist humanism as formulated by Thompson recalls the famous passage—'[…] how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name […]', William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1888), 31.

[18] See Perry Anderson, "The Left in the Fifties," *New Left Review* (First Series), 29 (January/February 1965), 3–18; Anderson, "Socialism and Pseudo-Empiricism," *New Left Review* (First Series), 35 (January/February 1966); Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism* (London: Verso, 1980). On structuralist critiques of humanism, see Richard Johnson, "Edward Thompson, Eugene Genovese and Socialist Humanist History," *History Workshop Journal*, 6 (Autumn 1978), 79–100.

[19] Davis, "Reappraising British Socialist Humanism".

[20] Ibid., 72–6.

[21] Thompson, "Socialist Humanism," 122.

[22] 'We do not see the socialist movement as merely a movement with a different *objective* from other political movements: we see it as a different *kind* of movement […] in which […] the objective itself, a society of equals, finds living embodiment.' Thompson, "A Psessay in Ephology," *NR*, 10 (Autumn 1959), 1–8 (5). See also, Taylor, "Marxism and Humanism," 95.

[23] See for example Lindsay Anderson, "Free Cinema," *Universities and Left Review* (ULR), 2 (Summer 1957), 48–52; Stuart Hall, "In the No Man's Land," *ULR*, 3 (Winter 1958), 86–7; Richard Hoggart, "BBC and ITV After Three Years," *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958), 32–6; Rod Prince, "Cinema at a Dead End," *ULR*, 4 (Summer 1958), 80–1.

[24] C. A. R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956).

[25] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of working class culture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957); Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958); and Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).

[26] See David Gregory Jones, "Housing the City Dweller," , *ULR*, 1 (Spring 1957), 42–4; John Harlow, "One New Town," *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958), 18–20; Janet Hase, Ellis Salmon and others, "Impressions of Two New Towns," *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958), 20–3; Gordon Redfern, "The Real Outrage," *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958), 7–10; Gordon Redfern and John Smith, "The Crisis in Town Planning," *ULR*, 2 (Summer 1957), 36–40; and, Graeme Shankland, "The Crisis in Town Planning," *ULR*, 1 (Spring 1957), 37–42.

[27] See for example, Mathew Aitchison (ed.) *Townscape Revisited*, a special issue of *Journal of Architecture*, 5 (2012); and, John Pendlebury, Erdem Erten and Peter J. Larkham (eds), *Alternative Visions of Post-War Reconstruction: Creating the modern townscape* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015).

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28 See Edward Thompson, "Commitment in Politics," *ULR*, 6 (Spring 1958), 50–5 (51–2).
29 See Thompson, "Commitment in Politics," 53; Thompson, "The Long Revolution (Part 1)," *New Left Review* (First Series), 9 (May/June 1961), 24–33; and Thompson, "The Long Revolution (Part 2), *New Left Review* (First Series), 10 (July/August 1961), 34–9.
30 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 63.
31 Stuart Hall, "Raphael Samuel: 1934–96," *New Left Review* (First Series), 221 (January/February 1997), 119–27 (121).
32 On the Left Clubs see Thompson, "On the Trail of the New Left," 99; and, Davis, "Reappraising British Socialist Humanism," 73–4.
33 Peter Sedgwick, in a broad demolition of the class structure and organisational form that the New Left took, refers briefly to the New Left Clubs as a 'milieu', see Sedgwick, "The Two New Lefts" [1964], in David Widgery (ed.) *The Left in Britain, 1956–68* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1976), 131–53, (142). With its emphasis on place the term could usefully be reclaimed as a positive, rather than negative, signifier.
34 On the structure and operation of the New Left Clubs, see Caroline Bamford, "The Politics of Commitment: The early New Left in Britain, 1956–1962," Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Edinburgh (1983), 286–323.
35 See, Bishopsgate Institute, Raphael Samuel Archive (RSA), "The New Left," 1957 Correspondence, RS1/002.
36 Hall, "Life and Times of the First New Left," 189.
37 Mike Berlin, "The Partisan Coffee House: Cultural Politics and the Early New Left," Bishopsgate Institute, 8 February 2012. http://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/audios.aspx?vid=7563 (accessed 21 June 2016).
38 Berlin, "The Partisan Coffee House"; and Bamford, "The Politics of Commitment," 295–7.
39 That the history of the Douglas Stephen and Partner practice remains unwritten is startling. For a brief and basic overview see Douglas Stephen, Kenneth Frampton and Michael Carapetian, *British Buildings, 1960–64* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965); and Stan Allen and Hal Foster, 'A Conversation with Kenneth Frampton', *October*, vol. 106 (2003), 35–58 (pp. 35–8).
40 RSA, Douglas Stephen and Partner, Letter, 18 February 1958, RS1/101.
41 Ibid. A contract was secured with Viceroy Builders for a sum of £2,287 3s. 6p. RSA, Douglas Stephen and Partner, Letter, 22 May 1958, RS1/101.
42 Berlin, "The Partisan Coffee House".
43 See Bamford, "The Politics of Commitment," 301.
44 The Partisan was rescued by a private individual—Nick Faith—buying out those who were owed from the initial loan. Bamford, "The Politics of Commitment," 301.
45 Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A twentieth-century life* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 213–14.
46 I employ scare quotes as the design historian, Matthew Partington, has shown the London coffee shop of the 1950s to be far more diverse and less 'amateurish' than has been typically recognised. See Matthew Partington, "The London Coffee Shops of the 1950s: An eclectic challenge to modernist design practices," Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Bristol (2008).
47 Concerns expressed in correspondence with Alan Hall (no relation) in 1957. Stuart Hall, private papers.
48 Stuart Hall, "A Sense of Classlessness," *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958), 26–32.

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[49] By placing so much pressure on the category of 'class', the essay drew fire from, among others, Thompson and Samuel. See, Thompson, "Commitment in Politics"; Ralph Samuel, "Class and Classlessness," *ULR*, 6 (Spring 1959), 44–50.

[50] Hall, "A Sense of Classlessness," 26.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Hall and Back, "At Home and Not at Home," 665–7.

[53] Ibid., 670.

[54] Ibid. For a map of both the psychic and social dimensions of the colonial and diasporic see Hall, "The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An interview with Stuart Hall by Kuan-Hsing Chen," in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds) *Stuart Hall: Critical dialgoues in cultural studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 486–505 (486–93).

[55] See, for example, George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 41. For the significance of London more generally for the black Atlantic diaspora, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1995); and, Bill Schwarz "Crossing the Seas," in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1–30.

[56] Hall and Back, "At Home and Not at Home," 671.

[57] Ibid. My emphasis.

[58] On Notting Hill and the 'race riots', see Edward Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill Race Riots* (London: IB Tauris, 1988).

[59] Hall and Back, "At Home and Not at Home," 671.

[60] Stuart Hall, "Absolute Beginnings: Reflections on the Secondary Modern generation," *ULR*, 7 (Autumn 1959), 16–25.

[61] There is an interesting relay between MacInnes and Hall—who were friends—in this period. Compare Hall's panorama of London with: '[...] like Cinerama, you can see clean new concrete cloud-kissers, rising up like felixes from the Olde Englishe squares, and then those gorgeous parks, with trees like classical French salads, and then again the port life down along the Thames [...]' Colin MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1959).

[62] Hall, "Absolute Beginnings," 25.

[63] An assumption that was borne by, among others, Hall and Thompson. See Thompson, "Commitment in Politics," and Hall, "Life and Times of the First New Left".

[64] See *ULR*, 5 (Autumn 1958); and, Mugiko Nishikawa, "Interview with Stuart Hall," edited by Thomas Garza, *Grassroots Media Zine*, 2 (2014), 17–43.

[65] Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 64–88.

[66] See, Stuart Hall, "The 'Base and Superstructure' Metaphor," in *Class, Hegemony and Party* ed. by Jon Bloomfield (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977), 43–72; and Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Analysis," *New Left Review* (First Series), 82 (November/December 1973), 3–16.

[67] It will be noted that I interpret the 'cultural studies' of Hall and Williams as a continuation of the political project—necessarily radically altered by the conjunctural conditions of their historical moment—instantiated by the 'first' New Left, and a political practice, not a theoretical exercise or academic discipline.