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UNESCO, mobile cinema and rural audiences: exhibition histories and instrumental ideologies of the 1940s

Ian Goode

The increased accessibility and take-up of the 16mm apparatus in the 1940s created the conditions for the significant mobilization of cinema across the world. This cinema was often but not exclusively non-commercial and what has come to be termed non-theatrical, in that it was exhibited in spaces not purpose built for audiences to watch films (Klinger, 2007). The social purpose of this burgeoning cinema is captured in the report published by UNESCO in 1949 called *The Use of Mobile Cinema and Radio Vans in Fundamental Education* which surveys the extending geography of this cinema and supporting media into rural areas throughout the world (UNESCO 1949). It is tempting to regard this cinema as a local, intimate and communal return to the itinerant roots of early cinema and there is a growing body of local case studies in anglophone national contexts that have consolidated the historical understanding of 16mm exhibition (Bowles 2007, Acland and Wasson 2011, Aveyard 2015, Goode 2014). The widespread take up of 16mm documented by UNESCO occurs under the banner of facilitating education and literacy through mass media and the particularly cosmopolitan moment of the organisation's formation in 1945 (Sluga 2010).

Within the general objectives of international peace and the common welfare of mankind propounded by UNESCO during the immediate post-war period, there were related and similarly instrumental and didactic uses of 16mm mobile cinema. This deployment of mobile cinema not only reflects the ideological divide that intensified during the post-war period, but also suggests that part of the specificity of rural, non-theatrical cinema is found in its liability to recruitment by government and related political and cultural institutions (Druick 2009). The concern of this chapter is the scrutiny of the functions that rural cinema was directed to undertake in the specific historic and ideological contexts of a world that was both entering the Cold War and recovering from World War

II. A focus on mobile cinema in rural China extends the research on 16-mm exhibition politically and geographically into a distinctly coercive context that can be usefully contrasted with the focus of existing work. The use of the term *rural cinema* is meant to signal the intention to further the historical understanding of what Chidana Das Gupta describes as the rural base of an urban phenomenon (Das Gupta 1988).

The UNESCO report highlighted the importance of the 16mm film apparatus in non-commercial, mobile cinema exhibition around the world. In line with the new body's founding objectives the report emphasizes the potential of film as a universal means of education and literacy:

More than half the population of the world is illiterate. The problem of illiteracy and social backwardness, however, cannot be separated from the problem of the uneven technological development of nations, which has been a marked characteristic of the past one hundred and fifty years (UNESCO 1949, 17).

UNESCO's understanding and promulgation of education was a central part of its mission and the term fundamental education was used to signal a desire to contribute to the solution of this problem by placing emphasis not only on the fight against illiteracy, but also on health, education, technical training and cultural development (UNESCO 1949, 17).

Given the mobility of the 16mm apparatus the report recognises the potential for mobile cinema vans to operate throughout the world and particularly in areas without a supply of mains electricity (UNESCO 1949, 17). This expansion of the geographical reach of film exhibition combined with the recognition that cinema had the power 'to stimulate, to educate, to encourage and lead forward millions of the world's population or, alternatively mislead and poison the thoughts of this population' (UNESCO, 1949, 82). The report makes no reference to any examples of the latter use of the medium. It did acknowledge the continuing influence of the British Colonial Film Unit in the colonial territories in taking on illiteracy through educational film programmes with limited

resources (UNESCO 1949, 24, Larkin 2008, Druick 2009, Grieveson & MacCabe 2011, Rice 2015). The results of the survey show that mobile cinema audiences were by no means small and geographically isolated audiences but mass rural audiences. The rapid growth of the mobile service to the British colonial territories made it one of the three largest services in the world that was hampered by an acute shortage of equipment and suitable films (UNESCO 1949, 25). The audience in Nigeria is shown to be particularly dependent on mobile cinema with reportedly 'four mobile vans serving a population of 20,000,000 people of whom, 80 per cent are illiterate, with an average audience attendance of about 2,000 persons. (UNESCO 1949, 24). A similar example from Mexico highlights that locally produced 16mm films were estimated to account for 60 per cent of total screen time, and were very popular in rural areas (UNESCO 1949, 28). The collated findings demonstrate that while mobile cinema was vitally important to the quest to educate rural audiences around the world, it was an acutely under resourced cinema.

One of the conspicuous features of the UNESCO discourse on the uses of cinema is the disinclination to politicise the contexts that are brought together by the wide-ranging survey. The organised programme of *cinefication* carried out by the Soviet Union is praised by Sergei Eisenstein for its advanced development alongside comparable developments in China, Canada and Jamaica (UNESCO 1949, 77, Kepley Junior 1994). The apparent neutrality and single world constructed by the report can be explained by examining the institutional context of UNESCO after its formation in 1945 and the appointment of the first Director Julian Huxley, an internationalist, evolutionary biologist (Sluga 2010). This was a crucial period for the new body when, as Byron Dexter argues, UNESCO was required to face two worlds (Dexter 1947). It was striving to promote international peace and world citizenship, and simultaneously transcend the ideological and nation-state forces that would fuel the Cold War (Dexter 1947, Laves & Thomson, 1957).

The forging of UNESCO

Glenda Sluga argues that Huxley's 'public status as a cultural cosmopolitan seemed to suit the import attached to UNESCO's global mission of tackling chauvinism and fostering international understanding (Sluga 2010, 394). Sluga argues that UNESCO under Huxley promoted an imperially driven evolutionary process that adapted rather than abandoned empires, in the interest of the world's international future (Sluga 2010, 409). Huxley's attachment to the techniques of Empire is confirmed by his prior involvement with colonial filmmaking and the British Empire Marketing Board in Africa (Sluga 2010, 409-410). The instrumental use of film was continued at UNESCO and extended to include broadcasting mainly in the form of radio as another tool of education and development (Grierson 1948). Huxley and other figures with experience of education in colonised countries were highly valued at UNESCO, and this expertise created colonial continuities in the activities that supported education and development (Sluga 2010, 410).

However, while colonised countries were a continuing concern, in general terms, regions and nations with large, geographically marginal, rural populations inevitably came to the attention of UNESCO and its organised support for the dissemination of fundamental education. A good example of this concern with exhibiting non-theatrical cinema to rural populations is provided by China because UNESCO was involved in the country before it became The People's Republic in 1949 following the civil war. The influence of UNESCO is subsequently displaced by Mao Zedong and the Communist Party, but the support for 16mm put in place prior to 1949 through the support of UNESCO was appropriated and expanded by the new leadership (Dikötter 2013).

The UNESCO report states that the first mobile film unit in China was used by the Mass Education Centre of the Kiangsu Provincial Government around the year 1935. The unit modified a truck and equipped it with 16mm projector, a slide projector, public address system and generator (UNESCO 1949, 26). The relatively piecemeal presence of Ministry of Education 16mm projectors throughout rural China during the Second World War relied upon the United States Information Services and the British Council (UNESCO 1949, 26). It is apparent that for UNESCO it was the presence and

availability of projectors that took priority over what films were actually shown to village audiences since there was a persistent shortage of films as well as equipment (UNESCO 1949, 26).

The presence of UNESCO in pre-communist China was most clearly evident through the audio-visual centre at the University of Nanking in the Jiangsu province (UNESCO 1949, 26). The audio-visual centre offered a service for organisations wishing to set up mobile film units (UNESCO 1949, 142). In 1947 a test programme was undertaken with ten other organisations in the rural town of BanCh'iao in collaboration with local leaders, farmers and townspeople. The day programme combined broadcasts with demonstrations and exhibitions on agriculture, home economics and public health before finishing with a film show. Attendance was reported to be fifteen thousand and the test was used as a template for future work (UNESCO 1949, 142).

The specialism in mobile cinema developed at the audio-visual centre at Nanking in conjunction with the Ministry of Education is confirmed by the publication of a report on Fundamental Education in 1947 (Ministry of Education, 1947). Like the UNESCO report, the Nanking study details the history, expanding application and logistics of mobile cinema units with audio-visual aids in rural areas, arguing that China was predominantly an agricultural country, and her millions of simple, industrial and self sufficient farmers had hitherto never felt the need for any type of education beyond training in farming (Ministry of Education, 1947, 4). Priority was given to countering illiteracy and providing the opportunity of learning to read to the illiterate 55 per cent of the population counted at the end of 1945-46 (Ministry of Education, 1947, 4).

Using the government term *People's Education* from 1940 places greater emphasis on the aim of universal access to education with recognition too of the special needs of the border regions (Ministry of Education, 1947, 10). These regions were located at points where the national boundary of China met other nations such as Tibet and Mongolia and also included areas where peoples such

as the Uigurs in the Xinjiang province spoke languages other than Chinese (Ministry of Education, 1947, 77).

The expanding China Educational Film Studio had since its formation in 1942 gone on to produce fifty sets of films and film strips circulated by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 1947, 67). Matthew Johnson notes that Nanking experimented with educational cinema producing several films devoted to post-war reconstruction with rural reconstruction groups in Chengdu and Suzhou (Johnson 2012, 165). The coverage of the rural districts was allotted to provincial authorities who were responsible for ensuring that mobile units would take the apparatus of film and broadcasting 'to every corner of the country' (Ministry of Education, 1947, 69).

At this point the use of mobile cinema in China continued to serve the aims and understanding of fundamental education developed by UNESCO under Huxley assisted by recruits from colonial contexts such as the UK. The planned instrumental use of cinema to mitigate the effects of the geographical isolation of rural districts in China was at this point in line with the public policy of UNESCO. The end of the civil war in China in 1949 saw a radical shift in the political system when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. The rise of the Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by Mao Zedong exploited and sought to expand the organised use of 16mm that was already in place, for more explicitly political and ideological ends, that, in the early years, were aligned with the Soviet Union (Mai Chen 2004).

Mobile cinema for the villages of communist China

On coming to power the Communist Party quickly acted to propagate film as an instrument of the party and government that should aim to reach all parts of China (Leyda 1972). Film had been deployed by the propaganda department of the nationalist government of Kuomintang during the civil war prior to but not on the same scale as that proposed by Mao (Johnson 2012, 162). The newly formed Chinese Film Bureau adopted and expanded the work of the Nanking centre when it began

film projection training courses using 16mm in 1950, training projectionists for teams that would cover the country (Mai Chen 2004, 99). This training helped to establish an organised programme of film projection for the villages of rural China. The programmes depended greatly on imported propaganda films from the Soviet Union translated for rural audiences and underlining the general message that 'the Soviet Union was China's tomorrow' (Mai Chen 2004, 84-85). Between 1949 and 1957, China imported 1309 films which included 662 feature films. Dubbed features like *Lenin in October* and *An Ordinary Soldier* would typically depict Soviet heroes and heroines in order to instruct audiences on how best they could serve the newly established People's Republic of China (Mai Chen 2004, 90).

The ideology of the party placed great emphasis breaking down the separation between urban and rural areas and working to ensure that propaganda actually reached the remote areas of the country. The geographically isolated districts were viewed centrally as part of a connected structure driven by land reform which removed land from landlord ownership and fostered the industrialization of agriculture (Mai Chen 2003a, 163).

The portable apparatus of 16mm was recruited to meet the challenge of China's vast geography and the systematic transportation and distribution of mobile cinema to the villages across the country helped to achieve the aims of the CPC. The task of exhibition was undertaken by the Village Film Projection Unit who would typically comprise 2-3 professional staff with a portable 16mm projector and apparatus (Hung 1965, no pagination). The projection teams were set clear objectives regarding the number of shows and how film content was to be communicated as propaganda to rural audiences (Mai Chen 2003a). The dissemination of cinema to the rural population of China had an important political and geographical precedent in the shape of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Film Bureau exploited the possibilities of this international socialist alliance in the early years of the People's Republic (Mai Chen 2004).

Vance Kepley Jr. has shown how the Soviet Union sought to 'cinefy' the USSR during the 1920s in the process of developing film as a tool of mass education and persuasion (Kepley Jr. 1994). The expanded land mass of the USSR demanded a distribution and exhibition network that was able to cover this vast area and its associated populations, and which would aim to ensure that every town and village, no matter how remote, would have access to newsreel, education and feature films using trains, lorries, airplanes, horseback, ships, and other modes of transport (Kepley Jr. 1994, 262). The scale and ideological ambition of *cinefication* as a preceding development represented a strategic opportunity and resource for the CPC and the international project of socialism. There was no doubt that this would supplant the prior programmes developed with the aid of UNESCO.

Glen Peterson (1994) shows how the scale of illiteracy in China remained considerable and carried over into the Communist Party. Peterson points out how under Mao popular support was mobilized through non-literate means such as pictorial magazines, cartoons, revolutionary songs, peasant dances, and public announcements borrowed from the Soviet Red Army. Further messages were drawn from a repertoire of elite means to communicate with illiterate village audiences - including posters, woodblock prints, folk songs and popular opera. Mao was an advocate of non-book learning as a means of popularizing political propaganda (Peterson, 1994, 101). Film was part of this array of materials and the supply of films produced by the Soviet Union provided images and narratives of socialist citizens of rural life that, as Tina Mai Chen argues, captured the attention of Chinese audiences for 'their patriotism and partisanship, as well as their appearance' (Mai Chen, 2010, 422).

The village projection teams were agents of this propaganda and their work combined 16mm film programmes with some of the means outlined by Peterson. Mai Chen demonstrates how films such as *Village Schoolteacher*, *Women Locomotive Drivers* and *Tractor Drivers* prioritised images and narratives centred on rural working women for village audiences (Mai Chen 2003a, 183). The reports from projection units stressed the enthusiasm with which the villagers accepted the new technology represented by the tractor in *Tractor Drivers* and women's participation as key to the prosperity

displayed in the film (Mai Chen 2004, 91). The tractor became a key symbol of rural modernization and a means of improving harvests through the implementation of mechanized agriculture.

One woman Liang Jun was inspired by films like these and went on to tractor driving school before becoming China's first female tractor driver and forming a women's tractor unit. Together they symbolised China's socialist modernity (Mai Chen 2003a). The connection between women, femininity, the fertile space of the land and the socialist future is exploited in propaganda messages as the poster below demonstrates (figure 1).

insert image1 118ppcm.jpg (tractor poster)

figure 1 c/o IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections; www.chineseposters.net

Mai Chen reveals how in official rhetoric, the arrival of the mobile film unit in the villages constituted a literal and metaphoric delivery of socialist modernity to the people by agents of the party (Mai Chen, 2003a, 165). The work of the projectionists in the village projection teams went beyond the exhibition of film programmes. The projectionist would introduce, explain and comment on the film programme and generally orchestrate the film show by combining the projection of films with lantern slide shows, while also leading the singing of songs accompanied by clappers, and tell stories praising the accomplishments of local farmers in the new China (Hung 1965, no pagination). The propaganda poster in figure 2 below illustrates clearly the intermedial tools utilised by the village projectionists during film shows and also how valuable the work of non-theatrical film exhibition was to the PRC in communicating with the rural population.

insert image2 118ppcm.jpg (projectionist)

figure 2 c/o IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections; www.chineseposters.net

Jay Leyda reveals how a young veteran of the Korean War working in a team of projectionists whose circuit included the villages of eastern Hopei province, invented a presentation technique that was widely imitated:

'He kept up a running commentary as each film was shown. At opportune moments during the opening sequences, he introduced the story shortly, its main characters, setting and background. As the film went along, he slipped in a few words of explanation wherever he felt it might be hard for some peasant audience to grasp' (Leyda 1972, 296).

The ability of the projectionist to influence the understanding of the films shown is also highlighted:

'the country people are very quick to love or hate during a motion picture. The minute a character appears on the screen they want to know who it is, whether he is good or bad [!] So the projection teams have to give some explanation as the story develops' (Leyda 1972, 298).

These reports indicate that there was a degree of intimacy between the projectionists and their rural audiences that made possible their dialogue with the audience. It is the often shared space of rural, non-theatrical cinema-going that shapes this experience and creates the possibility of directing and influencing the collective audience response to film. The village projectionists work to encourage the preferred collective response to the films shown.

The demands of the journeys made and the anticipation of the arrival of the film units at the rural locations was important to the public appreciation of their role in carrying out the work of the CPC. The work of the projectionists covering the Kirin province of north-east China was reported on the occasion of its tenth anniversary in 1964:

The team serves two people's communes with 39 hamlets perched (in the mountains). It takes the team a month to make one round of the cinema-showing centres there. On the way they cross three mountains, 3000 metres above sea-level, many smaller hills, and 18 rivers and

streams. The most out of the way centre - the team makes a point of visiting it every month - is up two pine logs, thrown across a precipice with a sheer drop of 100 metres to the river below. The team has conquered these difficulties cheerily (Leyda 1972, 296).

Hung describes the projectionists 'with their projectors and magic lanterns in their trucks, carts or over their shoulders, they are climbing mountains, fording rivers or tramping the plains to give film shows for the peasants' (Hung 1965, no pagination). Given the scarcity of motorised transport in the early years of the PRC the journeys taken by the projectionists and their apparatus to the village exhibition spaces and the ability to overcome technical problems would have added to the attraction and value of the rural cinema experience provided. In addition, the spaces where the films were shown are not given much attention by the academic research published in English on this particular area of China's cinema history (Mai Chen 2003a). There is evidence to suggest that the films would often be shown to rural audiences outside. For example a graphic illustration published in the popular film magazine *Dazhong dianying* emphasizes the interchangeable and collective tasks of irrigating the fields and projecting films for the village audience, underlined by the accompanying caption: commune member by day and projectionist by night (figure 3).

insert image3 118ppcn (graphic illustration)

figure 3 c/o The Australian National University

The illustration attempts to synthesise collective work on the land with the projection of film images of a single woman carrying some of the harvest from the land, onto a makeshift screen for a mixed audience at a film show apparently being held outdoors. The analogy between the work of agriculture, film exhibition and watching film as part of a village audience is made possible by the clear connection of the spaces where these activities take place (Allen 2006, 15). This graphic representation of a village adapting the apparatus of film using the materials of their own environment and situating it in parallel with agricultural work also confirms how the reporting of

non-theatrical film exhibition was used not simply for the general aim of improving literacy, but for the specific ends of the CPC. The provision of access to the projection of films for the villagers at night is linked to the wider project of collectivizing and modernizing agriculture in order to feed the vast population of the country. The people of the villages and communes are not peripheral audiences existing on the edge of film discourse but are rather central to it and to the propagation of the collective national subject.

A further narrative that highlights the importance of improvised film exhibition in rural spaces is provided by a story called *Wall of Bronze*. This story published in English in 1967 and written by a theatrical group in the People's Liberation Army Engineers Company, highlights the work of village projectionists:

Young Wang drove out in a horse-drawn cart one day at noon and announced he was going to show a film that night entitled *Long Live the Victory of People's War*. When news of this got around, the men in the company were delighted. Put up the screen as soon as you can.

Perhaps you might ask: Why set up the screen in the middle of the day if the film wasn't to be shown until night ? The reason was that whenever people in neighbouring hamlets saw it, they knew that after dark a film would be shown on company grounds. The screen had become a kind of announcement and invitation. After the screen was erected at the southern wall, a few of the guardsmen brought in soft, thick mats which the soldiers had woven out of the tenderest spring reeds. They had made these especially for the commune folk to sit on in winter while watching films, so as to ward off the chill of the cold ground. Wu and Liu helped lay the mats out, then invited the visitors to be seated. The company told his men to sit in the rear. In this way they protected the people up front from the north wind. When everyone had taken his place, the soldiers and the commune folk read aloud from their little red books of Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung and from the three constantly read articles, turning

the courtyard into a classroom for the study of the works of Chairman Mao. The lantern slide show ended and the projectionist turned on his work light. Look to the rear. The PLA comrades have formed a wall to screen us from the winter gale. It's not a brick wall, it's a wall of class love. They freeze their bodies to warm our hearts. It's a wall of bronze, here at the front on the Yellow Sea. This wall of bronze can stop old Baldy Chiang Kai Shek and his gang. The big nosed Yankees and their revisionist pals will also get cracked, bloody skulls if they tried to butt their heads against it! On hearing Liu and Grandma Sung, everyone in the audience was stirred. Wu didn't want feelings to run so high as to stop the showing of the film. He ran over to the projector and picked up a megaphone. "Quiet down, commune comrades", he shouted. "The film will start in a few minutes (PLA 1967, 57).

This story, while clearly written to serve the purpose of propaganda, also demonstrates how the improvised architecture of a 'people's cinema' is formed in a strategically important coastal setting and becomes symbolic in the protection of the eastern border of China against the opposition of the Nationalist leader Kai-Shek who had taken refuge in Taiwan after defeat in the Civil War to the Communist Party (Dikötter, 2013).

In this material it is clear that the sense of the local and communal that might commonly be associated with this mode of cinema exhibition is illustrated and narrated through a vocabulary that clearly transcends the local and the communal. The apparatus and exhibition of non-theatrical cinema in concert with the geography of rural China enables the ideological construction of the wider formation of the people in renewed defence against the hostile outside. The experience of film in the local space of the village or commune becomes synonymous with the shared work of the good citizen and the construction of 'the people' (Allen 2006, Mai Chen 2003a). Film is instrumental in the narrative construction of 'the people' and the subordination of the individual towards this end.

Peterson has argued that the actuality of rural literacy differs from the policy directives and propaganda messages issued by the CPC. He suggests that 'literacy ideologies, instead of reducing the major social differences between the city and countryside and between workers and peasants, as China's leaders frequently proclaimed, actually worked to preserve and reproduce those differences (Peterson 1994, 98). He points out that village population were to be subject to three kinds of education: political, technical and basic literacy, with the latter receiving least importance (Peterson 1994, 102). Similarly, he finds that in Yanpu county, in the south-eastern area of Guangdong, the Party Secretary in one township actually banned literacy classes during collectivization, on the grounds that they interfered with the peasants' main responsibility of growing food (Peterson 1994, 112). The exceptions uncovered by Peterson occurred underneath the official declarations from the centre, such as the anti-illiteracy decree of 1956 which called for the complete elimination of illiteracy among fourteen to fifty-year-olds in China within seven years (Peterson 1994, 113). Peterson concludes that despite the widely proclaimed intention by China's leaders to use the educational system as a means of reversing the old class structure, this was not achieved. The PRC educational system of literacy effectively reinforced the prior urban-rural split in Chinese society (Peterson 1994, 118).

The role of the village projection teams was to develop film as a means of developing a literacy that was about making meaning from images in combination with words. The films that were shown which in the early years of the PRC were reliant on imports from the Soviet Union meant that such literacy was also allied with the working life of village and the necessity of improving of agricultural production and ensuring that the production of China's precarious food supply was continued (Mai Peterson, 1994, 120). The organised use of non-theatrical cinema in the villages of China before the takeover of power by the CPC and thereafter serves as an illuminating exposure of the relative meanings of literacy and the importance of the instrumental use of the 16mm film apparatus to helping to achieve these ends. The availability of testimony to the historiography of post 1949 China

is certainly growing (Dikotter 2013, Mai Chen 2011). UNESCO actively promotes rural literacy through non-theatrical cinema and related media prior to the major political transition that took place in China during 1949. This was also the year that UNESCO published its major report on mobile cinema and there is no concern expressed in the report about the shift from literacy to propaganda activated by the CPC. Such measured neutrality confirms Byron Dexter's suggestion that the founding ideas that unite UNESCO across ideological divides are freedom from want rather than freedom of speech and expression (Dexter 1947, 407).

The particular apprehending of the possibilities of non-theatrical rural cinema traced here demonstrate that part of the specificity of the apparatus of 16mm in rural exhibition contexts is that it enables, in the face of relative cultural and economic scarcity, the instrumental use of cinema for ends that strive to affect geographically marginalised audiences according to institutionally centralised objectives. The moment of UNESCO's formation and the widespread use of 16mm in the 1940s confirm the use of film as instrument and that its (rural) audience was viewed unitarily, and often coercively, to fit the ideological concerns of the interests that were advancing rural film exhibition. The effects of geographical and social isolation mean that non-theatrical cinema exhibition facilitates such uses of cinema in a way that is, arguably, less easily realized in urban exhibition contexts.

This instrumentalist exhibition takes different forms as the case of China before and after the takeover of the CCP demonstrates. The expanding historiographies of New Cinema History and the work of Charles Acland and Heidi Wasson in bringing together the North American contexts of what they term *Useful Cinema* have helped to bring these other cinemas into view (Biltereyst, Maltby, Meers 2011, Acland and Wasson 2011). In addition, Gregory Waller queries the specificities of the smaller gauge when he asks whether '16mm was merely an ancillary delivery system or somehow the fulfilment of the motion picture's universally accessible, powerfully effective, eminently useful medium of communication?' (Waller 2011, 126). The answer, on the basis of the evidence presented

here, is that there was a relative universality to the non-commercial cinema made possible by 16mm, and, in the absence of a commercial imperative, and through the particular nature of non-theatrical exhibition in rural locations, there was an inherent and accessible instrumentalism that meant that the medium of communication was more open to political and ideological use than its more illustrious relative (Bennett 1988).

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