Film as Instrument of Social Enquiry:
The British Documentary Film Movement of the 1930s

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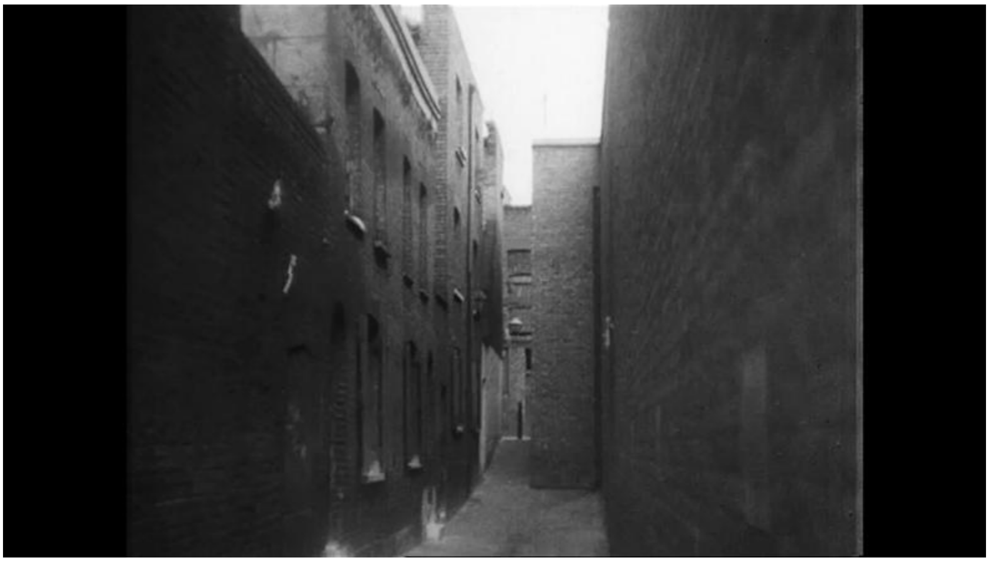

Figure 1. HOUSING PROBLEMS, Edgar Anstey and Arthur Elton, UK 1935
HOUSING PROBLEMS, DVD British Film Institute © original copyright holders

The 1930s saw the emergence of the British documentary as a distinct mode of film practice that strove for a cinema that, in opposition to the entertainment-focused mainstream, was socially purposeful and aesthetically innovative.

The economic situation of interwar Britain was a major factor in the genesis of the movement, as was the growing awareness of the potential of film as a medium of mass communication and the progressive attitudes in both the public and private sectors toward commissioning films for publicity purposes. John Grierson, who is considered the "founder" or "leader" of the movement, played a crucial role as both producer and theorist.

This article will present a brief outline of Grierson's key ideas, followed by a reading of one of his more renowned films, HOUSING PROBLEMS (UK 1935). What was progressive about it? What is its line of argument? In whose interest did it speak? What impact did it aim to have on its audience? The film

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has often been described as a model for socially engaged documentary filmmaking, although critical voices have also cited it as the most striking example of the sort of compromise that the documentary movement had to make when conforming to the agendas of their sponsors. A closer look will reveal its ambiguous character, indicative of the tension between the filmmakers' claim to be encouraging the self-confidence of the working class and their being representatives of government and industry interests. It will become obvious that the film is unambiguously promoting the interests of the gas industry. Furthermore, I will argue that it can also be seen as justifying government social policies.

The Economic Situation of Interwar Britain and the Establishment of E.M.B. Film Unit

Between the wars, Britain lost its position as a leading shipping, finance, and trading power that it had held since the heyday of world liberalism in the nineteenth century. Documentary filmmaking must be understood as part of the crisis management efforts by state and industry in an attempt to moderate the economic and social effects of the crisis. One specific strategy was to set up the Empire Marketing Board (E.M.B.), which lay the financial foundation for the documentary film movement.

During wartime, exports had decreased while imports had almost doubled. To counteract the loss of international competitiveness British government undertook several protectionist measures. It applied protective tariffs to non-British goods to open up the domestic market. Advertisement acquired a new importance that was recognized not only by the private sector but also by government agencies and public bodies. When the strategy of erecting a tariff wall to maintain the dominance of the British Empire failed at the Imperial Conference in 1926, the British government looked for other means to secure the economic unity of the empire. This led to the founding of the Empire Marketing Board (E.M.B.), whose main task was publicity work aimed at encouraging the British public to buy products made in Britain or its overseas colonies.

These promotional efforts involved not just newspaper advertisements, placards, and flyers, but also the medium of film. The strategy was not just to advertise a product but also to promote the unity of the empire by informing people about its economy, society, history, and geography. E.M.B. secretary Sir Stephen Tallents believed that film was an "incomparable instrument of national expression."[1]

It was John Grierson who convinced the state of the value of film as a medium for projecting national identity. In 1927, he approached the E.M.B. to finance his film DRIFTERS (UK 1929), which became the first film in British cinema history to have working-class protagonists in a nonfictional setting. As a result of the film's acclaim and an advertising campaign, Grierson was able to recruit film enthusiasts for the newly founded E.M.B. film unit, which by 1933 had thirty members. They were middle-class, exclusively white, mostly male, university-educated, and politically liberal. They had no formal training in filmmaking, and experimented with documentary and collective ways of working.

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1. Stephen Tallents, in Richard Meran Barsam, *Nonfiction Film: Theory and Criticism* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 39.

Adopting what might be called a patriarchal leadership style, Grierson kept the group together by deciding the content and subjects of the films, advising the inexperienced filmmakers, and giving feedback on the finished films. Thus, the E.M.B. film unit became most literally a film school in a literal sense, whose members learned about key aspects of filmmaking: scripting, directing, camerawork, and editing., When the E.M.B. film unit was closed in 1933 and became part of the public relations department of the General Post Office (G.P.O.), Grierson began to install the former members as independent filmmakers and consultants in the industry.

Grierson on Documentary—Propaganda for Democracy

Grierson on Documentary is the title of the collection of Grierson's articles, first published in 1946, that defined the terms in which documentary was understood. In order to better grasp his ideas, it is useful to have a brief look at his biography. From 1919 to 1924, he studied in Glasgow, where he witnessed the shipbuilders' illegal general strike in 1919. "I grew up in the Clydeside movement. I've been in politics all my life."[2] As an intellectual, he was not directly involved in industrial action. Instead, he founded a university "Labour Club," but wasn't interested in party politics in the form of standing as a candidate.

> *I think I saw early the possibility of other forms. Of course I was interested in the journalistic form first of all [...] But then of course Flaherty was a turning point. Nanook hit Glasgow round about 1922, I think. I was on to it by 1924, that film could be turned into an instrument of the working class.*[3]

This idea was refined when he came across mass communication theory in the mid-1920s while studying on a Rockefeller scholarship at the University of Chicago. There he met political scientist Walter Lippmann, who held a view of conservative skepticism about democracy that emphasized the necessity of rule by specialist elites. He believed that effective political communication was essential for participation in the democratic process. The argument that liberal states could learn from the propaganda techniques employed by the totalitarian European states to reach out to their electorates fostered Grierson's belief that public education could reinforce democratic processes, and that the most effective way to do so was through the medium of film. For Grierson, "cinema is neither an art nor an entertainment: it is a form of publication."[4]

After his return to Britain in 1927, Grierson began to develop the theory of documentary practice that made him the movement's leading intellectual figure. He sympathized with the Independent Labour Party, which pledged to establish a socialist society through the parliamentary route by means of tax reforms and social legislation. For Grierson, there was no contradiction in producing films that were intended to be "instruments of the working class" within the context of state-financed organizations. But he was aware of the limitations within the E.M.B. film unit: "Whatever its pretentions in purely cinematic terms, it was dedicated and devoted to the usual cold-blooded end of Government."[5] Grierson published his ideas in articles, while filmmaker

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2. John Grierson, in Elizabeth Sussex, "Don't Look at the Camera by Harry Watt," *Sight & Sound* 43, no. 3 (summer 1974): 184.

3. John Grierson, in Elizabeth Sussex, The Rise and Fall of British Documentary (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 2.

4. John Grierson, in Forsyth Hardy, *Grierson on Documentary* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979 (1946)), 68.

5. Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 67.

Paul Rotha held lectures and later became the movement's film historian. In hindsight, Rotha commented,

> *Equally in their own sphere, the E.M.B. films of Britain avoided the major issues provoked by their material. That was inevitable under their powers of production. The real economic issues […] lay outside the scope of a unit organized under a Government department and having as its aim the 'bringing alive of the Empire'. The directors concerned knew this, and wisely, I think, avoided any economic or important social analysis.*[6]

Being freed from the requirement of commercial success within the protected space of the E.M.B., the filmmakers enjoyed total freedom as far as aesthetics were concerned. They believed that "cinema's capacity for getting around, for observing and selecting from life itself"[7] could be used to create a "new art form" by dramatizing the documentation of events or using new imaginative forms that had to be developed through artistic research. Thus, they developed a collective way of working and a particular form of documentary that relied on the indexical nature of the photographic image and had a narrative foundation, but also took up ideas from avant-garde European cinema.

Their form of documentary did not just seek to depict and aestheticize everyday life, but also to form opinion. Grierson, who saw film as a means of education, even (unlike the American mass communication theorists) used the term "propaganda": "The key to education in the modern complex world no longer exists in what we have known as education but in what we have known as propaganda."[8] According to Grierson, the aim of education is to "give to every individual, each in his place and work, a living conception of the community which he has the privilege to serve."[9] On this notion of serving the community, he remarks, "Since the needs of the state come first, understanding of these needs comes first in education."[10] For Grierson, "the State is the machinery by which the best interests of the people are secured."[11] Given these ideas, it may be unsurprising that the films were not meant to supply knowledge that enabled individuals to understand and question social reality or even to act in their own interests through interventions or public confrontation. The films Grierson had in mind were meant to educate people morally so that they could better fulfill their civic obligations. These ideas fell on fertile ground at a time when, due to "the growing extent to which government departments intervened in the lives of the general public, politicians […] were compelled to pay much greater attention to public opinion in Britain than they had previously."[12]

The films produced at the E.M.B. were directly concerned with state functions. After the E.M.B. film unit was transformed into the G.P.O. film unit in 1933, the films mainly dealt with the complexity of the modern postal service and telecommunications. Alongside the G.P.O. film unit, another strand of film production developed: when major industries (gas/oil/aviation) and semi-public agencies (such as the National Council for Social Service) took an interest in documentary film, Grierson saw a chance to widen the corporate sponsorship of film production. James Chapman describes how there was no clear distinction between the private and public sector; most of the independent film units were offspring of the G.P.O. film unit.[13]

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[6] Paul Rotha, *Documentary Film*, 3rd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 161.

[7] Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 36.

[8] Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 139.

[9] Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 110.

[10] Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 139.

[11] Grierson, *Grierson on Documentary*, 139.

[12] Paul Swann, *The British Documentary Film Movement, 1926-1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.

[13] Cf. James Chapman, *A New History of British Documentary* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 4-89.

HOUSING PROBLEMS—Innovative Social Reporting?

One important success was the commission from the Gas, Light and Coke Company (GLCC) in the mid-1930s for a program of five films. Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey were responsible for the production and choice of subjects. The films investigated contemporary social issues that were on the political agenda, such as slum housing (HOUSING PROBLEMS, 1935), nutrition (ENOUGH TO EAT, 1936), education (CHILDREN AT SCHOOL, 1937) and public health (THE SMOKE MENACE, 1938). As the filmmakers intended, the short films fueled popular discussion. Commenting on their first film, HOUSING PROBLEMS, Anstey said,

> *We seized on this, because everybody had been told about the slums, but there was no direct communication about them. I mean, you could make still pictures and write articles in the press, but nobody had thought of the idea which we had of letting slum-dwellers simply talk for themselves, make their own film.*[14]

This statement makes clear how film was seen as an extension of mass media coverage of social issues. As we will see, Anstey and Elton did not stop at simply recording the living conditions of the slum-dwellers in order to lend them a voice. Instead, they positioned these interviews within a filmic dramaturgy whose result makes it questionable whether it bore any relation to what the slum-dwellers might have wanted to say if they had "made their own film." It is largely these interviews that gained the film its reputation for socially critical progressiveness, because at the time they were treading new ground. Paul Rotha points out that

> *up till then, documentary had little or no experience of direct sound recording on location; it was both too expensive and results often left much to be desired [...] But now Elton took a camera and a microphone crew into the actual place and recorded with sound and picture real people using unrehearsed speech with no script [...] in 1935 it was pioneer stuff.*[15]

It was, in fact, the first use of journalistic reporting in British documentary. This newly established method of direct recording opened up new possibilities that much later became a standard principle of documentary filmmaking: let people speak for themselves. If you look at the interviews you can see what Anstey and Elton had in mind when they say they wanted an authentic documentary about people, "the way they live and the way they think." They claim that they wanted to give space for these people's opinions rather than those of the filmmakers themselves. Anstey even talks about an argument he had at the time with Paul Rotha, who (according to Anstey) was opposed to this idea because he believed that Anstey was giving up his responsibility as the director to interpret the material.[16] As I shall show, these concerns were unfounded: the directorial interpretation is as strong as it would have been without the interviews because the space they opened up for the slum-dweller protagonists is closed down again by the way the filmmakers integrate these interviews into the overall message of the film.

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[14] Edgar Anstey, in Sussex, *The Rise and Fall, 62.*

[15] Paul Rotha, in British Film Institute, *Distribution Library Catalogue* (London, 1978), 13.

[16] Cf. Edgar Anstey, in Eva Orbanz, *Eine Reise in die Legende und zurück: Der realistische Film in Großbritannien* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1977), 101–103.

How did Anstey and Elton go about shooting the interviews? They minimized the use of film aesthetic devices and made as pure a recording as possible. The camera was positioned at a height of 1.40 meters above the ground, it did not move, there are no travels and almost no pans, and neither are there any zooms. We do not hear any questions from the interviewers, neither is there any interpretive commentary in these scenes. According to Anstey, they would have liked to take every interview in one go, but were disrupted by people coming in or noises from outside, so there had to be cuts and the material needed editing. This accounts for occasional changes in framing as well as inserts, mostly of the specific things that are being talked about, e.g. a lopsided staircase.

The protagonists were positioned in front of the camera, usually in the center of the frame. They thus seem to be directly addressing the spectators, which was supposed to maximize viewers' sense of involvement. Most people have put on their Sunday clothes for the filming. While they talk, they are posing; you can see they are aware of the camera, and we as spectators are aware of them being aware. It becomes obvious that they have been placed in front of the camera to make a statement. When the second interviewee directly addresses the council, asking them to speed up the process, it becomes clear that the purpose of the interviews is not to investigate and draw some previously unknown situation and call for action to be taken, there must already be some slum clearance scheme.

There are four interviews with slum-dwellers, which amount to roughly one third of the running time. If we look at the way these interviews are positioned within the filmic narrative, we find that they fulfill a certain function. The film consists of six sequences. It opens with a very brief introduction to the topic from an omniscient narrator. Then the voice-over passes over to the chairman of the Stephney Housing Committee, who explains the origin of the slum housing problems and the state the architecture was in. As he speaks about the level of decay, we see images of derelict houses.

This introduction is followed by the interviews, so that the statements of the slum-dwellers are used to illustrate and testify to the consequences of these housing conditions. The interviews function within the filmic logic as witness testimonies. But there is no prosecution, as the problems either already have been solved or will be in time, as the film goes on to explain. What could have been a critical enquiry prompted by the implicit demands in the interviews is stifled by the optimistic expression of faith in the ability of London City Council (LCC) to surmount the housing problems. Different models of buildings for rehousing the slum-dwellers are then presented. The commentator particularly emphasizes the importance of gas for cooking and heating in modern housing complexes, thus suggesting a natural link between public housing schemes and the use of gas conveniences.

Then there is another set of interviews with former slum-dwellers in their new homes talking about the improved living conditions. The chairman of the Stephney Housing Committee comments:

> *When a public authority embarks on slum clearance it must take people just as they are. It is, however, our experience that if you provide people from the slums with decent homes they quickly respond to the improved conditions and keep their homes clean and tidy.*

The use of this quotation suggests that the filmmakers share the same patronizing view of the slum-dwellers. Being positioned after the interviews, it shames the slum-dwellers. “Letting the people speak for themselves” obviously was not enough; it had to be qualified by speaking about them, in a way that by today’s standards sounds shockingly derogatory coming from an official agency.

The last sequence shows outdoor pictures of slum areas, where people are loitering in the streets, accompanied by more original recordings of slum-dwellers’ voices, stressing the necessity to go on with the slum clearance program.

The interviews in the film can also be seen in the context of the growing interest in social investigation, which was also manifested in other cultural practices such as photography and journalism. Humphrey Jennings, one of the filmmakers, was also one of the three founders of Mass Observation, an independent social survey organization set up in 1937 that attempted to develop an anthropology of Britain’s inhabitants.

HOUSING PROBLEMS: Social Enquiry, Image-Building, or Legitimization of Social Policies?

HOUSING PROBLEMS is a compromise that attempts to satisfy at least three different aims: firstly, the filmmakers’ aim to produce authentic material about the living conditions of the working class and make the case for improving those conditions; secondly, the GLCC’s aim to improve their image and advertise their product; and thirdly, the LCC’s aim to send out the message that it was dealing effectively with slum poverty. Another often-overlooked aim was the British government’s desire to promote the necessity of slum clearance to the public in general and to taxpayers in particular.

Responses to the film over the years have included everything from praise for its progressiveness and working-class perspective to criticisms of its overt promotional agenda and mélange of different perspectives. Evelyn Gerstein makes the point that the filmmakers “posit a social inquiry and resolve it superficially by concluding that slum clearance has been ended by the Gas Company and the abuses of the coal pits blotted out with electricity for all. The Empire takes care of its own.”[17]

Gerstein’s cynical remark can be read as referring to the joint action of the state and private sector in the matter of slum clearance. It must be taken into account that the film was produced by filmmakers who had absorbed Grierson’s idea that the educational purpose of film was to turn people into well-informed members of a functioning democracy, and not to denounce social grievances to stir up a public reaction. Joris Ivens recognizes the objective of the film as follows:

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[17] Evelyn Gerstein, “English Documentary Films,” in Lewis Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition* (New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1971), 15.

> *If the British films could have been sponsored directly by social organisations fighting the bad housing conditions instead of by a gas company, they would have closed in on such dramatic reality as rent strikes and protest movements.*[18]

Anstey himself declared that the film was not aimed at working-class people but at bourgeois opinion leaders. One could say that the slum-dwellers were being used as witnesses attesting to the necessity of slum clearance and the benevolence of the gas industry. The filmmakers fell for their own argument when they attributed a social conscience to the gas industry:

> *Arthur Elton and I succeeded in persuading the gas industry, who, after all, had a liberal tradition, a nonconformist tradition, that what you could do with film was to identify a big organization with social purpose, to the advantage of both. Perhaps this was the Grierson notion passed on by Elton and myself that, in a way, no great cooperation can dissociate itself from whatever the national social issues are at a given time.*[19]

Little persuasion must have been necessary, as the publicity manager at the GLCC responsible for arranging the sponsorship for HOUSING PROBLEMS was A. P. Ryan, the former press officer at the E.M.B. He had been hired in 1931 by Sir David Milne-Watson, the director of the GLCC, to create a public relations department to modernize the antiquated image of the gas industry in the face of competition from the electricity industry for control over the supply of power for cooking and heating. "The primary intention behind these films was to associate the gas industry with social progressiveness in the eyes of the planners responsible for slum clearance and new housing estates."[20] When Sir David Milne-Watson publicly stated that such films "helped to foster 'improved understanding and increased confidence between our industry and its public,'"[21] he made the GLCC look like a socially concerned, selfless sponsor, an image that the filmmakers themselves happily reproduced.

Even though the film foregrounds the importance of the gas industry for modern housing, the responsibility (and money) for the slum clearance program itself and the establishment of new buildings fell under the responsibility of the state and the local city council. It has been said that films like HOUSING PROBLEMS and ENOUGH TO EAT? influenced national policy.[22] HOUSING PROBLEMS was shown to MPs at the House of Commons and seems to have been favorably received. James Chapman elaborates:

> *However, it would probably be more accurate to suggest that such films informed public debate rather than influencing government policy directly. Housing Problems was actually produced after the National Government had earmarked significant funds towards a major slum clearance campaign between 1933 and 1938. In this sense the social purpose of the film [...] was not so much to advocate the need for slum clearance and a programme of new house building but rather to show how these activities were already being carried out.*[23]

[18] Joris Ivens, in British Film Institute, *Distribution Library Catalogue*, 13.

[19] Edgar Anstey, in Sussex, *The Rise and Fall*, 62.

[20] Swann, *The British Documentary Film Movement*, 103.

[21] Chapman, *A New History*, 77.

[22] According to Aitken, there were center-left pressure groups like Political and Economic Planning (PEP) "which argued for greater public regulation of the economy, typified the concern with corporate- and reform-planning which Grierson advocated, and which films such as *Housing Problems*, *The City* and *Roadworks* embodied." Ian Aitken, ed., *Documentary Film: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, vol. I

[23] Chapman, *A New History*, 81.

HOUSING PROBLEMS is not just an authentic and sympathetic document of living conditions in slum areas, nor is it just a commercial advertisement for a gas company. It is also a document promoting a particular social and political program that had been implemented by the state. Some of the more progressive theorists of mass communication from the interwar period argued that the role of state publicity activities in a democracy should be to promote social improvement.[24] With the establishment of general suffrage after 1918, "public opinion" became not just a new term but a vital factor in the hitherto traditionally hierarchical British politics. Sir Stephen Tallents noted in 1935 that the state would be called upon by Parliament to undertake new tasks, while at the same time the government had to win consent for its actions from a much greater electorate than twenty years before.[25]

Against this background, the role of photography and film can be seen as being not just to promote but also to justify government-funded social programs. According to Delia González de Reufels, film can be considered an excellent means for creating and circulating images of those receiving government help and documenting the successful implementation of social policies. With reference to historian Michele Landis Dauber's study on the history of federal disaster relief in the US,[26] González de Reufels highlights the role photography and film play in the process of legitimizing social policies. She argues that government spending on behalf of particular groups of people "had to be based on the consensus that beneficiaries are 'worthy' of help and that government action on their behalf is justified."[27] This, as one can imagine, would be even more important in times of limited public expenditure as a consequence of economic depression. HOUSING PROBLEMS leaves us with the certainty that the money is being well spent.

However, by the time the film was shot, the money that had originally been earmarked for slum clearances through the Housing Act of 1930 had already for the main part fallen victim to the government's austerity measures.[28] While the film makes the spectator believe that the only problem of slum clearance is to find interim housing for the inhabitants, the whole project has foundered. Promotion of failed council activities is not an isolated occurrence within British documentary films. Charlotte Wildman's examination of the making of A CITY SPEAKS (UK 1947) shows how the promotion of a local city council may be challenged by the reality of that same council failing to build houses and public baths on the promised scale.[29] Originally commissioned by the Manchester Cooperation in conjunction with the centenary of local government in 1938, the film aimed for civic pride but ended up being in conflict with the prevailing local mood of significant dissatisfaction.

Conclusion

The British documentary movement has, over the years, been subject to considerable critical debate over the role it played in the 1930s and the influence it has had on contemporary filmmaking. In the introduction to his comprehensive historical reappraisal of the documentary film movement, Ian Aitken describes different accounts of the movement, which range from the thoroughly positive assessment that the movement "challenged the entrenched forces of reaction and monopoly within the film industry" to the highly negative

[24] Cf. Chapman, *A New History,* 47.

[25] Stephen Tallents, cited in Swann, *The British Documentary Film Movement,* 2.

[26] Cf. Michele Landis Dauber, *The Sympathetic State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[27] Quoted from Delia González de Reufels's introduction to the workshop on *Social Policy and the Media* (Socium/Bremen University, November 27, 2018).

[28] Rolf Reemtsen, *Die englische Dokumentarfilmschule in den dreißiger Jahren* (Dissertation, University of Cologne, 1976), 117.

[29] Charlotte Wildman, "A City Speaks: The Projection of Civic Identity in Manchester," in Twentieth Century British History 23, no. 1 (Advance Access Publication, Oxford University Press, January 23, 2012): 80.

one that it had undermined the establishment of an "effective system of public film-making" and "stifl[ed] the growth of a critical British film culture," while simultaneously marginalizing the avant-garde.[30]

One of the questions that has been widely discussed by film scholars in this context is whether the movement represented a socially progressive intervention and actually contributed to social change, or whether it was merely a form of bourgeois self-expression, or even a tool of government and industry control. Scholars attempting to answer this question have considered the theory and practice of the movement from different perspectives and using different approaches: by meticulously examining the production histories and the complex interweaving of state/private structures and persons involved; by studying the filmmakers' theoretical writings (mainly those of Rotha and Grierson) and self-representations, e.g. in their journal *World Film News*; by focusing on individual members of the group and their artistic achievements; by evaluating what is known about the films' distribution and audience responses; by contextualizing all of this within the historical sociopolitical context of Britain with reference to American mass communication theories and public relations practice; and by reflecting on the paradigm of realism from the point of view of documentary theory. The result often leads to a somewhat undetermined description of the unbridgeable gulf between the "social and political concerns of the documentarists on the one hand and the ideological or economic imperatives of their sponsors on the other."[31]

Within these frames of reference, the films are used as samples for evaluation, often by just recounting their "narrative" or reproducing their argument, a practice that leads to conclusions like James Chapman's view that "the films should be recognized for their ambition rather than criticized for their limitations."[32] What I suggest instead is that we should recognize the films for what they are: a cultural product based on a number of artistic decisions by their makers. This requires us to take a good critical look, examining not just the films' content but also their aesthetics using a phenomenological approach—preferably before collecting all the reference data. As the analysis of HOUSING PROBLEMS has shown, it is not an unfortunate coincidence that the propagandistic statements of the GLCC undermine the reproachful messages of the interviews. It is a result of the dramaturgical montage that the two directors used in their film and the choice of voice-over commentaries. I do not judge them for their limitations, but also do not recognize them for their ambition. Whatever their ambition might have been, the film shows what is left of it.

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[30] Aitken, *Documentary Film*, 38.

[31] Chapman, *A New History*, 81.

[32] Ibid.