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# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library announces the acquisition of thirteen British documentary films, produced in England during the past three years. These will be circulated throughout the country by the Film Library as examples of a new method of film technique that is opening up a fresh field for the motion picture---the function of social analysis. Since 1925, fact films dramatizing the daily life, work, and environment of ordinary citizens have been made by several countries, notably Russia, France, and Germany. America, which developed the forerunners of the documentary film such as Nanook, Grass, and Moana, has been slower to use the fact film as a social document, although The Plough That Broke The Plains, issued in 1936 by the Resettlement Administration, and "The March of Time", which dramatizes news events and social conditions, are noteworthy examples of this type.) It is in England, however, that the production of documentary films has been most highly developed as a form of social comment.

The British documentary films acquired by the Film Library have been brought here by Paul Rotha, a leader in the movement in England. Of these films Mr. Rotha says: "The first British documentary, John Grierson's Drifters, was a factual yet dramatic picture of the North Sea fishing fleets. The increasing interest in public affairs in England since the depression has created a new and popular field for the documentary film, the field of social analysis. While unemployment, trade, education, transportation, and communication have been discussed in Parliament and the press, the living fact of each has been brought to the screen, making audiences conscious of their vital concern in contemporary problems.

"Financed by Government Departments, subsidized by industry and public services, these films plead for recognition of the duty of cooperation which is the first necessity of a modern democratic civilization. Concerned with the special problems of our country, British documentaries have not hitherto been exported to the United States. The interest of American educational leaders in those recently brought here indicates that they will create widespread interest in the United States."

The British documentary films acquired by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library are as follows:

AIR OUTPOST (1936-37). Production, Paul Rotha. Direction, John Taylor and Ralph Keene. Made by the Strand Film Company for Imperial Airways.

Along the British Empire air-routes are landing grounds for night stops. This picture shows the arrival and departure of an air-liner at the town of Sharjah on the Persian Gulf. The film is one of a series made about the England Australia air-route. (Two reels).

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL (1937). Production, John Grierson. Direction, Basil Wright. Made by Realist Film Unit for the Gas Industry.

This film reviews the whole system of public education in England which is forming the citizens of tomorrow. It shows the best and worst sides of the schools and presents the facts of the problem to the public. (Three reels).

ENOUGH TO EAT? (1936). Direction, Edgar Anstey. Made for the Gas Industry.

The nutrition problem is a matter of vital social importance not only to Britain but to the world. This film presents an analysis into the dangers of malnutrition and what foods are necessary for healthy, modern living. (Three reels).

EASTERN VALLEY (1937). Production, Paul Rotha and Stuart Legg. Direction, Donald Alexander. Made by the Strand Film Company for the Subsistence Production Scheme.

The study of a co-operative subsistence scheme to relieve unemployment in one of the distressed South Wales Valleys. (Two reels).

FOR ALL ETERNITY (1935). Direction, Marion Grierson. Made by the Strand Film Company for the Travel and Industrial Association. A descriptive film of England's most famous cathedrals. (Two reels).

GRANTON TRAWLER (1934). Direction, John Grierson. Made by the Post Office Film Unit.

In the tradition of the first British documentary film, "Drifters" (1928), this is the simple story of fishermen engaged in dragnet fishing off the east coast of Scotland. (One reel).

HOUSING PROBLEMS (1936). Direction, Arthur Elton and Edgar Anstey. Made for the Gas Industry.

The problem of slum clearance is international. By means of personal interviews, this film tells you what the occupants of slum houses themselves think about the matter. Its technique marked the introduction of journalistic reporting into the documentary method. (Two reels).

NIGHT MAIL (1936). Production, Basil Wright. Direction, Harry Watt. Made by the Post Office Film Unit.

Every night the Postal Special leaves London for Scotland. While Britain sleeps, mail from all parts of the country is collected and sorted for the morning's delivery. "Night Mail" dramatizes the speedy efficiency of the mail service which binds together all parts of the United Kingdom. (Three reels).

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ROADWAYS (1937). Production, Alberto Cavalcanti. Direction, William Coldstream. Made by the Post Office Film Unit.

A survey of the development of road transport in England and the growth of the highways since the War. A feature of the film are the scenes taken in the lorry-drivers' "pull-ups", the English equivalent of "diners". (Two reels).

THE SMOKE MENACE (1937). Production, John Grierson. Direction, John Taylor. Made by Realist Film Unit for the Gas Industry.

The evils of smoke pollution are an international problem. In this film some of the causes and effects of smoke are shown, together with some of the attempts being made to overcome this menace to public health and property. (Two reels).

TODAY WE LIVE (1937). Production, Paul Rotha. Direction, R. I. Grierson and R. Bond. Made by the Strand Film Company for the National Council of Social Service.

In England, social service schemes provide temporary work for unemployed men in the distressed industrial areas, as well as reviving social life in the country villages. This film, which has its action set alternately in the workless Rhondda Valley, Wales, and a West England village, relates these activities with the change in social and economic conditions in Britain over the last hundred years. (Three reels).

WE LIVE IN TWO WORLDS (1937). Production, John Grierson. Direction, Alberto Cavalcanti. Made by the Post Office Film Unit.

Through the medium of a film talk with Mr. J. B. Priestley, this film deals with the futility of nationalism in Europe in the face of the strides made in international communication. (Two reels).

WEATHER FORECAST (1934). Production, John Grierson. Direction, Evelyn Spice. Made by the Post Office Film Unit.

This film of the collection and distribution of meteorological news by radio and telephonic communication was one of the first British documentary films to use sound technique for more than straight recorded dialogue. (Two reels).