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BRITISH FILM  
INDUSTRY

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Compiled by  
Linda Wood



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**Finally, please note that we have included reminders in relevant places to indicate where the information could be misleading if taken as current.**

David Sharp  
Deputy Head (User Services)  
bfi National Library

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BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

LEAFLET A: STATISTICS

STATISTICS ON CINEMA IN BRITAIN

Year	Admissions In 000s	Box Office Gross £000s	No.Cinemas	Seating Capacity 000s	Average ticket price in new pence
1951	1,365,036	108,296	4,581	4,221	7.96
1952	1,312,077	109,856	4,568	4,200	8.39
1953	1,284,511	108,787	4,542	4,177	8.47
1954	1,275,776	109,992	4,509	4,156	8.73
1955	1,181,765	105,850	4,483	4,087	8.96
1956	1,100,794	104,217	4,391	4,026	9.19
1957	915,191	92,894	4,194	3,825	10.15
1958	754,651	83,391	3,996	3,664	11.05
1959	580,993	67,494	3,414	3,299	13.03
1960	500,789	63,641	3,034	2,960	12.88
1961	449,114	59,814	2,711	2,649	13.64
1962	394,965	56,889	2,421	2,420	14.46
1963	357,207	55,095	2,181	2,222	15.42
1964	342,780	57,533	2,057	2,104	16.79
1965	326,577	61,676	1,971	2,013	19.88
1966	288,841	59,400	1,847	1,883	20.58
1967	264,806	57,583	1,736	1,757	21.75
1968	237,281	57,677	1,631	1,627	24.29
1969	214,928	57,695	1,581	1,538	26.83
1970	193,027	59,041	1,529	1,466	30.58
1971	175,981	60,267	1,482	1,381	34.25
1972	156,640	59,371	1,450	1,198	37.90
1973	134,200	58,021	1,530	1,097	43.20
1974	138,455	69,338	1,535	973	50.10
1975	116,284	71,178	1,530	879	61.20
1976	103,865	75,829	1,525	827	73.00
1977	103,482	85,546	1,510	764	82.70
1978	126,146	118,157	1,519	738	93.70

British Films (inc. Commonwealth)  
Registered with Dept. of Trade

Television Licences  
issued for y/e 31<sup>st</sup>  
March

Year	Over 72 Mins	33.3-72 Mins	Under 33.3 Mins	Year	
1945	40	36	174	1945	
1946	39	61	181	1946	
1947	48	58	247	1947	14,560
1948	68	101	266	1948	45,564
1949	77	53	258	1949	126,567
1950	74	49	238	1950	343,882
1951	67	47	229	1951	763,941
1952	79	42	315	1952	1,449,260
1953	86	46	312	1953	2,142,452
1954	93	51	301	1954	3,248,892
1955	82	40	310	1955	4,503,766
1956	81	29	260	1956	5,739,593
1957	96	33	245	1957	6,966,256
1958	89	35	229	1958	8,090,003
1959	80	43	300	1959	9,255,422
1960	79	44	285	1960	10,469,753
1961	77	43	236	1961	11,267,741
1962	71	45	201	1962	11,833,712
1963	72	39	231	1963	12,442,806
1964	70	29	216	1964	12,885,331
1965	69	22	227	1965	13,253,045
1966	70	16	186	1966	13,567,090
1967	70	13	236	1967	14,267,271
1968	71	17	175	1968	15,088,507
1969	71	14	104	1969	15,496,061
1970	85	11	108	1970	15,882,528
1971	90	13	84	1971	15,943,190
1972	89	23	89	1972	16,658,451
1973	80	13	82	1973	17,124,619
1974	78	14	72	1974	17,324,570
1975	70	13	69	1975	17,700,815
1976	64	10	74	1976	17,787,984
1977	42	16	64	1977	18,056,058
1978	51	8	72	1978	18,148,918

Statistics issued by Dept. of Trade

Statistics taken from  
BBC Handbook 1978

Feature Films (films of 45 mins or more, including documentaries and cartoons) Submitted to the British Board of Film Censors.

Year	Total	'U'	'A'	'AA'	'H' (until 1950) 'X' (from 1951)	Refused
1945	469	165	301		5	
1946	531	216	305		10	
1947	444	187	255		2	
1948	559	214	340		5	
1949	591	280	301		-	10
1950	565	332	227		1	5
1951	636	354	246		31	5
1952	598	407	164		24	3
1953	640	412	184		34	10
1954	537	347	154		28	8
1955	500	271	186		35	8
1956	527	257	213		51	6
1957	583	264	233		77	9
1958	541	261	197		71	12
1959	506	238	163		80	25
1960	588	199	181		98	10
1961	512	224	173		102	13
1962	452	171	168		102	11
1963	546	184	157		96	9
1964	429	172	127		112	18
1965	397	155	144		95	3
1966	364	132	114		111	7
1967	387	130	133		112	12
1968	401	99 (16)	124 (48)		169 (64)	9 (2)
1969	445	91 (20)	114 (50)		219 (106)	21 (8)
1970	502	104 (9)	84 (31)	77 (29)	212 (97)	25 (11)
1971	502	98 (7)	77 (22)	77 (25)	228 (111)	22 (7)
1972	488	78 (5)	81 (25)	77 (23)	222 (126)	30 (6)
1973	504	62 (4)	78 (24)	85 (25)	259 (148)	30 (9)
1974	540	72 (5)	80 (23)	93 (21)	268 (169)	27 (5)
1975	424	74 (5)	96 (32)	73 (12)	164 (98)	17 (3)
1976	402	35 (5)	73 (17)	74 (10)	187 (105)	15 (1)
1977	375	39 (1)	86 (18)	78 (8)	164 (78)	8 (1)
1978	324	35 (2)	81 (16)	66 (8)	138 (48)	4

The figures in brackets indicate the number of films cut to conform with each category, and those after films refused indicate the number passed 'X' in subsequent years, generally with cuts.

Statistics issued by the British Board of Film Censors.

BRITISH FILM FUND AGENCY  
(called the British Film Prod Fund until 1959)

Year (financial year curr- ently end- ing in Sept.)	Total levy Collected	Amount payable to makers of British films and their nominees	CFF	NFS	NFDF	BFI Prod. Board
1950/51	1,197,666	1,123,373	59,883			
1951/52	2,971,910	2,853,940	100,000			
1952/53	2,732,726	2,589,054	120,000			
1953/54	2,752,428	2,614,044	125,000			
1954/55	2,573,458	2,441,217	125,000			
1955/56	2,568,295	2,431,027	125,000			
1956/57	3,096,487	2,936,664	125,000			5,500
1957/58	3,667,380	3,506,960	125,000			
1958/59	3,849,932	3,695,236	125,000			
1959/60	3,901,271	3,742,628	125,000			
1960/61	4,027,133	3,865,065	125,000			
1961/62	3,909,629	3,747,470	137,500			
1962/63	5,770,633	5,594,387	137,500			
1965/64	4,168,850	3,999,691	137,500			
1964/65	4,676,847	4,514,360	137,500			
1965/66	4,622,956	4,412,709	192,500			
1966/67	4,507,224	4,309,464	192,500			
1967/68	4,359,214	4,131,265	240,000			
1968/69	4,037,326	3,849,380	205,000			
1969/70	4,222,763	4,027,585	211,000			
1970/71	4,587,856	4,237,682	235,000	100,000		10,000
1971/72	4,344,551	3,983,797	235,000	95,000		10,000
1972/73	3,975,222	3,567,183	310,000	100,000		20,000
1973/74	4,304,057	3,910,523	351,550	100,000		25,000
1974/75	4,977,267	4,580,935	351,550	100,000		25,000
1975/76	4,720,874	3,978,360	454,250	120,000		30,000
1976/77	5,510,462	4,694,976	499,675	132,000	200,000	33,000
1977/78	6,616,919	5,775,412	499,675	150,000	200,000	33,000

Statistics taken from the annual reports of the British Film Fund Agency  
/British Film Production Fund

The difference between the total levy collected and the total of the  
various amounts paid out is accounted for by the deduction of  
administration costs and the addition of bank interest.

Abbreviations Used

CFF - Children's Film Foundation  
NFS - National Film School  
NFDF - National Film Development Fund  
BFI - British Film Institute

NATIONAL FILM FINANCE CORPORATION

<u>Year to</u> <u>31st March</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Advanced</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Repaid</u>	<u>TV</u>	<u>No. of Films</u>	
				<u>Short</u>	<u>Long</u>
1950	3,743,325	48,335	-	1	62
1951	1,467,897	449,693	-	2	35
1952	1,210,967	616,788	-	10	63
1953	1,468,698	860,834	-	25	51
1954	1,545,246	1,050,080	-	9	46
1955	1,730,901	878,305	-	12	41
1956	1,125,767	1,593,275	-	6	33
1957	1,414,037	1,071,325	-	20	47
1958	1,941,213	979,244	38	5	60
1959	1,788,135	1,665,814	403	13	45
1960	1,575,515	1,383,924	17	21	46
1961	927,504	1,032,195	39	8	27
1962	1,034,396	836,973	8	5	48
1963	1,687,964	720,870	-	11	36
1964	473,149	789,303	-	2	18
1965	464,102	505,670	-	3	12
1966	1,083,592	555,810	78	6	17
1967	936,161	495,457	-	5	12
1968	258,851	928,066	6	3	6
1969	778,208	495,428	1	2	5
1970	861,622	270,131	-	1	6
1971	687,063	226,250	-	3	11
1972	438,371	331,689	-	-	2
1973	356,437	260,143	-	1	3
1974	126,820	261,655	-	-	1
1975	321,432	363,207	6	-	8
1976	364,039	384,869	-	-	1
1977	432,500	255,239	-	-	5
1978	926,982	210,404	-	-	5

TOTAL	£31,170,894	£19,518,976	596	174	754
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Statistics taken from the annual report of the National Film Finance Corporation 1978.

BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

LEAFLET B: TRADE ORGANISATIONS

NB SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CURRENT, AND IS INCLUDED  
ONLY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## ASSOCIATION OF CINEMATOGRAPH, TELEVISION AND ALLIED TECHNICIANS

The Association of Cine Technicians was formed in 1933 by a group of technicians at Shepherds Bush Studios, At that time hours of work were unlimited, wages generally low, with no compensation for overtime, so interest rapidly spread and soon the ACT had members in all the British studios. Official recognition came with the first agreement with the British Film Producers' Association which was put into operation in 1943.

Now known as the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (television was included in 1956), the ACTT represents a wide spectrum of people employed in film and independent television: directors, scenarists, continuity girls, editors, joiners, and negative cleaners. The Association makes agreements on behalf of its members with the BFPA, FSFA and the ITCA which cover basic rates of pay, overtime, general conditions of work such as manning levels. Negotiations have been continuing for a considerable period of time with the Association of Broadcasting Staff, which represents technicians working at the BBC over a possible amalgamation, but this does not seem likely in the near future, ACTT is a member of the Federation of Film Unions which negotiates general matters with the employers' organizations. Realising there is a limit to the amount of work available, the ACTT does not make it easy to get a membership card and without a card it is practically impossible to get employment. Unfortunately, despite this and due to the popularity of film work and the ever shrinking size of the British film industry, there is a high rate of unemployment among ACTT's members. The ACTT runs an employment bureau, publishes a monthly newspaper the Film and Television Technician, and provides general assistance to members such as legal services for employees who appear to have been unfairly dismissed or injured at work.

## ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CINEMAS

The AIC was formed in 1953 response to a certain unease felt by some independent cinema owners that exhibitors connected with either production or distribution companies had power to influence policies affecting themselves while their own interests as independent cinema owners were insufficiently represented. A press statement released on 25th March of that year states the aims of the Association are to "safeguard the interests of the independent exhibitors and to ensure that their viewpoints are fully understood. It is also the aim of the Association to improve relations within the industry between exhibitors, renters and producers," Membership is open to all independent exhibitors and private companies but not to those connected with production or renting interests. Its membership accounts for over 500 of the cinema screens in Britain.

Activities of the Association centre on monthly meetings of its Council of Management - the ATC's executive composed of the officers and branch representatives. At these they discuss policy, important issues, problems currently facing independent exhibitors and the film industry. The officers of the ATC are constantly on hand to advise and assist members with any problems which may arise; members are able to reap the benefit of their specialist knowledge and experience. They do not have regular branch meetings but the Council of Management members look after the various areas. Because its officers donate their services free of charge, the AIC manages to run at practically no expense to its members.

Cinema exhibitors have had to face a number of crises such as the introduction of VAT. However, the principal threat to them has been television which provides constant, cheap entertainment in people's homes. The increase in the number of television licenses is mirrored by a corresponding decrease in cinema attendance and the subsequent closure of many cinemas. There were over 4,500 cinemas in 1953 compared with just over 1,500 today. The independent cinemas have been particularly badly affected by the decline in cinema attendance as they lack the financial reserves that large companies can call upon in lean times. Furthermore, the most commercial films tend either to be produced by companies with their own circuit to which they give preference or they are offered first to the major circuits as this guarantees wide exposure, The independent cinemas have to make do with what is left.

Independent cinemas are usually run on small profit margins. Many owners find it difficult to raise the money for modernisation, especially in view of the very high interest rates charged by the banks. For a long time now the AIC has campaigned for modernisation loans at low rates of interest with repayment spread over a period of years. It fought successfully an entertainment Tax levied on cinema seats. It attempts to demonstrate the particular problems its members have in paying the Eady Levy and agitates to have the exemption rate increased. Contact is maintained with other trade organisations, government bodies and local authorities. The AIC stages an annual conference at which day-long seminars are held with papers delivered by people from all sections of the industry followed, by question and answer sessions. It produces the AIC Film

Review which covers new releases and is made available to subscribers. It is a member of L'Union International de L'Exploitation Cinematographique.

#### ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS

The AIP was formed in 1976 as the result of a general feeling among independent filmmakers they needed an organization which would put forward their particular aims and requirements. According to its constitution, its purpose is "to encourage production of films and to broaden the base of finance and exhibition beyond that which is currently available to filmmakers". Its members believe Britain needs to build up a strong, indigenous film industry rather than one which is simply an appendage to Hollywood. This would serve the dual purpose of providing cinemas with good films and creating a convivial environment for the fostering of talent.

Anyone who is involved in filmmaking or whose livelihood is dependent on the film industry may take out membership. By 1979 there were over 450 members, including directors, producers and writers. There is an executive Council elected by members at the Annual General Meeting.

Since its emergence, the AIP has proved to be a very active pressure group. It has consistently proposed that Government finance for film-making should be restricted to genuinely British projects and awarded on the basis of quality and creativity, not commercialism. It has attacked both the National Film Finance Corporation and the British Film Fund Agency for failing to do this. It has attacked the exhibitors, and in particular the large cinema chains, for their reluctance to take British films. It has formulated a scheme for low budget production which involves technicians, actors, and technical services being prepared to forgo immediate payment, viewing their involvement as an investment to be recouped once the film has been completed and put into distribution. A company called First Investors Film Management was formed to make films according to these guidelines. The AIP puts great energy into getting its ideas known and listened to: it lobbies Government departments, Ministers etc.; it contacts newspapers and magazines; whenever possible it gets one of its members onto councils, committees, etc.

The Association also provides the opportunity for independent filmmakers to meet socially. It publishes a monthly newsletter, AIP & Co., arranges script workshops and maintains an office to help and advise members. It has also organized daily market places at which members are able to put on view their films, videos, etc..

## BRITISH ACADEMY OF FILM AND TELEVISION ARTS

The Academy came into existence following a conference held in the autumn of 1946 attended by many eminent British filmmakers. A committee was elected to prepare the Academy's constitution and policy and arrange for its formal registration as a non-profit making company. The Chairman of this Committee was David Lean - its other members were the Hon. Anthony Asquith, Sir Michael Balcon, Sidney Cole, Thorold Dickinson, Sir Alexander Korda, Frank Launder, Ronald Neame, Michael Powell, Carol Reed, Paul Rotha and Harry Watt.

Its aim is the advancement of the art and technique of the film and the encouragement of experiment and research in all branches of the industry. It attempts to make contact with organizations with similar aims both at home and abroad. Full membership of the Academy is restricted to "filmmakers" by which is meant those involved in film-making or pioneer work and research in cinematography. There is also an associate membership for those who are not filmmakers themselves but whose profession brings them into contact with filmmakers.

The Academy puts on a large number of screenings and discussion evenings for its members. The BAFTA premises provide somewhere for those involved in filmmaking to meet socially. Its advice on film and television matters is sought by both professional and government bodies. Its staff is frequently invited to give papers at overseas conferences. There is increasing interest from the general public in its annual awards for film and television which are now screened on television. In 1978 it organized its first television festival which received entries from all over the world.

## BRITISH ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

Equity which was formed in 1930 includes not just actors but the full range of performers - singers, dancers, variety artists, etc. It covers all areas in which performers work - theatre, film, radio and television. In 1973, the Commission on Industrial Relations found "a closed shop was necessary to maintain reasonable terms and conditions of employment and maintain stable arrangements for collective bargaining". Given that there are always far more people looking for employment than vacancies exist, plus the short term and casual nature of employment, it would be all too easy for employers to take advantage of the situation, were they not obliged to employ Equity members under Equity conditions. As it is, the acting profession is one of the most oversubscribed and underpaid - unemployment tends to range between 70% - 80% among the union's 25,000 plus members.

Equity has an agreement with the British Film Producers Association covering minimum rates of pay, hours of work, overtime and general conditions of work in films. It represents the actors at all-union meetings held with the producers of any film about to be shot in Britain. Equity is a member of the Federation of Film Unions which negotiates with the BFPA on matters of general interest to the film unions.

## BRITISH FILM PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

The present BFPA came into existence on 1st January 1967 with the merging of the British Film Producers' Association (formed in 1941) and the Federation of British Filmmakers (formed in 1957). The Association represents and promotes the interests of the production side of the industry. Its membership includes the major producing companies, the studios and the British production subsidiaries of the American companies.

BFPA is an employers' association and consequently industrial relations have an important place in its activities. It negotiates with those unions involved in the film industry - ACTT, NATKE, EETU, BAE, WGGB, MU and FAA. Separate agreements are reached with each of the unions over rates of pay, conditions of pay, etc. Once agreements are settled they become applicable to film production as a whole. But there are also constant discussions with the Federation of Film Unions which represents all the unions covering general problems and issues. Various procedures have been established to deal with any difficulties which may arise during shooting. Pre-production meetings are held with the unions' representatives at which detailed problems arising from the production are worked out.

The BFPA ensures that the producers' interest are represented in dealings with the Government, particularly with the Films Branch of the Department of Trade. It communicates and protects the specific needs of British producers through membership of bodies such as the Cinematograph Films Council. It makes submissions to Government Enquiries. It has also worked closely with the Department of Trade in setting up of co-production agreements.

It is a member of the International Federation of Film Producers and the Comite des Industries Cinematographiques de Communautés Europeennes which is concerned with filmmaking in the EEC. BFPA has an overseas committee whose role is to represent British production abroad, especially at film festivals.

All producers of cinema and TV films may become members; producers who are not currently active in filmmaking may take out associate membership. All members are represented on the Council of Members, the main body of BFPA, though associate members have no voting rights. However, the formulation of policy is carried out by the Policy and General Purposes Committee, elected by a ballot of the full membership. Any fundamental change must be ratified by the Council of Members, BFPA has a permanent secretariat of three: president, secretary and director of labour relations plus a staff of about 30.

## BRITISH INDUSTRIAL & SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION:

BISFA tries to assist industry, Government, commerce and science reach maximum efficiency in their use of audio visual techniques. Audio visual includes 16mm, 35mm, 8mm, video tapes, slides and film strips. With the ever increasing use of these aids by all sectors of the community, BISFA attempts to provide a central source of information for all its members.

BISFA is a non-profit making organization financed by subscriptions from its members and its activities. Its membership is drawn from many different sources and includes Government departments, nationalized industries, scientific establishments, producers of audio-visual equipment and technical consultants.

It arranges regular conferences and events. At its Monthly Newcomers show, new films and audio visual programmes are put on. Its monthly magazine covers new films, gives details of forthcoming audio visual events and publications plus general articles. It has various specialist groups such as the cassette group which keeps up to date with current developments or the distribution group which advises on matters such as television distribution or how best to handle the distribution of a particular type of sponsored film. Every year BISFA organizes the British Sponsored Film Festival. It is an opportunity to see the best British sponsored films from the previous twelve months and for delegates from the different areas of audio-visual production and use to discuss common problems, budgets, distribution, etc. The best entries are selected as the British representatives in the annual International Industrial Film Festival of the Council of European Industrial Federations. From amongst its membership, BISFA can call upon a vast store of expert knowledge.

## BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPH SOUND AND TELEVISION SOCIETY

This is a society of the technicians working in film, television, video, etc. As a result of major technical developments in the late 1920s, e.g. two-tone Technicolor and sound, British technicians felt the need for some means of keeping in touch, and in response to this the British Kinematograph Society was formed in 1931.

The Society arranges regular meetings, sometimes held at the NFT, at which papers on general and specialised subjects are presented and equipment demonstrated, followed by discussions. It organises a biennial International Conference and Exhibition attended by delegates from all over the world. The Journal of the BKSTS, a monthly periodical, includes papers given at the Society's meetings, technical articles written for the journal, reviews of equipment.

The Society has built up a collection of books and journals and offers a referral enquiry service to members. The Society is financed by its members' subscriptions. Members must be over 25 and hold a position of responsibility in film, TV and similar industries, or be proficient in the use of the varied techniques relating to these industries.

There is an associate membership for those undergoing training. The BKSTS is administered by a Council elected by its members.

#### CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITORS' ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The exhibitors (ie cinemas) are the part of the film industry which comes into direct contact with the public and are, consequently, more accessible to and likely to bare the brunt of any criticism. In the early years of the twentieth century, the cinemas were frequently accused of endangering both the moral and physical welfare of their audiences. Central and local authorities had begun to take an interest in the types of films being shown and the conditions under which they were being shown. The cinema owners felt the need to present themselves in a good light. Realising this could best be achieved through concerted action they formed the CEA in 1912, becoming the first branch of the industry to organise itself. The CEA includes most of the cinema circuits and its members account for about 90% of the screens in this country.

Over the years the CEA has presented the views and needs of the cinema owners to the Government by representation on committees such as the Cinematograph Films Council and by making submissions to various Government enquiries, including recently the PM's working party on the future of the film industry, the Williams Committee on censorship and the Annan Committee on broadcasting.

Through its Industrial Relations Committee the CEA negotiates with the various trade unions involved in exhibition - principally NATKE. It attempts to keep its members aware of current developments and the specialist knowledge of its officers and staff is at the disposal of its members.

The principal problem facing cinema owners since the early 1950s has been the constant decline in cinema attendance, due mainly to the spread of television. Though the cinema owners are not in a position to affect programmes made specifically for television, they have fought hard to keep films off television for as long as possible. CEA members will ban the films of those production companies from being shown in their cinemas which sell any film to television before they have had three years of cinema exhibition - an exception has been made for foreign language films for which it is considered there is no mass audience.

#### FILM ARTISTES' ASSOCIATION

FAA represents extras. Under an agreement with the British Film Production Association, all crowd artists working within a 56 mile radius of Charing Cross Road must be professional artists. BFPA's Central Casting Agency maintains a register of members (between 1,600-2,000) which is used by producers whenever they require crowds. The agreement with BFPA also lays down minimum rates of pay and working conditions. Extras tend to be hired on a daily basis and are paid by the producer at the end of each working day.

#### INDEPENDENT FILM DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION

Its members are mainly specialized film distributors who deal in both 16mm and 35mm. They supply films to many diverse sources - art cinemas, oil rigs, schools and television. But it is the large number of film societies which have mushroomed in recent years that provide the mainstay of these companies' bookings. Within the Association is to be found a wide diversity of specialisation. Companies such as Connoisseur and Contemporary concentrate on "art" films; the Concord Film Library has films on social issues while Fair Enterprises specializes in popular music films.

Formed in 1973, the IFDA's aims are "to give the best possible service and to ensure the maximum coverage for worthwhile films throughout this country and abroad". Experience has furnished their members with the ability to judge the potential audience for a film. Their 18 members are continuously searching for new films of quality from sources all over the world - and not just features, but shorts, documentaries, cartoons, etc.

#### INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1974, IFA provides a "forum and voice for independent cinema". Among its diverse membership are to be found avant-garde and experimental film-makers, groups producing films of a political nature, individual film-makers. Membership is not limited to film-makers but also includes film theorists and exhibitors. Although it does limit membership to professionals, it is not concerned with commercial cinema. It is very rare for an IFA member to produce material on 35mm; they mostly use 16mm and video, but also 8mm. Realising there is little chance of the commercial film industry displaying an interest in the kinds of films its members produce, there has been an attempt to develop their own system of production and screening - a system based on democratically run regional centres rather than what they view as bureaucratic centralist organizations currently in existence. The concept of workshops is very important to their scheme; these provide communal film-making facilities permitting the maximum usage out of any equipment; film-makers are able to meet and discuss each other's work; they can develop ideas behind film-making and work out the kind of films they are aiming for. At the moment, there are few outlets for films made by IFA members - principally art colleges, BFI Regional Theatres and some film societies. The desire to reach wide audiences has led to a

growing awareness among independent film-makers that production and exhibition must be developed alongside each other. So now workshops are combined with public viewing facilities wherever possible. Independent film-makers do recognize a certain reluctance on the part of the general public to attend screenings of their films and are attempting to break down this barrier.

Finance for IFA members comes from many different sources but principally from the BFI, the Arts Council, Regional Arts Associations and local authorities. However, any grants received barely cover running costs and independent cinema survives because those involved are prepared to accept minimal wages or they subsidise their film-making by teaching, working in industry or part-time employment.

The IFA is continually campaigning for more funds to make films of "cultural and artistic merit" and more and better workshops and exhibition facilities. It has made a submission to the Department of Education and Science on the future of the British film industry and its opinions have been sought by various Government bodies involved in the film industry,

#### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THEATRICAL, TELEVISION AND KINE EMPLOYEES

NATKE started out in 1890 as a union of backstage theatre workers. But from the early 1900s when the cinema was first establishing itself, the union started recruiting in both the studios and cinemas. On the whole NATKE representation is much stronger on the production side of the industry. Unionisation within production is almost 100% - the membership is small, cohesive and mainly skilled. The agreement with the British Film Producers' Association covers all craft grades, administrative, clerical, wardrobe, make-up and hair dressing. It sets minimum rates of pay and working conditions. It co-operates with the other film unions through the Federation of Film Unions on matters of general interest,

NATKE also represents cinema employees - cashiers, projectionists, cleaners, etc. A national agreement made with the cinema employers association, the CEA, covers conditions of work and rates of pay. However, there have been continuous problems in recruiting members - many independent cinemas and small chains, workers isolated from fellow workers, use of part-time and temporary staff. This, in conjunction with the use of a high proportion of women workers and the unskilled nature of the work being undertaken, has resulted in cinemas being an area of low paid employment.

## SOCIETY OF FILM DISTRIBUTORS

(known as the Kinematograph Renters Society until 1979)

In the early days of the cinema, distribution was small-scale and localized consisting of the quick selling of as many prints as possible of whatever the distributor had on his books. However, as the size of the business grew and it became more profitable to hire than to sell outright, the distributors became increasingly aware of the need to organize themselves. Upon its formation in 1915, its objectives were:

- Protection of distributors' interests;
- Co-operation with other branches of the trade on matters of general concern to the industry;
- Conferring with central and local Government bodies on matters affecting the trade;
- The protection of members from unfair or illegitimate methods of business;
- The suppression of piracy and the illegal duplication of films. SFD includes most, and certainly all the major, film distribution companies. Its policy making body is the Council of Members which is elected at the annual general meetings. The Society has a small permanent staff and various standing committees; these are responsible for pursuing the objectives of the Society.

The distribution branch has emerged as financially the strongest sector of the film industry. It does not have the large overheads of exhibition e.g. maintaining cinemas in a general good state of repair, rates, etc. Distributors can spread their risks more widely than producers. They are also in the advantageous position of being able to take out of returns from cinemas their distribution fee plus costs of distribution before passing on whatever money remains to the producers. Originally the cinemas paid a flat rate when booking a film. However, the combined strength of the distributors working through SFD was able to make the exhibitors give them a percentage of the box office takings, an arrangement which is much more financially rewarding for the distributors. The Society has a staff of inspectors which make regular, unannounced visits to check cinema accounts. It also operates a credit control system which ensures prompt returns from the cinemas.

Although SFD has been very successful in realising most of its objectives, piracy remains a serious problem. Losses arising from the unauthorised copying and selling of prints runs into millions of pounds. Despite co-operation with the police and similar trade organisations overseas, piracy seems to be on the increase. The introduction of video has greatly facilitated the making of illegal copies and greatly enlarged the number of potential outlets.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACTT	Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians
AIC	Association of Independent Cinemas
AIP	Association of Independent Producers
BAE	British Actors' Equity Association
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BFPA	British Film Producers Association
BISFA	British Industrial and Scientific Film Association
BKSTS	British Kinematograph, Sound and Television Society
CEA	Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association of Great Britain and Ireland
EETU	Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union
FAA	Film Artistes' Association
FFU	Federation of Film Unions
FSFA	Federation of Specialised Film Associations
IFA	Independent Film Makers Association
IFDA	Independent Film Distributors Association
ITCA	Independent Television Companies Association
MU	Musicians' Union
NATKE	National Association of Theatrical, Television and Kine Employees
SFD	Society of Film Distributors
VAT	Value Added Tax
WGGB	Writers' Guild of Great Brilain

BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

LEAFLET C: GOVERNMENT AND RELATED ORGANISATIONS

NB SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CURRENT, AND IS INCLUDED  
ONLY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

SECTION 1

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

### THE CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY

The Central Film Library claims to be the oldest non-theatrical film library in the world. The library was started in 1927 as part of the Imperial Institute (now Commonwealth Institute) to send films to pupils in areas too remote to attend Institute cinemas. A few years later it came under the control of the Empire Marketing Board and followed its various changes of names, parent body and addresses, rapidly building up its stock of films.

It now functions as the UK distributor for audio visual materials produced by the COI or acquired by them from industry (nationalised or otherwise) and international bodies such as the US Information Services. It has sought to build up a library of clear, informative films, covering a wide range of subjects, and its 1400 titles includes films on agriculture, safety, arts, science and technology, plus some classic documentaries such as DRIFTERS and NORTH SEA. Its films are hired by schools, film societies and industry.

### CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

The Central Office of Information Films and Television Division is responsible for Government filmmaking on informational themes. It also has responsibility for projecting overseas a favourable image of Britain through the media, excluding broadcasting. Government involvement with filmmaking began in 1928 when the Empire Marketing Board established a small film unit. This unit was taken over by the GPO in 1933 and in 1939 became part of the Ministry of Information. In 1952 the Crown Film Unit (as it had become known) was disbanded. The COI still sponsors a large number of films but not having any filmmaking facilities of its own has to commission outside film companies. Its output ranges from full length documentaries to 50 second quickies. News items and magazine programmes are made for overseas television. The British Embassies and High Commissions are used to send films abroad. It provides facilities for film teams visiting Britain making programmes about this country.

### THE CINEMATOGRAF FILMS COUNCIL

A statutory advisory body with no executive powers, the CFC was constituted under section 41 of the Films Act 1960. Its members are drawn from the various branches of the film industry to advise the Secretary of State for Trade on matters affecting the film industry and he may effect certain arrangements only after receiving recommendations from the Council. These include distribution of the British Film Fund, the quota of British films to be shown in British cinemas and any disciplinary action to be undertaken on failure to reach quotas.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRADE

Films Branch of the Department of Trade is responsible for carrying out Government policy concerning the feature film industry. Its tasks include the administration of the Films Act 1960 to 1979, which involves the enforcement of the film quota, the licensing of exhibitors and distributors, the registration of standard (ie 35mm width) films, and the negotiation of co-production agreements with other countries, and the application of these arrangements. The Branch also deals with general questions about production, distribution and exhibition of films in Great Britain. It is responsible for questions relating to the film levy under the Cinematograph Films Acts 1957 to 1975, for the British Film Fund Agency, for the National Film Development Fund and for the National Film Finance Corporation.

## DUCHY OF LANCASTER

The Government is the major financial support for the arts in Britain. The Government department looking after the arts is based in the Office of Arts and Libraries, situated within the Duchy of Lancaster. Its role is limited to making grants to various art bodies, such as the British Council (which alone received a grant of £61,000,000 in 1978-9), the BFI, national museums, etc.

Although the allocation of money is decided by the grant receiving body itself, the Government as the source of finance wields enormous influence and it would be extremely unwise to go against current government policy. The previous Labour Government was very much in favour of increased regionalization which definitely spurred on the art organizations to make a somewhat fairer allocation of funds to the regions.

## HOME OFFICE

The Home Office has no responsibility for the classification of films and no power to vary the decision of the British Board of Film Censors or of a licensing authority (ie. local authority).

In June 1977 a committee under Professor Bernard Williams was set up "to review the laws concerning obscenity, indecency and violence in publications, displays and entertainments in England and Wales, except in the field of broadcasting, and to review the arrangements for film censorship in England and Wales; and to make recommendations". The Committee's Report was published in November 1979 and its findings are being considered by the Home Secretary (see also leaflet D: Censorship, p62).

The Home Office does sponsor a few publicity and training films on aspects of crime or fire prevention or films for use as recruiting aids (principally regarding the police force). These are commissioned through the Central Office of Information.

SECTION II

GOVERNMENT FINANCED ORGANISATIONS

## THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Arts Council attempts to promote the practice of and interest in the various arts. Drama, literature, visual arts, dance and community arts all fall within its sphere. In 1979-80 it received a grant of £61,250,000 from the DES but is now funded by the Office of Arts and Libraries, based within the Duchy of Lancaster.

The ACGB sponsors films about the arts. The filmmaker has to make an application to the Arts Films Committee which bases its decision not only on the importance of the subject matter but takes very much into account the originality of approach demonstrated in the filmmaker's outline and whether the end product is likely to be a good film.

There developed an awareness of the need to finance films by artists in addition to films on specific art subjects. Originally this was done through the Arts Films Committee but in 1972 an Artists Film Committee was set up with "the investigation and experiment into the language and meaning of film within the context of avant-garde film practice" as its terms of reference. There are four different types of bursaries for film and video ranging from £100 for work in 8mm up to over £1000 for filmmakers who want to develop ideas they have already explored in previous work.

The Arts Council realises an obligation to filmmakers to ensure the screening of independent/avant-garde work, which is of little to no interest to commercial distributors. It sponsors in collaboration with other organizations, festivals, and exhibitions, eg the Festival of Independent Cinema held at Bristol and an exhibition of British Avant-garde held at the Hayward in 1977. It also arranges tours by selected artists with their work, and gives grants to groups prepared to show certain film and video shows.

## THE BRITISH FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES

The British Federation of Film Societies is the nationally recognised representative body of the film society movement. Begun in 1945 on a voluntary basis in order to protect existing film societies and encourage new ones, the federation is now a firmly established, professionally run organisation. In addition to membership fees, it receives, through the British Film Institute, an annual grant from the Office of Arts and Libraries.

The aims of the Federation are to encourage the wider showing, use and appreciation of film as an art and an instrument of social education by film societies in every part of the United Kingdom. Every film society affiliated to the Federation operates within an approved constitution and receives practical assistance, advice, information and services.

There are at present 700 film societies who are currently members of the Federation spread throughout the country. These societies are groups of people interested in the art of cinema and its role as a means of communication as well as entertainment. Film societies will be found in schools, colleges, universities, towns, villages, offices and factories. They show a far wider range of films than would normally be available to the local community through the usual channels and provide a substantial outlet for independent British film production and for the neglected areas of short films. Discussions, talks and special shows form an increasing part of every society's activities.

The Federation operates through an executive council appointed by groups of societies located in each region of the country. Decisions taken by the executive are implemented by a full-time staff of four and a great deal of voluntary help. The full-time staff occupy offices located within the British Film Institute at 81 Dean Street. The executive council is supported by a number of specialist committees.

The work of the Federation falls broadly into three categories - liaison with national bodies, provision of central services information of events, liaison with individual film societies. Regular contact on behalf of the film society movement is maintained with the film trade, the government, the British Film Institute, the Regional Arts Associations and related bodies concerned with film. The Press and other media are fed with information about the activities of the movement.

Services to film societies include information on programming, advertising, publicity, sponsorship, film availability, technical and legal matters. Every society receives a copy of the Federation's monthly magazine Film, an annual register of societies and various information leaflets (soon to be incorporated into a handbook). Viewing sessions are held both nationally and regionally to enable film society programmers to view newly available films on 16mm. Posters, stills, programme notes, programme brochures and photographic blocks are among the other material available to societies at virtually cost price in addition to a number of regional projectors for emergency use or special events. Individual

societies are assisted with specific problems and guidance is available to new societies from the Federation Office and regionally. The Federation also organises a number of national events including the Film Society of the Year Award, the Grierson (Short Film) Award [the BFI will be taking over responsibility for this award in the near future] and from time to time, specialised film events and seminars.

#### BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

**NB SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CURRENT, AND IS INCLUDED ONLY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

The Institute was founded in 1933 'to encourage the development of the art of the film, to promote its use as a record of contemporary life and manners; and to foster public appreciation and study of it' In 1961 the Institute's Memorandum of Association was amended to incorporate a further aim: "to foster study and appreciation of films for television and television programmes generally, to encourage the best use of television". The Institute is financed primarily by an annual Government grant through the Office of Arts and Libraries. It is not, however, a Government department nor does it come under the control of the film or television industries. The policy of the Institute is controlled by a Board of Governors, appointed by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who serve in an honorary capacity normally for periods of three years (Director: Anthony Smith)

#### NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

The national Film Theatre on the South Bank has become, since its foundation in 1952, an established part of London's cultural life. Programmes covering an enormous range of materials are presented in two cinemas (NFT 1 and 2) throughout the year, usually arranged in seasons to cover particular aspects of the cinema or television or the work of a director or country. There are two programmes each evening in each theatre with late night shows on Fridays, matinees throughout the week, regular seminars and guest appearances. The normal price of admissions to both auditoria is £1.20 (unreserved) and £1.50 (bookable). NFT 1 has 466 seats and NFT 2 has 162 seats. The NFT Club has both catering facilities and a licensed bar as well as a magnificent view of the Thames. Entrance to the NFT is normally restricted to Members and Associates of the BFI and their guests, but on certain occasions members of the public are admitted, notably for the London Film Festival. The Festival, inaugurated in 1957, is non-competitive and aims at bringing together the pick of the year's film festivals. (Controller: Leslie Hardcastle)

#### NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE

The Archive's function is to select, acquire, preserve and make available to bona fide users films and television programmes of artistic, historical or scientific interest. Its terms of reference cover any film shown or programme transmitted in Great Britain, irrespective of the country of origin, and the Cataloguing Department, which is open Monday-Friday, 10.00-17.30, holds catalogue entries for more than 40,000 titles in the Archive's collections. The material is based at Ernest Lindgren House,

Berkhamsted, Herts and Gaydon, Warwickshire, and viewing facilities for students and researchers are available at 81 Dean Street. The Viewings Supervisor (who arranges access to the Archived film and television collections for bona fide students and researchers) and the Production Librarian (who supplies, subject to copyright clearance, copies of Archive material for film and television productions) are available for consultation at 81 Dean Street, Monday-Friday, 10.30 -17.30 (Curator: David Francis).

#### PRODUCTION DIVISION

The Production Board, serviced by the Institute's Production Division, represents the active involvement of the Institute in filmmaking. The Experimental Film Production Committee, the forerunner of the present Board, was founded in 1952, initially using funds donated by the film industry, and was responsible for encouraging such major talents as Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson. In 1966 the fund was reconstituted as the Film Institute Production Board with enlarged technical resources and support staff. Any person or group wishing to make an original and independent film, and able to establish their technical competence and reliability, may apply for a grant. The Division now receives an annual grant of 'Eady Money' (a national fund used for British film production) to supplement the sum allocated from the Institute's own budgets. In 1980 the Division received further subvention from the Independent Television Companies Association. (Head: Peter Sainsbury)

#### DISTRIBUTION DIVISION

The Division acquires and distributes films and television programmes and provides funds, advice and services for film and video activity around the country. The Division offers for hire films and video-cassettes chosen for the relevance to the art and history of film and television, produces critical writing to support them and offers programming support, film booking and publicity services. Additionally, the Division monitors the entire range of cinema and television and tries to ensure that the most important examples are made and remain available for hire in this country. The Division also has an important role as funder of film and television activity throughout the country, very often working through Regional Arts Associations, and giving money to groups working to improve public enjoyment and understanding of film and TV. Often the grants result in the starting up of new local amenities (such as exhibition spaces, cinemas and production workshops), but the central objective is to join with local groups in stimulating activity in film and television. In particular the Distribution Division is anxious to give help where the various facets of film and television (eg. production, exhibition, education) can be brought fruitfully together to provide a focus for activity and discussion in a community. (Head: Colin McArthur)

## INFORMATION DIVISION

The Information Division consists of all those BFI departments which collect and disseminate information to its public and to the film and television industries; it collects, preserves and catalogues, but also goes out to the public by commissioning and publishing, by advising schools and universities on materials and documentation, by holding courses and conferences, by working with scholars, critics and research institutes in Britain and abroad.

### BFI Library Services

BFI Library Services provide an information and study centre for film and television which is international in scope but which has a special relevance to the history and practice of British cinema and television. It also publishes the British National Film Catalogue, a subject-classified record of films and video-cassettes available in the UK. The collections include books, scripts, periodicals as well as newspaper clippings, festival files, campaign and press books and a variety of "special collections" (scrapbooks, diaries, memorabilia etc). All services are accessible to the public by letter, telephone or personal visit, but regular users are expected to take out membership of the BFI, Hours of opening [in 1980] were: Monday closed; Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 11.00-18.00; Wednesday 11.00 - 21.00.

### BFI Periodicals

BFI Periodicals publishes two magazines Sight and Sound and the Monthly Film Bulletin, and the bi-monthly house journal BFI News which is sent to all members of the Institute. Sight and Sound appears quarterly and is generally recognised as one of the most authoritative magazines in the world. The Monthly Film Bulletin covers all the new films distributed in London each month. This includes full credits, a plot synopsis and separate review/analysis.

### BFI Publishing

BFI Publishing edits and publishes books and monographs for the Institute on various aspects of film and television. It also engages in co-operative projects with outside publishers, while handling the marketing arrangements for specialist works produced by other BFI departments. The underlying principle of the BFI's own series of books is to combine basic information with debate about the key issues in film and television criticism, theory and public policy.

### Stills, Posters & Designs Department

The Stills, Posters and Design Collection contains over 1,500,000 black and white still photographs, colour transparencies, posters and original set and costume designs and animation reels relating to the development of world cinema. Researchers can visit the collection by appointment Monday-Friday 11.00-17.30, alternatively enquiries can be made by post and a copying service is available.

## BFI Education

BFI Education works for the development of the study of film and television. The department offers educational guidance and support to the public as a whole through the schools, conferences, courses and other events which it presents each year. It also provides advisory services at every level of the education system from primary to adult education. It produces and distributes visual and written documentation for the use of students and teachers of film and television and its material on offer includes slide packs, study guides and an extract catalogue.

## PUBLICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP SALES

Anyone over the age of 16 may become a Member or Associate Member of the British Film Institute. A Member, for an annual subscription of £8.50, is entitled to purchase tickets for the National Film Theatre (London) with three guests; use the NFT licensed clubroom and restaurant; receive free illustrated NFT programme booklet and Sight and Sound magazine (normal subscription £4.20); use Library Services Department; receive Monthly Film Bulletin at the reduced rate of £5.00; purchase tickets for programmes at the BFI's Regional Film Theatres outside London with one guest; receive the Annual Report and attend the Annual General Meetings. An Associate Member for £5.50 (£3.50 for full-time students and members of registered film societies) is entitled to purchase tickets for the National Film Theatre (London) with three guests; use NFT licensed Clubroom and Restaurant; receive free illustrated NFT programme booklet, purchase tickets for programmes at the BFI's Regional Film Theatres outside London with one guest. All Members and Associate Members receive BFI News bi-monthly, and are able to book in advance for the London Film Festival each year. Corporate membership is available to educational establishments and film societies, and there is a short-term membership for visitors. For £2.00 Associate Membership is available for one month at a time; a further £1.50 includes use of the Library Services Department.

## BRITISH UNIVERSITIES FILM COUNCIL

The British Universities Film Council exists to encourage the use, production and study of audio-visual media, materials and techniques for degree-level teaching and research in institutions of higher education. It aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information and experience in this field.

The Council is a representative organisation founded in 1948 by and for practising university teachers. Since 1967 the Council has had a permanent office in London which houses the Information Service and the Secretariat. The Council is supported by a grant received from the Office of Arts and Libraries through the British Film Institute and by members' subscriptions. The Council is a limited company with the status of an education charity.

The Council's most important fields of work are:

Information Service - the Service deals with any enquiry relating to the availability, use and production of audio-visual materials in higher education. It maintains a small reference library, a major collection of film catalogues covering the UK and overseas, and a file of appraisals on audio-visual materials currently available in the UK from which information can be supplied to members. Subject lists of materials and short bibliographies are prepared for members on request. Staff in member institutions assist the Service by appraising new materials, a process which enables the appraisers to keep up-to-date with developments in their fields.

The Information Service is responsible for the production of the BUFC catalogue, Audio-Visual Materials for Higher Education, the HELPIS catalogue, and single-subject catalogues.

The Service at present holds the records of the Slade Film History Register. Lack of staff prevents the continuation of work on the Register but the existing records and newsreel issue sheets are available for consultation by researchers by appointment.

Higher Educational Film Library (HEFL) - the Library provides, on a non-profit-making basis, an outlet for specialised films which would not normally be available in this country, for example; material from abroad, or films shot in the course of research which might not otherwise be accessible to teachers. Films are acquired on the basis of recommendations as to their suitability for use in degree-level teaching or research and may be in any subject area. Some 400 titles are now in the Library. A separate catalogue of the films is available from the BUFC office and new acquisitions are noted in the Newsletter. The films are distributed on behalf of the BUFC by the Scottish Central Film Library.

Audio-Visual Reference Centre - the Council holds audio-visual materials produced by member institutions for viewing at the Council's offices. Material is held on film, videocassette, tape/slide and audio tape and visitors may consult the collection by appointments. It will be of interest to both teachers and producers in the UK and overseas.

Conferences and Screenings - the Council organises a number of conferences and screenings each year devoted to the use of audio-visual material.

Publications - the Service is responsible for the production of Audio-Visual Materials for Higher Education and the Higher Education Learning Programmes Information Services (HELPIS) catalogue as well as for single-subject catalogues, such as Audio-Visual Materials on Drama and Films for Historians.

### Membership

There are three categories of institutional memberships -

Ordinary Membership - open to universities and institutions of university status in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Associate Membership - open to overseas universities and to non-profit-making bodies associated with university education either in the UK or abroad. Corporate Membership - open to commercial organisations which have an interest in the work of BUFC. All member institutions in the UK receive free copies of the Newsletter. Members of staff of member institutions are entitled to make full use of the BUFC's services and to participate in any events organised by the BUFC. In addition, they are entitled to purchase BUFC publications at a discounts

Member institutions appoint one or more representatives from their staff to sit on the Council who are entitled to exercise the power of the institution they represents. Only one representative of any Ordinary Member may vote at general meetings of the Council. Ordinary Members' representatives elect from amongst their number honorary officers and an executive committee responsible for formulating BUFC policy.

Individual Membership is also available to any staff member of a member institutions

## NATIONAL FILM SCHOOL

The setting up of the NFS followed the findings of the Lloyd Committee set up by Jennie Lee, then Minister for the Arts, in 1965. In 1971 the school purchased Beaconsfield Film Studios and accepted its first intake of students in the autumn of that year. It was set up as an autonomous, non-profit making institution and is funded by a direct grant from the Treasury, plus additional finance from the BFFA and television companies,

The school does not require any formal academic qualification of its entrants. Entry is based on open competition, an indication of talent and a strong motivation to work in film or television are the chief criteria. The annual intake is approximately 25 pupils - 5 places being reserved for applicants from overseas. There is no age limit, but the course is regarded as a post-graduate one and the average age is mid 20s. The Lloyd Report laid down several guidelines to the functions of a national film school. It is to provide for all the creative aspects of filmmaking - producing, directing, writing, editing etc. The students are not to concentrate on one kind of filmmaking but to gain experience of the many different forms. Although the importance of developing technical knowledge and proficiency is realised, professionalism is expected to emerge alongside a parallel artistic development.

There are few rigidly structured courses but three main emphases exist in the curriculum - the development of artistic and technical control, the study of contemporary and past work in the cinema and the relationship between film and television and other arts and, society in general. First year activity tends to be centred round workshops on specific topics, but thereafter the balance shifts to individual productions. Within the school it is hoped to build up a community of filmmakers who will view and discuss each others films and the issues raised. Professional attachments are sought for the students. Through these it is hoped to make the student aware of the profession's needs and current practices. The school possesses a professionally equipped sound studio with sound transfer and mixing facilities capable of handling Super 8/16/35mm. An attempt is made to give graduate films as wide an airing as possible, they are screened at BAFTA and the NFT, and the occasional film gets shown on BBC2. Also the NFS is the only film school in the country which can offer its graduates membership of the technicians union, the ACTT. Although by no means guaranteeing a job, the possession of a union card is a distinct advantage when it comes to finding employment. It is not possible to work within the film industry or independent television without membership and as the rate of unemployment among existing members is very high, the intake of new members is otherwise understandably restricted.

## THE SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION IN FILM AND TELEVISION

The Society for Education in Film and Television is a grant -in-aid body of the British Film Institute. It is organised and run by film teachers and others with interests professional or otherwise, in the area of film, television and media studies. The Society was formed in 1949 (as the Society of Film Teachers). Its aim is to promote and develop film, television and media studies at all levels of the educational systems. The Society seeks to contribute to the establishment of the 'subject' of film/television studies, a broadly cultural task given the subjective and non-theorised way in which film and television are usually treated. SEFT publishes two quarterly magazines Screen and Screen Education and organises a number of educational events each year. In addition it sells a wide range of journals, books and magazines. The Society is run by an annually elected Executive Committee.

### Screen

The aim of Screen has been to provide the means for studying film without lapsing into the impressionistic criticism characteristic of most writing about film. This has led to a dissection of the theoretical assumptions underlying these forms of criticism and to an exploration of recent more objective approaches and to the study of the industrial, political and cultural contexts of cinema and television. More recently the magazine has begun to engage more directly with areas such as the visual arts and photography where Screen's work has been influential and with current debates in film and television culture. This new editorial policy - together with a new design begins in 1980.

### Screen Education

Since 1972 Screen Education has grown from a set of duplicated notes into a leading journal of educational, media and cultural theory. But because its purpose is to change the ways that people think about and work in existing institutions and practices, it has never lost its commitment to the primary importance of teaching. This has made it a reference point in the construction of new academic subjects like Media, Communications and Cultural Studies. During 1979, it published articles dealing with the nature (and changing political context) of 'interventions' within both education and mass media, as well as several reconceptualizing some of the central terms in Film Studies. It has also extended its innovatory investigations of photography and popular music.

### Screen Readers

The first of a series of Screen Readers containing important out-of-print material from Screen is now available. A second Reader (and a reprint of the first Reader) will be published shortly by Macmillan Press in conjunction with SEFT. The first Reader contains material on cinema ideology and politics; Screen Reader 2 will cover cinema and semiotics.

### Easter School

The annual one-week Easter School is designed for teachers interested in devising and setting up their own courses by presenting a survey of some of the central concepts involved in media teaching as well as introducing courses and material that already exist.

### Weekend Schools

Each year SEFT organises a number of weekend schools, day schools and conferences in order to present recent work in film and television theory and to examine issues of current concern in film and television culture. These are advertised in the press and in SEFT's journals.

### Regional Study Groups

SEFT seeks to encourage, support and develop reading and study groups in the regions. For further information please write to SEFT.

### Sales, Subscriptions and Membership

Membership of SEFT is -through subscription to Screen and/or Screen Education. Subscriptions are available to both journals together or to each one separately. SEFT also sells and distributes a large number of books, journals and magazines not generally available as well as a number of economically priced teaching material for use in the classroom. Please write for details of subscriptions and publications list.

SECTION III

GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMERCIAL FILM INDUSTRY

NB SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CURRENT, AND IS INCLUDED  
ONLY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## BRITISH FILM FUND AGENCY

At the end of the 1940s, British film production was going through a rough time. The usual difficulties British film producers have in recouping the costs of their films were further compounded by a particularly huge entertainment tax (about 37%) hiving off a large percentage of the money coming in at the box office. The system of film finance is such that the production company is the last in line when it comes to sharing out the profits. Consequently, the British Production Fund was set up in an attempt to ensure that some of the money collected by the cinemas reached the producers who could then plough back the money into film-making. The Fund, or Eady Money, as it is generally known after Sir Wilfred Eady, the civil servant who devised the scheme, was introduced on a voluntary basis in 1950. But needless to say, the cinemas were less than enthusiastic about participating and the sums collected fell far below the Government's expectations. So under the Cinematograph Films Act of 1957 contribution was made compulsory,

### Collecting of the Eady Levy

The Levy is paid on every cinema ticket sold - the present rate is one twelfth of the ticket price, net of VAT. There are certain exceptions and no levy is payable on the following categories:

- When the weekly box office is less than a certain sum, currently £1,400 and immediately after this figure a sliding scale of exemption exists,
- Children's matinees, certain educational and charitable entertainments and entertainments in rural areas,

The Levy is collected every month by Customs and Excise and paid over to the British Film Fund Agency which is responsible for its administration,

### Who Receives Payment

The cost of collecting and administering the Fund is deducted from the amount collected. Grants are made to the Children's Film Foundation, the National Film School and the BFI Production Board. The remaining money is divided up among eligible British films. An eligible film is one which complies with British quota regulations; as such it should be produced by a person normally resident in Britain or by a company registered, in Britain; not more than 7.5% of playing time should be filmed in studios outside Britain; 75% of the labour costs should be British. A film made under a co-production treaty to which the Government is party is also eligible.

### How the Money is Divided up Between Eligible Films

The amount British films have taken in a particular year is placed against the amount of Eady money available for distribution and a percentage rate is worked out. The producer then receives payment for an eligible film in proportion to the amount his film has taken at the box office. So if the Eady Levy available after all other deductions have been made is £1m and the amount British films have taken is £2m, then the payout rate is 50%. If an eligible film takes £200,000 at the box office, then the producer will receive a further

£100,000 from Eady. The average payout rate for the past few years has been between 45-50%.

At the end of 1979 the following restrictions were announced:

1. No feature film will be allowed to earn more than £500,000
2. Short films of less than 33 and a half minutes are allowed, to multiply their earnings by 2.5 before calculating their share of Eady up to £30,000 but then Eady Money will be paid at a flat rate up to a ceiling of £50,000.

See also EEC

The method of allocating Eady has frequently been criticised, in the past. Most money goes to those companies which have already been adequately financially rewarded at the box office and do not need any additional boosting of their profits. Even allowing for a maximum of £500,000 to any one film, there still exists a tendency for most of the money to go to a few films - films such as THE STUD or THE WILD GEESE - leaving very little for the rest.

Although designed to stimulate British production, the Government has interpreted the various regulations in such a way that a film made by a foreign company working through a British registered company and using a British cast, crew and facilities is eligible for Eady. In the late 1960s, a period of high investment by American companies in the British film industry, it has been estimated that 80% of Eady Money went to American companies. One of the biggest recipients of Eady in 1979 was SUPERMAN which was financed by the American company Warner Brothers.

Even where independent British films are entitled to Eady, the money does not always reach the producer. In order to persuade a distributor to back his film, the producer will promise the distributor first call on all returns up to a specific sum (including Eady). In the case of shorts, the distributor can make a tidy profit by buying a film outright and putting it on with an audience-pulling American film.

There has also been strong criticism of the automatic handing out of money to films regardless of their quality, or more pertinently, the lack of it, Sexploitation films, for instance, are sizeable earners of Eady Money.

Indeed, it appears that independent filmmakers who are trying to produce good, genuinely British films, benefit least from Eady. They are unable to get widespread distribution which would give them the opportunity for commercial success, but because their films are not put into distribution, they also do not get Eady.

However, on the the credit side, Eady does put a considerable amount of money into film production in Britain. Although the returns from Eady are unlikely to cause a flood of investors from overseas, it does act as an incentive to foreign companies to make films in Britain and so provides employment for British technicians, actors,

etc. Furthermore, the money received from Eady can be used as bait by independent companies when they are trying to find finance for their films and/or a distributor,

The Films Bill presently going through Parliament (May 1980) includes the following proposal: "Each year for the next five years the Corporation (NFFC) will receive £1.5 million, or 20% of the levy, whichever is the greater". This probably is in recognition of the criticisms already mentioned; but it also represents an attempt by the Government to make the NFFC less reliant on public money. Until now, one of the requirements for quota (and therefore Eady) has been that 75% of the personnel employed must be British. The Films Bill extends this to include citizens of EEC countries.

The annual statistics for the British Film Fund Agency are to be found in British Film Industry - Leaflet A : Statistics (p1).

## NATIONAL FILM DEVELOPMENT FUND

The National Film Development Fund was set up under the Cinematograph Films Act of 1975 to enable writers and producers to develop potentially good ideas, so ensuring a supply of interesting projects for film companies to invest in. An annual grant of £200,000, paid out of the British Film Fund (Eady), was to be made available for an initial period of two years to help meet the cost of script writing and other necessary pre-production expenses. In 1978, the scheme was extended for a further two years and an extra £120,000 added.

Applications for grants are made to the National Film Finance Corporation; these are considered by an advisory committee of eight consisting of writers, producers and others involved in the film industry. Any application must be made by at least two individuals - a writer with a producer and/or director. The Advisory Committee must satisfy itself as to the credentials of the applicant, that the applicant is capable of completing the project and that it has been properly thought out. Any resulting film must classify as British and be eligible for quota. Loans are interest free but must be repaid by the first day of principal photography. Should the project not be filmed, it is within the discretion of the Advisory Committee not to demand payment. Of the eighty-six projects awarded loans by the middle of August 1979, only one feature has gone into shooting -THE CLASH OF THE TITANS - which is being financed by MGM.

The "Report on Non-Departmental Public Bodies" published in January 1980 recommended that the National Film Development Fund should be absorbed into the National Film Finance Corporation. Though still in operation, under the Films Bill presently going through Parliament (May 1980) the NFDF is to be wound up. Its functions will be taken over by the NFFC which "will be better able to commission, guide, use or sell the scripts it backs",

## THE NATIONAL FILM FINANCE CORPORATION

The NFFC is a Government funded bank run by a board and managing director empowered to make loans to independent producers (ie. those not linked with large cinema circuits or American parent companies) without security other than the revenues arising from the film being financed. The Corporation was set up in 1949 by Sir Harold Wilson - then President of the Board of Trade, in response to an even worse than usual crisis besetting the British film industry. Cash flow from the City had dried up and Rank was about the only British company still making films. The government believed only temporary assistance was needed - in the form of a subsidy, not a loan - to tide over producers until the confidence of investors returned. Once production had been set in motion again, it would generate, hopefully, its own finance. So originally the Corporation was given £5m and its powers were to be ended after five years. However, the British film industry has never been in a sufficiently healthy state to dispense with the Corporation's help; the initial five year period has been extended several times and at present there are no plans to wind up the Corporation. Subsequent loans have brought the sum advanced by the Government to £9.6m.

### Lending

The money put at the Corporation's disposal has been used to form a revolving fund. The Government has never given specific guidelines as to the kind of films the Corporation can invest in. It does have a statutory duty to pay its own way and loans can only be made to persons who have reasonable expectations of commercial success. Under the terms of its charter, the Corporation is expected to encourage new ideas. The pattern of investment undertaken by the Corporation has changed to adapt to major developments within the film industry over the past thirty years. In its early days, it was principally the provider of "end money" (usually amounting to one-third of the necessary finance - the other two-thirds is generally provided by a distributor and is known as "front money") for a large number of films. The film industry was then hit by television with the resultant decline in cinema attendance and far fewer films being made. So the Corporation in recent years has invested in a much smaller number of films but provided a larger proportion of the necessary finance. In its first ten years, the Corporation helped finance over 450 films - in the past ten years the number was 47.

### How it works

A production company presents a project to the NFFC. If the Corporation approves, it will put up money. Eventually, the producer receives his share of the profits and repays his initial advance. Unlike ordinary commercial banks which simply charge a set rate of interest, the Corporation has made a practice of sharing in the profits on successful films. Once the money has been repaid, it becomes available for loaning to a new project. Unfortunately, film finance is a highly risky business and not all producers who have received an advance have been able to repay their loan. Although the Corporation does not have to make good to the Department of Trade any unpaid loans the amount available for relending is reduced by the sum lost and the Corporation has to continue paying interest on

money which the Corporation itself realises is irretrievably lost. By 1970, the revolving fund had been whittled down to nearly nothing and the Corporation's current deficit is £8m. In fact the NFFC has only been able to continue operating over the past few years because the Government has been prepared to remit interest repayments.

The Corporation's performance is not nearly as dismal as these figures would indicate. Out of the revolving fund, over £31m has been invested in British films and the Corporation has helped finance over 750 features and 170 shorts. Running costs account for £1.8m and the Government has received £4.5m in interest repayments. Also the loss has been made over a 30 year period.

The Corporation has tried various formulae throughout its history in an attempt to get off the rough end of the deal - financing groups of films in the hope of spreading the risk; financing films on a 50/50 basis with a main distributor; forming a Consortium with City bankers as partners with the Corporation choosing the project and the Consortium as the major backer of any project chosen; persuading distributors to share the profits on a *pari passu*\* basis. But the end result has always been the same - the Corporation continues to make a loss. [\**pari passu* = simultaneously and equally]

#### How the losses were made

- The Government instructed the Corporation to loan between 1949 and 1952 just under £3m to the British Lion Corporation then under Sir Alexander Korda. The Corporation had no control over how this money was spent and not only was most of it never recovered, but for many years the Corporation had to pay interest on this loan.
- Until 1957 the Corporation could only finance projects which had been rejected by all other sources of finance, so only tended to be offered the least financially attractive projects.
- Well into the mid 1960s, the Corporation's involvement in film finance was limited to providing "end money". This is the part of the investment which is most at risk. The provider of "end money" is last in line when it comes to handing out the profits. He does not receive anything until both the exhibitor and distributor have covered their costs and taken a share of the profits in the form of a fee. Consequently, a film has to earn far more at the box office than its actual cost before there is any likelihood, of the source of "end money" getting a return on his investments. Although, if a film is a big success the provider of "end money" receives a much higher return on his investment than the provider of "front money".

- In the 1960s when the Corporation was trying alternative methods of finance, American money was pouring into the British film industry. It is estimated the Americans were "backing 90% of all production in Britain by the end of the decade. The American companies were able to offer finance for producers on much more attractive terms than the Corporation could offer. So yet again the most commercially attractive projects bypassed the NFFC.
- As a greater proportion of the sum originally made available for loaning out has been written off, the interest repayments on lost investments have become increasingly crippling. The half year interest alone due on 1st April 1978 amounted to £241,655.
- Unlike Rank or EMI, the Corporation does not have its own cinema circuit which would guarantee distribution of any film made. In many instances, the Corporation has been unable to get back as much as may have been possible because it has either been unable to find a distributor for its film or (as is usually the case) the film gets only a limited release. There is always a long delay between putting out money and getting any returns - even assuming the film is successful. Any extra delay caused by having to shop around for a distributor adds considerably to costs, particularly in view of current high bank rates. The Corporation does tend to have a better record for choosing successful projects than many commercial companies. Sir John Terry, the Managing Director from 1958 to 1978 stated that two out of seven films financed by the Corporation were successful, whereas the Rank Organisation's success rate was only one in ten. However, the Corporation's successes tend to be of a modest kind and their coffers lack the bolster of a distributor's fees.

### Policy

In the NFFC annual report for 1979, the final report before its current right to lend expires at the end of 1980 the Corporation has taken the opportunity to examine its relationship to the British film industry and make the following suggestions as to what role it should play:-

- The history of British production is one of "long periods of unemployment followed by short periods of activity". The Corporation ought to provide "stability - a centre to which filmmakers can look for support and finance".
- The Corporation is constantly being urged to chose between so-called art and commercial films. The Corporation finds the assumption that such a choice must be made mistaken. Films are both entertainment and culture. The NFFC realises it operates in the commercial sector of filmmaking and the high costs involved make it essential the Corporation maintains an awareness of the needs of audiences. However, if the Corporation is to participate in the evolution of a truly popular culture it must make "not only films that appeal to a

popular audience but also films that will feed ideas and invention".

- British audiences have long since developed a taste for American films. As very few British films are made and fewer which deal with British life and manners, the British film has become an unknown commodity. The Corporation considers quantity matters as well as quality and supply can create demands. It argues "unless the Corporation has the funds to enable it to contribute towards the making of at least ten films a year it will be difficult to play an effective role in improving the climate for British cinema".
- The Corporation has no distribution facilities of its own and depends on outside organisations for the marketing of its films. This has led to many problems. Often, these companies have been less than enthusiastic in putting over Corporation films to the public. Requests to examine distribution accounts have been denied. Unfortunately, the Corporation is in a weak bargaining position. The small number of films it produces are on the whole of little interest to the major distributors. Consequently, the Corporation would like to set up a marketing arms.

The review of policy concludes "there is wide agreement as to the need for a revitalised and healthy film industry, for full employment and for British films which command respect. But there is disagreement as to means. However, if the Corporation adheres to the old solutions, it will surely fail for it is these very ways and practices that have led the industry to the positions which it is now in".

#### Recent Developments

The Films Bill currently going through Parliament (May 1980) makes the following proposals with effect to the NFFC:

- The powers of the Corporation to make interest-bearing loans for the production or distribution of films are to be extended until the end of 1985.
- The NFFC is to undertake those functions now exercised by the National Film Development Fund; otherwise its brief remains unchanged.
- The Department of Trade's powers to lend the Corporation money are to be repealed.
- All existing debts to the Government are to be written off (about £13m).
- The Government is intending to make a once-and-for-all grant of £1m.

- The Corporation will be empowered to borrow up to £5m from non-government sources. Such borrowings will be approved but not guaranteed by the Government.
- Each year for the next five years, the Corporation will receive £1.5m or 20% of the Eady Levy, whichever is the greater.
- The Board of the Corporation is to be increased from six to seven.

These measures are an attempt to end the Corporation's reliance on public money. But in the past, the Corporation has needed to depend on Government funds not out of choice but because the private sector has shown no interest in investing in the kind of projects which are offered to the Corporation.

## SCREEN QUOTA

Throughout the twenties, British cinemas were being swamped with American films and the proportion of British films being shown fell to between 5-10%. In a bid to save British film production from rapidly sinking into oblivion, the Government introduced the Cinematograph Film Act of 1927 which made it obligatory for cinemas to show a proportion of British films. British is defined as:

1. Made by a British (including Commonwealth)/Republic of Ireland citizen or by a company registered, in Britain(Commonwealth)/Republic of Ireland.
2. Any studio used must be situated within the Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland - the Department of Trade can allow up to 7.5% of playing time to be filmed outside these areas in special circumstances.
3. 75% of the labour costs must be payable to British personnel - certain minor adjustments can be made.

The quota rate is reviewed annually. Although it has been changed in the past, for many years now 30% of all main features and 25% of the supporting programmes must be British.

Since 1972, when Britain joined the Common Market, films produced in member states when shown here have been counted as quota films.

Certain exemptions can be allowed - eg. when a cinema's weekly box office is less than £350. In recent years, a sizeable number of cinemas have failed to achieve their quota of first feature films. Under the Cinematograph Act, the Cinematograph Films Council can fine these cinemas and even revoke their licenses. However, the exhibitors generally argue that failure to achieve quota is due to the absence of good British films and this argument is accepted. So there are very few instances of prosecution. It is to be noticed that most of the failures occur among the independent cinemas. The main circuits are expected to fulfil their quota obligations and do so - as shown in the table below:

Statistics issued by the Department of Trade and cover 1977.

<u>Cinema Group</u>	<u>No. Screens</u>	<u>Failures to achieve 30% quota</u> <u>For first feature film</u>
Classic	119	26
EMI	268	6
Rank	267	-
Star	127	9
Others	781	140
All cinemas	1562	181

A shortage of suitable British films (and the consequent failure to achieve quota), the inclusion of EEC films and doubts as to whether the protection of a quota system is still needed led to the setting up of a sub-committee of the Cinematograph Films Council to review the situation. In 1979 it recommended the quota be suspended.

As yet the Minister for Trade has refrained from taking any action, considering further consultation with interested parties necessary. It is unlikely that the abolition of quota would have much effect on the extent to which major, foreign (ie. American) companies are prepared to make films in Britain. Although the quota has been a factor in persuading the British subsidiaries of American companies to make films here, their investment is influenced far more by the general health of the film industry in the States and the savings to be made from filming in one country rather than another. However, the potential consequences of the removal of quota on low-budget filmmaking are very serious. The producers of such films already have great difficulties in persuading companies to invest in them or take their films into distribution. Often the need to fulfil quota has been the principal motivation for companies with the requisite financial resources to back/distribute low-budget British films. The removal of quota would undoubtedly endanger the continued existence of this highly vulnerable area of production. Yet it is this area which has been responsible for some of the most interesting British films, which provides a training ground for directors, writers, etc. and most certainly warrants the maximum protection it can be offered.

Under the Films Bill currently going through Parliament (May 1980), quota is to be extended for a further five years - until the end of 1985. However, the Secretary of State for Trade is empowered to suspend quota after due consultation. The requirement which has previously limited eligibility for quota to those films with a 75% British crew/cast is to be widened to include citizens from EEC countries. This brings the legislation in line with EEC rules covering the free movement of labour within the EEC. The Films Bill also proposes that all screen performances in a complex (provided there is common ownership) should be added together for the calculation of quota. At present, exhibitors must achieve quota on each individual screen.

SECTION IV

MISCELLANEOUS

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## CHILDREN'S FILM FOUNDATION

The late Lord Rank decided if children were really to be entertained by what they saw in cinemas it would be necessary to make films specifically for them. To this end he formed in 1944 the Children's Entertainment Film Division under Mary Field. However, the scheme was never commercially viable and Rank on his own could not be expected to carry the financial burden indefinitely. So in 1951 under an agreement arrived at by all branches of the British film industry, the CFF was set up as a non-profit making organisation.

The CFF receives an annual grant from the BFFA (ie. "Eady Money") and is administered by a Board of unpaid directors drawn from the various branches of the film industry. There is one paid Executive Director, who with a small staff, looks after the day to day runnings. The films are not made by the CFF itself but by commercial film production companies which are awarded fixed price contracts.

The principal aim is to make films children will enjoy and a great deal of work is put into keeping in touch with the everchanging tastes of young audiences. Nevertheless, the basic elements of CFF films have remained fairly constant. The films feature the children themselves, usually getting caught up in all kinds of adventures and emphasis is put on action rather than dialogue. The average age of CFF audiences is 9. To ensure that seat prices fall within the reach of children's pockets, the Foundation only charges cinemas a nominal hire fee for its films which means the CFF does little more than cover its administrative costs.

Because the Foundation is treated as a special case by the industry, it is able to produce high quality films on a low budget. Laboratories, studios, equipment suppliers etc. give a special discount. Under an agreement with the unions, actors and technicians work for less than standard rates. Also many prominent film personnel are prepared to work for far less than their normal fees. Since its inauguration, the CFF has produced over 130 feature films.

The past few years have been difficult for the Corporation. Cinemas have reported a substantial drop in the audiences for children's matinees and the cinema owners' association, the CEA, has suggested that the low attendances no longer justify the continuation of these shows. A severe blow was dealt by the reduction of the CFF's annual grant from £500,000 in 1979 to £220,000 for 1980 which will necessitate a sizeable cut back in production. The CEA ban on the selling of films to television within five years of their initial cinema release eliminates the most obvious alternative source of finance. Some trade organisations, including the AIP and the ACTT, consider the Foundation can survive only by radically reassessing its basis of operation. Whilst maintaining its non-commercial standing, it could, for instance, attempt to find sponsorship or go into co-production with television. There is also a feeling that despite genuine efforts on its part the CFF has failed to keep in touch with the tastes and interests of children today; that they are staying away from matinees not only because of the greater accessibility of television, but also because they prefer the programmes television offers.

Although there is certain dissatisfaction with the present operation of the CFF, there remains strong support for the aims which led to its setting up. The CFF can play an important part in developing an early, and hopefully lifelong, interest in the cinema; attendance of matinees can accustom children to the idea of paying regular visits to the cinema.

#### EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Under Article 92 of the Treaty of Rome "Any aid granted by a member state or granted by means of state resources, in any manner whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain enterprises or certain productions shall, to the extent to which it adversely affects trade between member states, be deemed incompatible with the Common Market".

The favouring of British over community films by giving state aid to British films through the British Film Fund Agency and the National Film Finance Corporation contravenes this article. The Commission of the European Communities has announced its intention to take drastic action unless steps are taken to establish a scheme harmonising film aid throughout the EEC. However, each of the member states with a film industry has its own method of protection tailored to the particular way its industry has developed and a system of aiding which will be acceptable to them all will not be worked out quickly or easily.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACGB	Arts Council of Great Britain
ACTT	Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians
AIP	Association of Independent Producers
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BFFA	British Film Fund Agency
BFFS	British Federation of Film Societies
BFI	British Film Institute
BUFC	British Universities Film Council
CEA	Cinematograph Exhibitors* Association of Great Britain and Ireland
CFC	Cinematograph Films Council
CFF	Children's Film Foundation
CFL	Central Film Library
COI	Central Office of Information
DES	Department of Education and Science
GLG	Greater London Council
GPO	General Post Office
HFDF	National Film Development Fund
NFFC	National Film Finance Corporation
NFS	National Film School
NFT	National Film Theatre
SEFT	Society for Education in Film and Television

BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

LEAFLET D : CENSORSHIP

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## CENSORSHIP

### BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS

#### Early History

Under the 1909 Cinematograph Films Act, it became necessary for public cinemas to be licensed by their local authority. The legislation had been introduced as a safety measure as many early cinemas represented serious fire risks. However, the local authorities soon began to make broader use of their powers and refused to renew licenses of those cinemas screening films they considered unsuitable. The situation of hundreds of separate censors each with their own set of criteria and peculiarities alarmed the trade organisations. Realising they had to do something, the setting up of some form of trade censorship seemed to be the best solution. This idea received the approval of the Home Secretary who was reluctant for the Government to become involved in cinema censorship. So in November 1912 the British Board of Film Censors was established. The local authorities were at first unwilling to relinquish their power but gradually the reputation of the Board grew. The turning point in the Board's struggle for acceptance came when the Middlesex County Council and LCC made the granting of a license conditional on only showing films with a BBFC's certificate in 1920/21 respectively. There is still no statutory obligation requiring distributors to have their films censored.

#### Operation

The Board finances its own operation by charging a fee for any viewing it undertakes; this fee is related to the length of the film. Independence from any one source of finance is supposed to free the Board from a situation whereby the source can use its control of the purse strings to exert undue pressure. Consequently, the Board is seen to be impartial. The Board is jointly controlled by its President and Secretary; the former is responsible for broad, overall policy, whereas the latter has responsibility for effecting these policies. There are also four full time examiners. Vacancies are filled from a list of people who have indicated they are interested and after vetting have proved suitable.

#### General Principals

When viewing a film the Board has to take into consideration the local authorities' statutory obligation to protect children under 16. It attempts to judge whether the film is liable to "deprave and corrupt" or have an undesirable effect on its audience. Finally, it tries to assess whether there is material greatly and gratuitously offensive to a large number of people. The Board seeks to reflect in its decisions contemporary public attitudes. There is no written set of rules but each film is considered in the light of the above criteria, previous decisions and the examiner's personal judgement. Although producing some inconsistencies, it results in an intelligent and responsive system. It is now the policy of the Board not to censor anything on political grounds.

## The viewing of films and awarding of certificates

Each film has to be seen by at least two examiners. They need to make careful and detailed notes. If a film is likely to present difficulties, it is viewed by all the examiners and the Secretary; if a question of policy is involved the President also attends.

### Certificates

The awarding of certificates was introduced for the protection of children. The two categories initially devised were U (Universal) and A (Public). The Board never intended that children should be excluded from any film awarded a certificate. U simply indicated suitable for children and A more suitable for adults. However, when the LCC made the granting of a license conditional on the showing of Board certificated films, it stipulated that children under 16 could gain admission to films only if accompanied by "a parent or bona fide adult". Although unpopular with the trade, this requirement was soon adopted by other local authorities and became generally applicable.

In 1932, in response to concern voiced by the local authorities at the increasing number of horror films being shown, the H certificate was introduced. There was still no suggestion that children should be banned from such films - it was simply a warning to parents of the considered unsuitability of these films for their children.

In January 1951 following the recommendations of the Wheare Committee (set up to examine the existing censorship machinery with special regard to the admission of children) the X certificate was introduced to supplement the U and A. Any person under the age of 16 was to be refused admission to films receiving the new certificate.

By the late 60s the Board was finding the existing categories inadequate. With families staying at home to watch television, filmmakers stopped catering for this audience and the Board found itself faced with an ever-increasing number of films featuring sex and violence. Because it admitted 16 year olds, the then X was not quite an adult category. Also the censors wanted some means of differentiating between films which would be acceptable for older children but not younger ones. So after lengthy consultation with local authorities, the Home Office, the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association and other interested organizations, the following four categories (which are still in use) came into effect on 1st July 1970 -

U - Universal admission

A - Permitting the admission of children "but conveying a warning to parents that the film will contain some material they may prefer their children not to see

AA - Not permitting the admission of children of less than 14 years of age

X - Permitting the admission of persons of not less than 18 years of age

Some films fall automatically into one of these categories eg. Walt Disney or Children's Film Foundation films invariably receive a U certificate. However, quite often a film will fall between two categories; when this occurs the censor usually requests that certain sequences are removed, preferring if possible to give a less restrictive certificate. A recent example of a film being cut in order to make it accessible to a younger/wider audience is SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER which started life as an X and became an A following the removal of certain scenes. The decision to comply with the censors requests is the distributors. However, there are occasions when the distributor is informed that their film will not receive a certificate unless the cuts are made. As the distributor knows no public cinema will screen their film without a certificate, in such circumstances there is little real choice. Detailed specifications of any cuts required are sent to the distributor on an exemption slip - the Board does not make the cuts itself. Wherever possible the censor will attempt to take into account the technical problems involved. The final decision still lies with the local authority. The Greater London Council has sometimes given a GLC certificate to films turned down by the BBFC. There are also cases of films having been passed by the Board and then banned by individual local authorities; this happened with THE DEVILS and more recently, THE WARRIORS. Newsreels are exempt from censorship. The Cinematograph Film Act did not cover the private screenings of films: club cinemas can show films to members without their having to be passed by the Board.

#### Other activities

In 1976, the Board started publishing a monthly bulletin to which trade organisations and local authorities can subscribe, giving its views of the films it has seen. In order to keep in step with current public attitudes the Board makes a serious effort to find out what they are - it liaises with various groups, studies recent research. Comparisons are made with other media. Members of the Board attend public meetings.

#### Criticisms

Inevitably, the BBFC attracts an assortment of criticisms; some areas of criticism are listed below:

It is condemned both for being over-permissive and for failing to reflect the more tolerant attitudes of society today. The Board has been criticised for being over-prurient as regards sex while letting through viciously violent films.

There exists some dissatisfaction with the present composition of the Board. Rather than a body of "amateurs" who have to rely on acquiring expertise in the course of their work, it is felt that new members should already have or be required to undergo some form of professional training - in psychology, the law, etc. This would better enable them to judge the possible effects of what they are viewing and the implications of their decisions.

Misgivings are held, even by those who accept the need for censorship, over the way the Board operates. Its closed door policy

is incompatible with the open, democratic society we are supposed to have. The public has no influence over who are chosen to be censors; vacancies are not advertised. The Board has no obligation to explain its decisions; it is not required to declare on its certificates that so many feet have been cut. Subscription to its bulletin is not available to members of the general public.

An examination of past decisions made by the Board does not provide any justification for its future existences. In the twenties the Board imposed so many vetoes, it must have required great ingenuity to devise a plot which did not infringe one of its restrictions. Films which have caused major controversies in the past and have been refused a certificate frequently seem in retrospect quite innocuous.

Many consider the validity of the BBFC is seriously reduced by power continuing to reside with the local authorities (and their subsequent ability to ignore at will the Board's recommendations). The qualities which make a good councillor are not necessarily those which make a good censor. This, together with their relative inexperience in dealing with films often results in their attempts to go solo being ill-advised - inviting ridicule and bringing the entire system of censorship into disrepute.

Members of the Board are on the whole drawn from "the establishment" ie. those in tune with the existing order and its values. Yet the extent to which the censor can understand and identify with any film he is viewing will strongly affect his ability to treat it sympathetically. Although overt political censorship may occur very rarely these days, the censor's own predispositions incline him to pass films which reflect the values he holds and reject those which do not. It has been argued an inherent characteristic of censorship is that it will maintain and re-inforce the dominant values of a particular society.

One of the declared aims of the Board is to save the public from material which is likely to corrupt. It is, of course, assumed that the censors themselves will not be corrupted by what they see, that they possess an immunity absent in the average cinemagoer. Many find such assumptions patronising and are disinclined to accept this view of their moral inferiority.

The notoriety gained from being banned can often give an allure to what otherwise would, be of little interest. Also, people invariably find some way of getting round rules eg. club cinemas, home video.

Admittedly children might need protecting. However, given no indisputable proof has ever been produced to show that films do corrupt, adults not only are quite capable of making their own decisions but have every right to do so. By denying access to material, the censor is limiting the individual's freedom to choose and forming a barrier to the free circulation of ideas.

There are those who though not worried by the Board's present amendments or cuts, which are largely confined to sexploitation and gratuitously violent films, do worry about the potential misuse of

the censor's powers. Once such powers exist, no matter how moderate their current usage, there is no way of guaranteeing they will not be more widely applied in the future. Rather than take this risk they would prefer to put up with the screenings in public cinemas of films they find distasteful.

#### THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACT 1959

Up to 1977, films came under the jurisdiction of Common Law. However, in that year the Obscene Publication Act of 1959, which had previously only covered printed material, was amended to include the showing, projecting and distribution of films. Its terms of reference are anything which "tends to deprave or corrupt". Films can be defended on the basis of "public good" ie. a film can be justified in the interest of drama or any other art or literature and learning. It also requires the bringing of prosecution to have the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Club cinemas which put on private screenings for members only and therefore are not required to submit films to the BBFC can be prosecuted under this Act. It has also served to protect distributors. Formerly organisations such as the Festival of Light were bringing private prosecutions - as entitled under common law - against films which had often been passed by the BBFC. These prosecutions invariably failed, but they did cause distributors considerable aggravation.

#### THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT 1978

The Act makes it an offence to take, distribute or show indecent photographs of children under 16. Indecent is taken as that which offends recognised standards of propriety.

Films are also covered by the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 which prohibits the importation of indecent or obscene films and the Post Office Act of 1953 which makes it illegal to post indecent or obscene films.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON OBSCENITY AND FILM CENSORSHIP  
CHAIRMAN: BERNARD WILLIAMS

The Williams Committee was appointed on 15th July 1977 "to review the laws concerning obscenity, indecency and violence in publications, displays and entertainments in England and Wales, except in the field of broadcasting, and to review the arrangements for film censorship in England and Wales; and to make recommendations", by the then Home Secretary. The Report of this Committee was presented to Parliament in November 1979.

The Committee reached the following conclusions:

- The current definitions of pornography such as "indecent", "obscene" and "tendency to deprave and corrupt" have outlived their usefulness and are no longer taken as guidelines by the courts. A multiplicity of often overlapping statutes and common law rulings makes the present law a mess. Quite beyond any minor repairs, it needs to be totally scrapped and replaced by a comprehensive and rationalised set of statutes.
- No irrefutable proof can be produced to show that pornography in itself has any harmful effects on adults. Consequently, there is no reason why such material should not be freely available to those adults who want it. The Committee recognises the need to protect children who lack the necessary maturity to deal with pornography and agreed that it should continue to be unavailable to children. Also, there should be a total ban on material which sexually exploits children under 16 (who are too young to properly consent) or involves the inflicting of physical injury. Although the Committee in general was against the need to censor material, because film was found to be "a uniquely powerful instrument" capable of producing "an impact which no other medium can create" it should continue to be subject to censorship.
- Although not harmful, many people find pornography "deeply offensive". Hence, the main objective of the new law should be to protect the public from offensive material in "places where normal life happens to take them".

The major recommendations specifically covering film were as follows:

- Censorship no longer to be based on local authorities. These would lose their powers to ban any film which receives a certificate.
- A statutory board should be set up which combines the current powers of the local authorities and the work of the British Board of Film Censors.
- The new body should be known as the Film Examining Board and should have 12 members drawn from the film industry, local government and other relevant areas.
- Any film shown for a profit must have a certificate.

- Six new censorship categories to be used in order to give the censor more flexibility in assessing films:

U - suitable for all ages

11A - children under the age of eleven should be accompanied by a responsible adult

16 - no person under the age of 16 to be admitted

18 - no person under the age of 18 to be admitted

18R - for restricted exhibition. No person under the age of 18 to be admitted.

Certificate Refused - film either contravenes the law or the treatment of sex, violence and crime unacceptable even for restricted showing.

- A film classified as restricted to be shown for gain only in a cinema designated by the local cinema licensing authority as suitable for the showing of such films. The 18R category will include many films which currently fail to get certificates and tend to be shown in cinema clubs.
- When exhibiting a restricted film there should be no pictorial display outside the cinema or visible from the outside.
- No film to be refused entry into the country without prior consultation with the Film Examining Board.
- No proceedings to be instigated against a film other than by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Government will now consider these recommendations and confer with interested organisations etc. It is by no means automatic that all or any suggestions made will be accepted. As pornography and censorship are not high priority issues, the Report is unlikely to be allotted, any Parliamentary time in the near future.

#### ABBREVIATIONS USED

BBFC British Board of Film Censors

GLC Greater London Council

LCC London County Council

BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

LEAFLET E : PRODUCTION

NB SOME OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS NO LONGER CURRENT, AND IS INCLUDED  
ONLY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## GENERAL BACKGROUND TO PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION IN BRITAIN

Within a matter of years of the first public screenings in the mid 1890s, people were going to film shows in large numbers. Within a couple of decades, film had emerged as the most popular form of mass entertainment with millions visiting the cinema every week.

("The History of the British Film" by Rachael Low covers in detail the early development of the film industry in Britain)

### THE AMERICANS

Many consider the most important influence operating on the film industry in Britain is that of the American companies. In recent years, they have provided between 70%-90% of the finance invested in British productions. With the exception of Rank, EMI (now part of Columbia/EMI/Warner) and ITC, all the major distributors are American. The majority of the films shown here, and certainly the biggest box-office draws, are all American. Indeed, British production has never been large enough to keep British cinema screens fully occupied and exhibitors are dependent on the American companies for a constant supply.

The American companies first managed to establish a footing here during World War 1 which halted production not only in Britain but all over Europe. As there was no alternative source, American films were gratefully welcomed by cinema owners. Probably the war only served to accelerate and facilitate the American takeover, a process which would have occurred in any case. Audiences were already showing a preference for foreign films - French, Danish, Italian, German as well as American - and the US industry has certain advantages which make it very difficult for British films to compete on an equal footing. American films can generally recoup their costs from the home market and because it is not necessary to make arrangements for marketing overseas can also cover costs rather more quickly than British films can. Because they are able to call on large financial resources - the average weekly attendance in the USA between 1930-1950 was over 80m - American companies are able to spend sufficient money at least to ensure that their films are quality, polished products. Although this does not in itself guarantee success, it does increase the odds in favour of their being so. Moreover, the quality of these films makes them attractive to audiences in other countries, such as Britain, whose home industries, lacking equivalent financial backing, are unable to produce such films. Once a preference has been established, it benefits from an inbuilt reinforcing mechanism. If an audience has a choice between a film with a well-known star from a company with a reputation for making enjoyable films and an unknown quantity, they will understandably go for the former. The corollary of this is low audiences for British films; yet the less they earn, the less can be re-invested and this is bound to adversely effect the quality of future productions...

Although not necessary for the survival of the American industry, combined overseas sales are quite considerable. Even Britain (which accounts for between 4%-5% of world sales) provides sufficient an incentive for the Americans to protect their lion's share of the market here.

#### THE DUOPOLY

The British film industry has never operated on the kind of scale to be found in the USA. There tends to be a proliferation of small companies which limit their operations to one branch of the industry. This makes it very easy for any company with large financial resources (at least by British standards) and the inclination to involve itself in the film industry, to dominate. From the thirties, the home-based industry has revolved around two companies - presently in the form of Rank and EMI. These two companies are collectively referred to as the duopoly. Until recently they have been the only British companies concerned with distribution, exhibition and production. Indeed, they alone have had the necessary finances to embark on a sustained programme of production.

As has been mentioned in the previous sections British films have a small home market to draw on; for instance, in 1977 only 103 million cinema tickets were sold in Britain as opposed to one billion in the USA. If a producer stays within the limits of a budget which can be recovered from distribution in Britain, he risks ending up with a product unattractive to audiences which will be by-passed in favour of American films. This factor, plus the lure of huge profits to be made if a film is a worldwide success, has prompted the British majors to pursue success in the international market (particularly the USA) at the expense of jettisoning any possibility of recovering costs at home. Yet such policies have often resulted in financial disaster eg. Balcon at Gaumont British in the thirties, Rank in the late forties. Although money was lavished on production quite often the wrong project was chosen. The producer frequently ended up with films full of spectacle and production values but very little else, failing to interest either audiences or critics. In the attempt to straddle two cultures, they fell between the two. But even those films which were of interest failed to get through the checks and hindrances set up by the US film industry. The expense of establishing marketing units overseas, plus the costs of making large numbers of prints, advertising, etc. managed to eat up any profits which were made. Those "British" films which have been successful in the USA on closer examination invariably turn out to be financed by American money. Repeated experiences of unsuccessful production ventures, the large nature of losses unsuccessful production now entails and the drastic contraction in the size of the film industry since the fifties has made the British majors very wary of future commitments in this area. Rank has just announced its total withdrawal from filmmaking. EMI seem to be concentrating on backing American productions being filmed in the USA eg. THE DEER HUNTER, HONKY TONK FREEWAY and THE JAZZ SINGER.

That these companies continue to exert a strong influence today is largely a result of their control of exhibition. Between them, they account for 37% of the cinemas and 50% of audiences. Not only does this guarantee them a choice of the most successful films but no British film can hope to cover its costs from the home market unless it gets a circuit release.

The ascendancy of these companies does not go unchallenged. Recent years have seen the emergence of Lord Grade's ACC which also involves itself in all three branches of the industry and has large financial resources to call on. ACC has been going for the international market and has invested large sums in production but as yet has not acquired substantial cinema holdings.

#### INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS

There has always been a strong tradition of independent production in Britain and this sector has been responsible for many of the best known British films. The films from the independents tend to be low-budget/medium budget productions which are principally aimed at the home market and have a more British flavour than those of the British majors. Independent producers do not generally have the necessary funds to finance their own projects and rely on being able to persuade some outside party to do so. The British distribution branches of the American companies (so they can fulfil quota obligations) have been one source of finance. At the end of the forties, the Government bank, the National Film Finance Corporation, was set up with the aim of making loans to independent producers. Yet, except for a short period in the mid-thirties, following the phenomenal success of Korda's *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII*, financial institutions have been extremely reluctant to involve themselves with independent filmmaking. Despite an international trend towards independent production, those producers who are trying to make more serious British films are finding it increasingly difficult to raise finances. Although, multi-million dollar spectaculars can still play to full houses, all too often it is medium/low budget films which fail to lure people away from their television sets and many interesting, well-made British films fail to attract the audiences they deserve. A greater proportion of the cinemas which have closed since the appearance of television were the ones which used to show films made by the independents. Since the demise of British Lion, there has been no distribution company which has been particularly ready to handle the films produced by this sector.

#### NO STUDIO SYSTEM

Despite strong American influence, the structure of the film industry in Britain has never mirrored that of Hollywood ie. a studio system with one company being based at a particular studio with artists, technicians etc. on contract. Although there have been brief periods when American companies have taken over a British studio and in a blaze of publicity announced their intention to make a series of prestige films eg. Warners at Teddington and MGM at Boreham Wood, such activity was generally in response to mounting criticism and to forestall Government intervention and rapidly petered out once it had served its purpose. The US majors, though forced to invest in British production by the Quota Act of 1927, had

no intention of setting up satellites here which might one day rival the parent companies, preferring instead to make the necessary finance available to independent producers. There are some instances of British companies setting up studios on the American style. Rank at Pinewood, Korda at Denham. But the economics of a studio system demand constant productions - artists, technicians, etc. have to be paid for regardless of whether they are being used and there never really existed the necessary demand for British films to justify such a basis of operation. The dramatic decline in the demand for films from the fifties onwards marked the end of any such efforts.

#### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

Various factors have persuaded Governments of the need to provide some form of protection for the film industry in Britain - lobbying by parties involved, the degree of interest evinced by the general public in all matters relating to cinema and the immense cultural and propaganda potential of films. The Moyne Report (1935) stated "Film...undoubtedly is a most important factor in the education of all classes of the community, in the spread of national culture and in the presenting of national ideas and customs to the world". The principal forms of Government involvement in the film industry are covered in Leaflet C: Government and Related Organizations. (Page 24)

## THE RAISING OF FINANCE

Producers rarely have the necessary finance to back their own projects - especially in these days of spiralling budgets when it is difficult to make a commercial film for under half a million pounds and the multi-million pound extravaganza such as A BRIDGE TOO FAR and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is becoming fairly commonplace.

### PUTTING A PACKAGE TOGETHER

Before approaching any prospective sources of finance, the producer should have a fully worked out project; this includes story rights - and preferably a script - a director, a list of leading players, budget estimates and a shooting schedule. If a producer uses his own funds, it is usually at this pre-production stage. Since 1975 loans have been available to producers from the National Film Development Fund for the development of potentially good ideas. Although financiers require quite detailed preparation on the part of the producers they do not automatically accept the producer's conception of his project and may demand changes in the script, cast, etc.

### THE ROLE OF THE DISTRIBUTOR

The principal source of finance is usually one of the distribution companies. A producer with a good track record and an attractive package will have little difficulty in getting a backer. In the boom days of the late sixties, it was not exceptional for a distributor to provide 100% of the necessary finance. However, the following trends are making this practice rare. Films are increasingly either hitting the jackpot or flopping altogether, with far fewer films making a moderate profit. This has resulted in a higher percentage of films failing to cover their costs. With escalating budgets when an unsuccessful film can mean the loss of millions of pounds, distributors prefer to spread the risk somewhat. So distributors generally put up about 70% of the budget. A contract is drawn up giving them exclusive distribution rights, plus a percentage of any profits. The producer is paid a fee; this is the only payment he is likely to receive for some considerable period of time and if a film is unsuccessful the fee is all he gets. The distributor's contribution is known as "front money". It is then up to the producer to find the additional finance necessary - the "end money" (called this because the provider of "end money" is always the last investor to get any return on-his-investment),

### SOURCES OF "END MONEY"

In the past, the Government bank, the National Film Finance Corporation, has been the most usual provider of "end money". But shortage of funds and changing investment policies mean the Corporation is no longer the automatic source it used to be. Companies such as Faberge and Readers Digest, whose main interests are in other areas, make the occasional sortie into filmmaking. The producer can try selling the distribution rights in other countries - although if the distributor backing him is internationally based, this option will not be open to him. He can also pre-sell the television rights. Occasionally, the producer has financial resources of his own. He may be able to cut down the amount of cash

required by persuading personnel involved in the making of the film eg. stars, writers, director, to accept a smaller fee in return for a percentage of the profits. Due to the high failure rate of films and the slow return of any profits, this practice is not very common.

#### ROLE OF THE BANKS

In the first instance, distributors rarely provide money directly. Instead, they give the producer a note guaranteeing repayment of the sum estimated as being necessary for the filming of a particular project. On the strength of this guarantee, the producer then borrows money from a bank. The banks themselves are not prepared to take on the role of film speculator. They advance money for filmmaking on exactly the same principals as they would advance money for any other commercial concern. In view of the highly risky nature of filmmaking the prospect of revenues sometime in the future is inadequate security for the banks. They will advance money only if they have an undertaking from some source with the necessary funds that the loan will be repayed.

#### COMPLETION GUARANTEE

The biggest losses have resulted from a film running over schedule or for some reason failing to be completed. Consequently, the distributor will often make his contribution contingent on the producer being able to find somebody who will guarantee completion i.e. provide any extra money should the film go over the estimated budget. There are companies which specialise in the providing of completion guarantees and they frequently require a steep fee and a percentage of the profits.

## THE DIVISION OF BOX OFFICE TAKINGS

### CINEMA

After deducting Eady Levy and VAT, the remaining sum is divided up between the exhibitor and the distributor. The percentage to be kept by either party is open to negotiation, but the average works out about two-thirds/one-third for the exhibitor/distributor respectively. Agreements normally incorporate a sliding scale with the higher the takings, the higher the percentage going to the distributor. With films which are obviously going to be extremely successful, distributors have been known to ask for and get far more than their usual third.

### DISTRIBUTOR

The money paid to the distributor is known as the distributor's gross (DG). A percentage - around 30% - of all returns is taken by the distributor as a fee for his services. He will also deduct the distribution costs. These include laboratory costs for making negatives and prints, advertising (probably the highest single item, dubbing, censorship, registration and insurances. The average amount taken up by these is between 20%-25% of the DG. However, a specific sum is spent on these items and if a film fails to draw good audiences they can swallow up a far larger percentage. The distributor will not be prepared to pass any money to the producer until he has fully re-imbursed himself for any such expenditure incurred.

Many producers feel that too large a share of the DG is kept by the distributor and there is too long a delay before money starts trickling through to them. The distributors argue they have to build a good profit margin into their operation to cover the day to day running of a company and to repay all the loans they have guaranteed on films which fail to recover their costs at the box-office. The distributor also has to make sure he has the necessary funds to finance his next year's productions. However, producers likewise require some means of financing new projects. More recently some producers have been able to persuade distributors to share the DG (after the percentage fee has been deducted) from the first pound received from the exhibitor. But it is really only the producers with the more obviously commercial films which are going to earn good profits who can demand this. Those worse affected (ie. the producers of medium/low budget films) by the present system of dividing up box office takings are in no position to bargain for better terms. Their films do not earn large sums of money and fairly often most of what they do earn is kept by the distributor "to cover expenses".

## PRODUCER

The producer's share must first be used to pay back the money loaned by the banks plus whatever interest has accrued. It is only when this has been achieved that a film goes into profit. There is always a considerable period of time between a film being made and its going into profit. Barry Spikings, head of EMI productions, has stated it takes about 5 years before EMI films reach this stage.

Any profits are divided up between the producer and the distributor (this time in his guise as a backer). How the money is shared depends very much on the relative strengths of the two parties, with the distributor getting between 50%-75%. Out of his share the producer has to account for any other backers such as the completion guarantor or directors, or stars, promised a percentage of the profits.

## THE NON-EMERGENCE OF AN INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY

The problem which has always faced the British film industry is how to ensure continuity of production - filmmaking seems to lurch from one crisis to another. Recently, large sums have been injected into production in Britain by the filming here of multi-million dollar spectacles - STAR WARS, SUPERMAN, etc. - financed by American companies. Although any such investment is to be welcomed as it provides employment for British technicians, actors, etc. it does not offer stability. Foreign companies have no obligation or commitment to production on a long term basis and it would be quite dangerous to become reliant on their continued presence. These companies are prepared to make films in Britain only while it is economically advantageous to do so. Any sudden withdrawal, as occurred in the early seventies, has a devastating effect, with the industry being geared up for large scale production and no alternative source of funds existing.

Many feel that the existence of a healthy, home-based industry is an essential pre-requisite for any kind of stability of production in Britain. But if such an industry was unable to establish itself when cinema-going was at its peak, the chances of doing so now would seem to be increasingly remote. Perhaps any attempt to build an imitation Hollywood, making slick, glossy films would be doomed to failure. The necessary capital outlay is not available in Britain and the Americans have repeatedly demonstrated they can make the kinds of films with which Hollywood is associated better than anyone else. However, it is felt that there is room for an industry making "British" films ie. films which try to identify with British audiences by reflecting on the screen something they can recognise from personal experience.

The arguments to make in favour of an indigenous industry are not just economic ones. Although no longer the form of mass entertainment, film can still be an important means of reflecting national culture, and there should be some means of guaranteeing that films which do so are made. Some feel that the source of money will inevitably affect the nature of a production. Consequently, if there is to be a truly British film, it must be financed by British money.

Although the strong US presence in Britain has not helped the emergence of an indigenous production industry, the two are not incompatible. Quite often responsibility for the absence of an indigenous industry has been laid at the door of the two British majors. The reasons for this view as put forward by independent filmmakers, journalists, filmwriters, unions and others involved in the film industry are outlined in the following paragraphs.

### DUOPOLY AND PRODUCTION

For a number of years investment by Rank and EMI in British production has been at a very low level (and an ever decreasing one). Most film companies do not have the necessary resources to finance their own projects, so understandably resentment is caused when those which have the capacity to inject sizeable sums into filmmaking refrain from doing so. As the duopoly's resources are

partly the result of substantial profits made from the exhibition and distribution of films, resentment has been sharpened by their unwillingness to put money back into making the product on which these profits depend.

According to Rank and EMI this withdrawal from production has been necessitated by the unprofitability of previous involvement. But British films are not inherently unsuccessful and losses have often been the result of ill-advised investment policies. Although those films which are made principally for the home market such as CARRY ONs or TV spin-offs are successful, the majors, on the whole have not been prepared to extend their backing to films which deal with social issues, cover a topic with any degree of realism, look at areas of conflict in British society, etc. Such films have always been dismissed as being strictly for minority audiences and consequently uncommercial. As the greatest losses have been made on those big-budget films aimed at the international market and chosen because they were judged to be commercial, serious doubts have been raised as to the competence of the majors to assess commerciality. The British companies certainly seem to lack the flair of their American counterparts for spotting box-office potential in films such as KRAMER Vs KRAMER or MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN which at first glance are not the blockbusters they subsequently turned out to be, and then being prepared to back their hunches by providing the kind of back-up which will put the films across. (In fairness to the British companies, it must be pointed out the Americans do have a far larger annual investment programme, so they can better afford the occasional experiment and better absorb the odd loss). In the few instances where the British majors have been persuaded to finance something a little more adventurous than their norm, they have often destroyed any chance such films might have of financial success by allowing them to languish on distributor's shelves or giving them a partial and unsupported release.

Although the duopoly has made losses from filmmaking, these have been exaggerated by the methods of accounting these two companies employ. A film which does not cover its costs from fees paid to the production branch is classified as a loss with no account being taken of any money earned in the area of distribution and exhibition.

The critics of the British majors accuse them of consistently failing to fulfil the obligations their position in the industry places on them and of being quite content to point to the unprofitability of production as this leaves them free to restrict their activities to the exhibition of American films.

#### THE DUOPOLY AND THE AMERICANS

For Rank and EMI there are some obvious advantages to be gained from showing American films on their circuits. These have a far better box-office record than British films; the circuits are guaranteed a constant supply of films and the two British companies are not required to put any of their own money at risk by involving themselves in production. The Americans find their operations in Britain greatly simplified by only having to deal with a single

company to obtain a nationwide release. This partnership, however, is not so advantageous for British audiences and filmmakers. Most of the American companies come to informal agreements with the circuits whereby in return for some of their more lucrative films, some of their less attractive ones will be given a releases. So screen time is taken up by inferior American films when producers of interesting British films are having difficulties in getting their films shown.

Furthermore both Rank and EMI are quite aware of their dependence on the American distributors. They do not want to antagonise their principal and most profitable source of supply by giving the impression they are trying to compete with these companies in the area of production. This serves to re-inforce their already existing inclination not to involve themselves in filmmaking. If there did not exist the connection between exhibition and production, it would not be possible for such underlying pressures to operate.

#### DUOPOLY AND THE INDEPENDENTS

If the production policies of the British majors have seriously hampered the growth of an indigenous film industry, their reluctance to exhibit the films of the independent sector has had equal if not more serious ramifications. In Britain, a booking on one of the main circuits is essential for the financial success of any feature. Commercial filmmaking is expensive and at the best of times risky; no one wants the losses failure to get a circuit booking makes inevitable, so the booking policies of the circuits are going to strongly influence any prospective backer's willingness to finance a project.

The kinds of films the majors are reluctant to book are precisely the same kinds of films they are reluctant to make themselves. They defend their policies on the grounds that their primary responsibility is to their shareholders and not to independent filmmakers; as such they must base their decision whether or not to book a film on their assessment of its audience drawing power. But many feel the circuits underestimate their audiences and in the past the ability of British films to attract audiences has been badly affected by their being put out at unfavourable times without the necessary publicity campaign to back them up. Also the twinning and tripling of cinemas now make it possible to successfully release films which do only have a limited appeal.

Filmmakers believe if their films were given proper access to audiences they would cover their costs but the circuits are reluctant to take British independent films because the profits earned from them are much lower than those American films provide, so, at present, the circuits are operating as a barrier between British films and their audiences.

## GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

As the managers of both Rank and EMI are responsible to their shareholders for the running of these companies, it is unlikely they would voluntarily undertake changes in policy which would result in heavy losses for quite some time for this is precisely what any commitment to the making and showing of "British" films would mean. Also it is highly unlikely that such an undertaking would be sufficient in itself. All other countries which have a successful, indigenous film industry still require some form of continuous government assistance, and it is improbable Britain would be an exception. But equally, many are convinced that without accompanying changes in the structure of the British film industry, any government help would be futile. Listed below are some proposals for government intervention which have been made by various sources:

### Subsidies to Producers

Although pouring billions into British Steel, British Leyland, Fords etc. since 1951 when the National Film Finance Corporation was set up, there have been no sizeable subsidies for filmmaking. While not ignoring the need to attract audiences, the quality of any prospective project should be the principal criterion for making loans available.

### Break-Up of the Circuits

Unless the Government took steps to deal with the problems of exhibition, any money put into production would be lost as the films would not be widely shown. One solution advocated is the break-up of the circuits into groups of 50-40 cinemas which would include present first and second run houses. It is argued this would lead to greater competition. Smaller units would result in greater care being taken with programming the needs of individual cinemas and experience has shown this can considerably increase the size of audiences. Hopefully, there would be more flexible and adventurous booking policies. Moreover, filmmakers would no longer be in the onerous position whereby they are totally dependent on their film being picked up by one of the two circuits. It is unlikely there would be any marked drop in the demand for American films but allowance would be made for interest in other kinds of films.

BUDGET SUMMARY: A BRITISH FILM OF THE MID-THIRTIES

	£	S	d
<u>STORY AND SCENARIO</u>	3,310	1	7
<u>PRODUCER AND COMPOSER</u>	6,050	0	0
<u>PRODUCTION STAFF SALARIES</u>	1,542	14	11
Covers production manager, assistant, directors, Continuity clerk, cameramen and operators			
<u>LEADING ARTISTS</u>	3,650	0	0
<u>SUPPORTING ARTISTS</u>	2,500	9	0
<u>CROWDS</u>	1,131	7	6
<u>MUSIC, COMPOSER AND MUSICIANS</u>	621	14	6
<u>SETS</u>	2,673	14	1
Covers wages for painterse, platerers, art director and assistants, carpenters and asistants.			
<u>SETS - materials</u>	1,145	5	10
<u>ELECTRICITY</u>	2,015	19	7
Covers set lighting and electricians wages			
<u>PROPERTIES</u>	903	12	11
Covers hire, purchase and wages			
<u>WARDROBE</u>	107	17	3
Covers hire, purchase and wages			
<u>STILLS</u>	72	5	6
Covers wages of photographers, processors and materials			
<u>MAKE-UP AND HAIRDRESSING</u>	460	0	10
Covers wages and materials			
<u>FILM</u>	3,354	1	4
Covers raw and mute stock/processing			
<u>EDITING</u>	782	18	7
<u>PUBLICITY</u>		18	6
<u>STUDIO RENT</u>	5,395	0	0
<u>RE-RECORDING THEATRE</u>	400	0	0
<u>ROYALTIES</u>	480	0	0
<u>GENERAL TRANSPORT AND TRAVELLING</u>	300	2	0
<u>INSURANCES</u>	686	13	1
<u>MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES</u>	327	2	0
Covers sundry hires, hotel and catering, telephones...			
	37,911	19	0
Overheads 10%	3,791	3	11
<u>TOTAL</u>	£41,703	2	11

BUDGET SUMMARY: A BRITISH FILM OF THE FIFTIES

	£
<u>STORY AND SCENARIO</u>	7,500
<u>PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR</u>	8,000
<u>PRODUCTION UNIT</u>	4,100
<u>CAMERA WORK</u>	3,300
<u>STARS</u>	12,500
<u>SUPPORTING ARTISTS</u>	12,500
<u>CROWDS</u>	5,000
<u>MUSIC, COMPOSER AND MUSICIANS</u>	3,100
<u>SETS</u>	17,700
<u>ELECTRICITY</u> (WAGES AND SET LIGHTING)	7,500
<u>PROPERTY</u> (HIRE AND PURCHASE AND WAGES)	4,200
<u>WARDROBE</u>	3,200
<u>MAKE-UP AND HAIRDRESSING</u>	1,775
<u>FILM</u> - (MUTE AND RAW STOCK AND PROCESSING)	8,600
<u>EDITING</u>	2,400
<u>HIRE OF EQUIPMENT</u>	2,200
<u>HOTELS, CATERING, TRANSPORT AND TRAVELLING</u>	4,350
<u>SOUND CREW</u>	2,100
<u>ACCOUNTANCY, STILLs, ROYALTIES AND MISC.</u>	3,090
<u>STUDIO RENT</u>	15,000
<u>INSURANCES</u>	3,100
<u>CONTINGENCY RESERVE</u>	5,000
	<hr/>
Overheads 10%	£136,215
	£13,621
	<hr/>
<u>TOTAL</u>	£149,836

BUDGET SUMMARY: A BRITISH FILM OF THE LATE SEVENTIES

	£
<u>STORY AND SCRIPT</u>	23,000
<u>PRODUCER</u>	40,000
<u>DIRECTOR</u>	40,000
<u>LEADING ARTISTS</u>	265,450
<u>PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT AND SECRETARIES</u>	42,368
Covers location manager, assistant to producer, runners	
<u>ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AND CONTINUITY</u>	23,712
<u>TECHNICAL ADVISORS</u>	3,420
<u>CAMERA CREWS</u>	40,475
Covers lighting cameraman, camera operators, focus pullers clappers/loaders	
<u>SOUND CREWS</u>	33,938
Covers mixers, operators, boom operator and assistant, post synchronising and dubbing staff	
<u>EDITING STAFF</u>	40,219
Covers editor, assistant editors, dubbing editor and assistants, dialogue editor	
<u>WARDROBE STAFF</u>	20,184
Covers designer, wardrobe mistress and assistants	
<u>MAKE-UP ARTISTS</u>	11,650
<u>HAIRDRESSERS</u>	6,100
<u>CASTING</u>	6,900
<u>PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANCY</u>	30,300
<u>PROJECTIONIST</u>	1,700
<u>MISC. STUDIO STAFF</u>	6,800
<u>ART DEPT. SALARIES</u>	44,763
Covers production designer, art director and draughtsmen, construction manager, scenic artists	
<u>SUPPORTING ARTISTS</u>	70,000
<u>CROWDS, STAND-INS, STUNTMEN</u>	69,383
<u>MUSIC</u>	28,920
Covers composer, musical director, musicians	
<u>COSTUMES</u> - hire and purchase	12,000
<u>MISC. PRODUCTION STORES</u>	7,500
Covers make-up, hairdressing equipment, art dept. equipment	
<u>FILM STOCK AND LABORATORY CHARGES</u>	96,827
Covers negative stock, developing, printing	
<u>STUDIO RENT</u>	41,100
Covers stages, offices, dubbing theatre, cutting rooms	
<u>EQUIPMENT</u>	81,450
Covers cameras, lenses, cranes, lamps, cables, generators, booms, tapes recorders (hire of)	

<u>ELECTRICITY</u>	2,450
<u>TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL</u>	122,413
Covers cost of moving unit, cast and equipment to locations, petrol, hire of drivers, coaches, vans, cars, caravans, fares of visiting artists and technicians	
<u>HOTEL AND LIVING EXPENSES</u>	120,061
Covers hotel accomodation for unit and artistes on location,catering, various living expenses	
<u>INSURANCE</u>	46,000
<u>SOCIAL SECURITY</u>	54,000
<u>PUBLICITY</u>	28,500
Covers publicist, assistant, stills	
<u>MISC. EXPENSES</u>	26,200
Covers medical fees, telephones, Film Producers Assoc. fees	
<u>SETS AND MODELS</u>	
A) CONSTRUCTION - LABOUR-	47,444
Covers carpenters, painters, riggers	
B) CONSTRUCTION - MATERIALS	17,000
C) DRESSING, OPERATING, STRIKING	50,127
<u>LIGHTING AND LAMP SPOTTING OF SETS</u>	35,200
Covers gaffer, best boy, electricians, generator operator	
<u>PROPERTIES</u>	45,600
Covers hire and purchase	
<u>SPECIAL EFFECTS</u>	11,500
Covers labour and materials	
<u>SPECIAL LOCATION FACILITIES</u>	20,000
Covers local permits, allowances for damage, police/security	
	£1,714,654
Overheads - approx. 10%	£171,465
Covers legal fees, bank interest, completion guarantee	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>£1,886,119</u>