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STANLEY KUBRICK, THE 1974 FINANCE ACT, AND THE CRISIS OF THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF ACCESS, POWER AND PRIVILEGE IN BRITISH MEDIA AND POLITICS

James Fenwick

Between 1975 and 1977, filmmaker Stanley Kubrick secretly campaigned to overturn the new tax provisions of the Labour government's 1974 Finance Act. His aim was to develop a crisis narrative in which the legislation that affected the amount of earnings foreign residents would pay tax on in the UK was deemed directly responsible for the imminent and absolute collapse of the British film industry. Drawing on archival sources from the Stanley Kubrick Archive, the Harold Wilson papers, and The National Archives, the article reconstructs Kubrick's actions during this period to reveal how he planted stories in the press, lobbied MPs, ministers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the prime minister, manipulated trade union officials, and secretly wrote press releases and campaign letters under the name of the general secretary of the ACTT, Alan Sapper. The archival case study widens understanding of the narrative of crisis pertaining to the British film industry in the 1970s and how this was exacerbated and exploited by powerful and wealthy individuals like Kubrick for personal gain. The article also contributes to the broader topics of access, power, and privilege in British society and how the rich subvert and undermine democracy, thereby aggravating structural inequalities, inequalities that have only deepened since Kubrick's political interventions and machinations.

On 21 July 1975, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT) issued a press release titled 'The Extinction of the British

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Feature Film Industry Forecast if Taxes Drive Americans Out'.¹ It was a missive that warned of the imminent and absolute collapse of the British film industry as a direct result of the Labour government's 1974 Finance Act, new laws that would result in tax changes for the wealthiest in the country. The ACTT press release predicted "ruinous loss of work" and "further closures" unless new taxes on foreign film makers in Britain are postponed or abolished'.² The following day, 22 July 1975, and in the days after, regional, national, and international newspapers and trade journals published headlines and stories based on the press release, with the text being paraphrased or copied wholesale in articles in *The Financial Times*, *The Times*, and *Variety*.³ The ACTT press release contributed to a wider crisis narrative pertaining to the British film industry and resonated in critical histories of the period, such as Alexander Walker's book about 1970s British cinema, *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties*. In a chronology of the period, Walker writes that in 1975 there was a 'huge emigration of stars and other key production executives to avoid effect of Denis Healey's new taxes'.⁴ But what is absent from the above press release, the news stories that picked up the press release, and Alexander Walker's subsequent history, is any mention of filmmaker Stanley Kubrick's direct involvement in this narrative of industrial crisis. Yet, it was Stanley Kubrick who had written the ACTT press release.

In summer 2019, when working my way through as of then uncatalogued records newly transferred to the Stanley Kubrick Archive at the University of the Arts London (UAL), I—along with a fellow Kubrick studies colleague Matthew Melia—came across a box that contained numerous copies of the ACTT press release, including early drafts with handwritten corrections by Kubrick, and final drafts, as well as correspondence between Kubrick and Alan Sapper, the general secretary of the ACTT, and correspondence with Sir John Woolf and the then Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor Denis Healey, and the Prime Minister Harold Wilson. As I worked through the material in its disordered state, it became clear that Kubrick had some kind of role—perhaps a central role—in the creation and crafting of the ACTT press release, as well as subsequent news stories planted in the media. I incorporated what I had found in the uncatalogued box into subsequent publications, as did my colleague Matthew Melia.⁵ However, the uncatalogued and dispersed form of the records made it difficult to understand the full extent of Kubrick's role or why the records were in his possession.

Four years later, archivist Lucy Parker had begun the process of cataloguing the new archival material. This included the box that I had consulted above, which was now part of a series titled 'Future of the British Film Industry'.⁶ The box title refers to the working party established by the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1975. With the material catalogued, I decided to revisit it to investigate Kubrick's role in the writing of the ACTT press release and his contribution to a narrative that the British film industry was in crisis, as well as to consider what the records reveal about the structures of power and access in British media, politics, and society.

The article will aim to widen understanding of the narrative of the British film industry's 'crisis' of the 1970s. British cinema of the 1970s was long underappreciated by film studies scholars, positioned as a period of malaise and decline and as a fallow

period prior to the later success of the 1980s and 1990s.⁷ It is only in recent years scholars have intervened to correct this narrative, surveying and rescuing the creativity and even subversive character of British filmmaking in the 1970s.⁸ Far from being a fallow period, 1970s British cinema was a period of diversity for the moving image generally.⁹ The narrative of crisis was, however, a key mark of the contemporaneous industrial contexts of the British film industry.¹⁰ The industry had undergone a period of rapid financial production spend in the 1960s due to US-based companies basing productions in the UK. The import of US production finance into the British film industry reached £31.3 million by 1968, but rapidly decreased from thereon to a low of just £2.9 million by 1974.¹¹ The primary reasons for this retrenchment were economic, with American film production companies having suffered box office losses and having overinvested in production.¹² The move out of the UK was also encouraged by new tax inducements in the USA.¹³ American production finance did eventually begin to return to the UK by the mid-1970s, but on a much-reduced scale compared to what had gone before in the 1960s.¹⁴ At the time, industry executives and prominent filmmakers were alarmed at the decline of production financing, both from the USA and from the British government, leading to calls for direct government intervention to aid the “remains of the film industry”.¹⁵

As for the impact of the Labour government’s 1974 Labour Finance Act, it is an overlooked aspect of the British film industry’s crisis of the 1970s. Alexander Walker provides one of the few detailed accounts of the impact of the Finance Act on American filmmakers.¹⁶ Walker argues that Labour’s new tax policies led to the withdrawal of American talent from the UK. But his account lacks any detailed discussion of Kubrick. Walker merely claims that Kubrick never indicated that he would leave the UK, saying that he ‘showed no sign of turning globe-trotter’ and ‘presumably paid the price’ as a result.¹⁷ But Walker’s account is in contradiction to the archival record and relies instead on ACTT press releases and the news stories to which it led about the Labour Party’s tax policies instigating crisis and decline in the British film industry, news stories that he himself had written, often in collaboration with Kubrick.

I will undertake archival research to reconstruct the period between 1975 and 1977 using the Stanley Kubrick Archive, an extensive collection of records and objects donated by the filmmaker’s family to UAL in 2007. I will also refer to related archival records in the Harold Wilson Papers, which are based in the University of Oxford’s Bodleian Libraries, and Harold Wilson’s Economic Policy Records held at The National Archives. In addition, I will draw upon secondary sources, including newspaper and trade journal articles from the period, to triangulate the archival data. The archival method will be used to further understanding about the crisis narrative that has dominated histories of the British film industry, as well as to consider the extent to which those with power and wealth in the film industry and British society in the 1970s exploited and exacerbated the crisis narrative for their own personal gain.

Wider historical contexts

Before proceeding, it is necessary to clarify two key wider contexts: 1) the British political and economic landscape of the 1970s, and the introduction of the 1974

Finance Act; and 2) the position and status of Stanley Kubrick by and beyond the 1970s.

British politics and the economy in the 1970s

The 1970s have long-been characterised as a decade marked by crises, instability, and malaise.¹⁸ This is because the UK suffered a range of national economic and political crises during the 1970s, including severe economic recession, large-scale and persistent industrial action, high unemployment, high inflation, an energy crisis with blackouts and an imposed three-day working week, political instability with two general elections in 1974, the devaluation of the pound, and an International Monetary Fund bailout in 1976. Yet, despite the country's economic decline and recession, there was what Dominic Sandbrook has called a cultural dynamism throughout the decade, with an explosion in fashion, celebrity, food, technology, film, and television. Sandbrook is one of several historians that have recently reassessed British culture and society of the 1970s in a bid to disassociate the malaise and drabness attached to the decade because of the period's economic troubles and the ever present 'pervasive sense of crisis and discontent'.¹⁹

Political parties of the period seized on the narrative of permanent crisis in their election manifestos. For example, Harold Wilson's 1974 Labour Party election manifesto was titled 'Let us work together – Labour's way out of the crisis'.²⁰ In it, the Labour Party blamed Edward Heath's Conservative government for breaking the country's social contract, which it claimed had led to a rapid increase in unemployment and the working and middle classes suffering financially as a result of inflation, increased housing costs, and rising energy costs. The manifesto outlined the crisis facing the nation in stark terms: 'Britain needs a new Government, and the Labour Party is ready with the policies essential to rescue the nation from the most serious political and economic crisis since 1945'.²¹

Wilson formed a minority government in February 1974 and, following a further general election in October 1974, formed a majority government (of just three seats). The Labour Party promised in both of its 1974 manifestos to confront the underlying problems of the country's economic crisis including soaring unearned incomes and capital values, and increased banking profits. The Labour Party's aim was social justice, in which it would increase taxation on the rich to make a more equal, fair, and democratic society. This would be achieved through income and wealth redistribution, and the introduction of an annual wealth tax, a new inheritance tax, and a tax on property speculation, as well as closing tax loopholes exploited by the rich. The Labour Party had agreed with trade unions prior to its 1974 election that it would redistribute income and wealth in return for a restraint on wages (seen as necessary to curb high inflation) and to prevent further widespread industrial action.²²

The maximum tax rate in the UK by the 1970s was 83% and news stories about celebrities and business tycoons leaving the UK to become 'tax exiles' were commonplace: from pop and rock stars (such as Mick Jagger, Rod Stewart, and Tom Jones) to film stars (Sean Connery and Roger Moore), and from businessmen (Derrick Robbins, David Wickens) to sport stars (Jackie Stewart and Tony

Jacklin), some of the UK's wealthiest citizens sought to base themselves overseas so as to avoid paying tax on their earnings, many of them acting on the advice of tax lawyers and accountants.

The Labour government's 1974 Finance Act was enacted in July of that year and contained changes to tax law that would increase the levels of taxation on non-domiciles (foreign nationals).²³ The Act included new tax provisions that would come into effect in April 1976, requiring non-domiciles to pay tax on 50% of their earnings 'from non-resident employers in respect of employments carried out wholly or partly in the UK'.²⁴ In addition, the proportion of earnings liable to UK taxation would increase to 75% if the individual had been resident in the country for nine of the previous ten years.²⁵ The Act would also make non-residents liable for capital transfer tax if they had been in the UK for 17 of the previous 20 years, 'whether the assets so transferred are situated in this country or not'.²⁶ The aim was to create a more equitable and democratic tax system, whereby foreign residents who had lived in the UK for many years would pay the same tax as UK citizens.

Stanley Kubrick by the 1970s

Stanley Kubrick was a US-born film director, producer, and occasional screenwriter. His films were all US-financed, either from private sources of income (as in the case of *Fear and Desire* [1953] and *Killer's Kiss* [1955]) or from major US film production and distribution companies (from *The Killing* [1956] onwards, with Kubrick funded by United Artists, Universal-International, Seven Arts, MGM, Columbia, and Warner Bros.). In the early 1960s, Kubrick moved his productions to the UK, first producing *Lolita* (1962) in the country, before permanently relocating to the country in the mid-1960s. He had lived in the UK for a decade by 1975. Kubrick produced *Dr Strangelove* (1964) through to *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) in the UK, aside from occasional location work in Northern Ireland (*Barry Lyndon* [1975]) or second unit pickup shots overseas for films like *The Shining* (1980), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), and *Eyes Wide Shut*. His films from *Lolita* through to *The Shining* all received subsidy funding via the British government's Eady Levy and qualified as British made, though there was a constant tension between whether his films were British or American,²⁷ coming to a head in a diplomatic dispute about the nationality of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), which was entered by the USA as its official entry to the 1969 Moscow International Film Festival.²⁸ Kubrick was paid via his American company, the New York incorporated Polaris Productions. Polaris would arrange financing and contracts with the major US studios and subcontract Kubrick's services, and the services of other above-the-line costs, to his UK incorporated production companies, such as Hawk Films. Once production was complete, the rights for his films would be assigned back to Polaris.²⁹

Kubrick had accrued considerable wealth and capital by the 1970s. He purchased a sizeable mansion, Childwickbury Manor in Hertfordshire, in 1978. In 2016, it was disclosed that following Kubrick's death in 1999, ownership of the manor had been transferred to companies registered in the British Virgin Isles, an

offshore tax shelter. The offshore companies were controlled by Kubrick's daughters. *The Guardian* investigation stated that by transferring the property to offshore companies the Kubrick family had potentially avoided 'hundreds of thousands in inheritance tax', though it could not be confirmed if this was the case.³⁰ *The Guardian* also reported that 'a complex network of offshore companies [were] used by the [Kubrick] family to own assets, including the profits from some of Kubrick's films'.³¹ Kubrick was also associated with two incorporated holding companies in Switzerland from the 1960s: Anya and Transworld Pictures.³² Incorporating holding companies in Switzerland is a way for those with wealth to take advantage of low taxation and avoid corporate tax. Again, there is no evidence of whether this was why Kubrick was associated with the Swiss companies. But archive evidence does indicate that Kubrick was consistently, from the beginning of his film career in the 1950s, seeking out overseas production bases that would allow him to take advantage of lower taxes, cheaper labour costs, or government subsidies. This included a consideration of moving to Mexico and Turkey in the mid-to-late 1950s, producing *Paths of Glory* in Germany in 1957, and finally relocating to the UK in the 1960s.³³ Seeking ways of being subjected to lower taxation was something that mattered to Kubrick throughout his career.

A concerned filmmaker

The archival record indicates that Kubrick's overriding concern between 1975 and 1977 was not the future of the British film industry, but his own personal tax situation should the 1974 Finance Act's tax provisions come into force in April 1976 as the government intended. By the start of 1975, Kubrick was amassing research about the impact of the Finance Act on his own situation. Kubrick was building a list of contacts as part of a lobbying effort to overturn the tax provisions that would impact non-domiciles like himself who had lived in the UK for a decade. He obtained a copy of the 1975 Vacher's Parliamentary Companion, which listed the names and addresses of members of the House of Lords and House of Commons,³⁴ and he was also compiling lists of the names and telephone numbers of editors and journalists of national newspapers, radio programmes, and television news and current affairs programmes.³⁵ Kubrick's key media contact was Alexander Walker, a film critic and journalist at the *London Evening Standard*. Walker was a friend of Kubrick and had written a biography of the filmmaker, *Stanley Kubrick Directs* (1972), which was in effect an authorised biography; Walker had supplied Kubrick with drafts of the manuscript, which he proceeded to annotate and correct.³⁶

By February 1975, Kubrick was liaising with Alexander Walker on an 'important story on the state of the British film industry'.³⁷ Informing the story was a memo that Kubrick had drafted in which he had developed a wider narrative that positioned the Finance Act's tax provisions as responsible for the imminent collapse of the British film industry. He began initiating meetings with film industry trade unions, including Equity and the ACTT, and sharing his memo with union leadership.³⁸ On 12 February 1975, Kubrick and Bernard Williams (Kubrick's associate producer on *A Clockwork Orange* [1971] and *Barry Lyndon*) had

lunch with Les Wiles, the ACTT's national organiser. Kubrick told Wiles that Labour's tax changes would mean there would be no alternative for foreign-born filmmakers other than to leave the UK and produce their films overseas. Kubrick argued that 'there is unmistakable evidence that this will happen, and is already happening' and concluded that unless Labour abandoned the tax changes then 'all of the undesirable events' he had described would come to pass.³⁹ Kubrick suggested that either Wiles, or someone else from the ACTT, meet with Walker to contribute to the planned news story to specifically comment on the Finance Act's impact on the film industry's crisis. Similarly, Kubrick put the General Secretary of Equity in contact with Alexander Walker.⁴⁰

Following these initial contacts, Kubrick began to refine his research memo. On 13 February 1975, Kubrick added the title 'The Effect of April 1974 Budget Tax Provisions on Foreign Residents in Britain'.⁴¹ This early draft of the memo contains an alarmist opening sentence:

A mass exit of the American film colony in Britain has begun, because of tax provisions in the 1974 budget, which will cause them to begin paying, in April of 1976, a UK tax rate 24-55% higher than their united states maximum tax rate, which is 50%.⁴²

Kubrick has crossed out the word 'exit' and replaced it with 'exodus', presumably to provide the sentence with even greater emotional impact. On 18 February 1975, Kubrick changed the title of the memo again, considering calling it 'The effect the British Film Industry of the April 1974 Budget tax on foreign residents', before settling on 'Memorandum on the Effects of the April 1974 Budget on Foreign Residents in the UK'.⁴³ Kubrick used subjective language in describing what he saw as the key effect: 'nobody who has a choice will remain in the UK to pay this tax'.⁴⁴

By mid-March, Kubrick had prepared a streamlined version of his memo that consisted of thirteen points, which he had drafted to focus on the industrial impact of the Finance Act's tax provisions. The first eight points set out how prior to the election of Labour in 1974, foreign residents only paid tax 'on the money they remitted to the UK, and not on any money which was not remitted'.⁴⁵ Kubrick acknowledged that most 'high salaried' individuals would only remit to the UK the amount of money they 'needed to live'.⁴⁶ By April 1974, however, foreign residents were required to pay the maximum UK tax (83%) on 50% of their world-wide earnings, regardless of whether the money had been remitted to the UK or not, 'unless the services which created these earnings were rendered abroad'.⁴⁷ Kubrick states that this equated to a tax rate of 41.5%. However, Kubrick argues this was not a problem for most Americans as the tax they paid in the UK was fully deductible from their US tax, and because 'many high-salaried Americans' used tax shelters 'which are allowable in the United States, but which are not allowed in the UK'.⁴⁸ Kubrick's concern was that foreign residents would have to pay full UK tax on 75% of their earnings from April 1976 if they had been in the country for nine of the previous ten years. He claimed that, 'Based on a maximum USA tax rate of 50%, this would represent a tax increase, to Americans, of 24.5%, and if based on the 40% rate, which most of them pay, it would represent

an increase of 55.63%'.⁴⁹ These facts, Kubrick states, have led 'the best tax lawyers in London' to confirm that 'there are no alternatives to this except not to make films in the United Kingdom'.⁵⁰

The remaining points in the memo connect these financial facts to the crisis in the British film industry. Kubrick claims that 'there is unmistakable evidence' that American directors were already moving their productions overseas.⁵¹ Kubrick sets out a vision of how the British film industry would suffer over the next few months because of the Finance Act:

The departure of the major American film figures, who account for a great proportion of this sum, will be ruinous to the British Film Industry. For, in addition to the actual loss of the pictures which they would otherwise have made in Britain, the reputation of the British Film Industry will suffer, thus making it less attractive to producers [...] Unless the next budget is amended to provide relief from provisions which take effect in April 1976, there is every indication that there will be few important American film people left in Britain by the end of this year.⁵²

Kubrick had written his memo with expert advice from tax lawyers, as well as incorporating unsubstantiated supposition and anecdotes. But the memo lacks context, context of which Kubrick would likely have been aware given his reference to tax shelters. US, German, and Canadian based film productions had increased since the early 1970s because of tax loopholes in those countries. In 1974, journalist Quentin Falk referred to a spate of films—including *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *The Great Gatsby* (1974), and *The Odessa File* (1974)—as 'tax shelter films'.⁵³ Governments would pay the losses on high-risk investment, whilst the investor would receive significant profits and tax advantages should the film be a box office success by 'rolling on' their investment into other film productions. The US Congress had launched an investigation into the legality of tax shelters by the mid-1970s. Filmmakers were leaving the UK for the USA and other countries prior to the introduction of the 1974 Finance Act, enticed by these tax loopholes. Kubrick was, in other words, crafting a narrative to exacerbate the sense of crisis in the British film industry in a bid to rectify his own personal concerns about changes to the UK's tax laws. He ends the memo by stating what he wants:

Specifically, it is necessary to postpone or abolish the provisions of Sub-section 3, or Section 3, of Schedule 2, to the Finance Act of 1974. This would then continue the existing basis whereby UK income tax is charged to foreign residents on 50%, rather than on 75% of their world-wide earnings for work performed in the UK.⁵⁴

On 13 March 1975, the story that Kubrick had been liaising on with Alexander Walker was published in the *Evening Standard*. Titled 'Who gains if the moguls go?', the news story featured images of film directors across the top, including Kubrick, Norman Jewison, Carl Foreman, and Joseph Losey, among others.⁵⁵ The story contains a mixture of Walker's own opinions along with text that is directly copied from Kubrick's research memo – though, without any acknowledgement that this was the case. Instead, the story is passed off as being all Walker's own writing, despite this not being the case. A reader of the newspaper would not be

aware of Kubrick's role in its preparation or writing. The article features quotes by the ACTT's general secretary Alan Sapper and its national organiser Les Wiles, again without acknowledging that it was Kubrick who had arranged contact between the ACTT and Walker. The news story is written to emphasise the importance of American filmmakers to the British film industry, but more importantly to convey the crisis narrative that Kubrick was instigating: that the exit from the UK of American directors would be a direct result of the 1974 Finance Act and lead to the collapse of the British film industry. This argument is made clear in the opening lines of the news story: 'Within a few months the final run-down will begin of what remains of the once considerable British film industry. By this time next year, say the men best placed to judge, the scene could resemble a near-total wipe-out'.⁵⁶

The news story ends by claiming that the 'exodus' of American filmmakers would ultimately impact on the average British citizen's way of life:

the very people from whom the Treasury will expect to benefit will have left Britain by the time the tax is due to hit them. More likely the Social Security Services will be forced to dip ever deeper into the taxpayers' pocket to relieve the unemployment that will follow the exodus.⁵⁷

Walker uses the text of Kubrick's memo to argue that the tax changes proposed in the 1974 Finance Act should be abandoned and American directors allowed to pay tax on 50 per cent of their world-wide earnings. Whether this is fair, Walker states, is irrelevant because 'we need these people more than they need us'.⁵⁸

On 15 March 1975, Kubrick drafted a letter to the Prime Minister Harold Wilson, enclosing a copy of the *Evening Standard* article. The letter in the Stanley Kubrick Archive is incomplete and it's not clear if it was sent. Kubrick begins the letter by saying the film industry is in the 'most serious situation' as a direct result of the Finance Act's tax changes. Kubrick writes, 'The film industry is at present undergoing the most serious crisis in its history, and we consider that, if further strain is put upon it, it could lead to its complete collapse and the loss of livelihood for many of the people who work in it'.⁵⁹ Kubrick tells Wilson that a copy of the *Evening Standard* article was also to be sent to Members of Parliament.

Kubrick circulated copies of the *Evening Standard* article to newspaper editors and news programme presenters on 14 March 1975, including Barry Norman and John Timpson (Radio 4's *Today* programme), Michael Charlton (BBC's *News Day*), and Peter Jay (London Weekend TV's *Weekend World*).⁶⁰ It is not clear under whose name the article was circulated. Kubrick engaged his own staff, as well as his contacts at Warner Bros., to approach the media in a bid to encourage them to take up and further investigate the *Evening Standard* story, but they could not 'raise a flicker of interest' from anyone.⁶¹

Kubrick's attempts to instigate a backlash against the Finance Act's tax provisions and to generate a crisis narrative had not succeeded. The only consolation was that Sir John Eden, a Conservative MP, raised a question in the House of Commons, asking Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he had made any estimate 'of the extent to which the changes in tax law made in 1974 will affect the British film industry through the large-scale withdrawal of American

participation therein'.⁶² Healey responded that he did not see any reason why provisions in the Finance Act would 'adversely affect American participation in the British film industry'.⁶³

In April 1975, Kubrick set about intensifying his lobbying efforts. He began redrafting his research memo into a letter that he was to provide to Alan Sapper, the ACTT's General Secretary. Kubrick wrote a draft letter titled 'UK tax' on 7 April 1975 in which he now flipped the narrative so that the British film industry's reliance on American film directors and financing was centred: '90% of the financing of British feature film production is derived from American sources, and a very substantial part of this comes directly from work done in England by a relatively small number of important American writers, directors and producers'.⁶⁴ Kubrick made annotations on the draft letter, suggesting that he was continually rethinking how to develop the crisis narrative. For example, he adds the phrase 'crippling blow' when describing the impact on the British film industry of the withdrawal of American filmmakers. And he changes the sentence '...there is every indication that there will be few important American film people residing by the end of this year' to 'there is likely to be a ruinous loss/great loss of production in 1976'.⁶⁵

The following day, 8 April 1975, Kubrick wrote a second draft of the letter, substantially altering the tone of the text. It opens with an apocalyptic warning:

Considering the disastrous state of the film industry in this country, it might seem hard to believe that things could be worse than they are. This is a letter intended to warn you that they soon will be, and it is also written in the hope that this time the warning will be heeded.⁶⁶

The apocalyptic tone continues throughout the letter, with Kubrick referring to prophecies, jeopardy, and peril. In contrast to the formal and quite dry language of previous drafts, the language in this letter is designed to shock the reader, with Kubrick describing the Finance Act as a 'mortal blow to the last remaining film talent in Britain'.⁶⁷ Kubrick describes how the film industry is reliant on a small group of men 'whose artistic talents are regarded as so unique that they attract to them all the finance they need to make films'.⁶⁸ Rather than focusing on the impact of the tax changes on the livelihoods of the wealthy filmmakers, Kubrick instead describes the impact on the wider British film industry:

It will immediately mean less work for actors and technicians at all levels, for film studios, where interior scenes are shot, for film laboratories who print the pictures, for camera and sound equipment rental companies, for dubbing theatres which complete the soundtrack, for a vast variety of vital and ciliary services like costuming, catering, haulage and car hire, casting agencies and many more.⁶⁹

Kubrick crafts a vision of crisis and applies it to wider society by saying that there will be mass unemployment, the collapse of industry, and a decrease in tax revenue. 'No one will be richer', he insists, before concluding, 'I seriously urge you to use your position as a Member of Parliament to bring home to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the extreme urgency of the threat to our members' livelihood and our industry's future'.⁷⁰ Note how the draft letter refers to 'our members'

livelihood': Kubrick was personally drafting a letter that expounded his own personal views, but passing those views off as representative of the wider ACTT membership.

A final draft letter was composed by Kubrick on 16 April 1975 and forwarded to Les Wiles at the ACTT.⁷¹ In a letter accompanying the draft, Bernard Williams added:

I have arranged for the letters to be typed on an automatic typewriter, where each copy looks as though it is individually typed. The letters will then be sent down to you for Alan's [Sapper] signature. After they are signed, we will pick them up and put them in addressed envelopes and mail them, together with an offset copy of the *Evening Standard* article [...] Obviously we will need some ACTT letter heads for typing the letters.⁷²

The final draft sent by Kubrick to Sapper has a tight structure, with Kubrick having achieved a balance between the formal and factual language of the 'Effects' research memo and the emotional language of the draft letters from early April. In the opening paragraph, Kubrick finally combines his crisis narrative with the concerns about taxation in a way that has dramatic impact:

As a direct result of the 1974 budget provisions, relating to long-term foreign residents in Britain, the film industry is in danger of a ruinous loss of work and further closure of the already seriously diminished roster of studios, laboratories, photographic and electrical equipment rental companies, and a host of ancillary suppliers.⁷³

The remainder of the letter returns to listing statistics about the contribution of American filmmakers to the British film industry, the impact on their taxes of the Finance Act, and their willingness to compromise if the provisions of the Act were abandoned. Kubrick removes all ambiguity about the latter argument. He originally composed a sentence that read, 'The consensus of opinion seems to be that the Americans affected by this tax legislation are willing to pay the 1975 tax on 50% of their world-wide earnings'. Kubrick crosses this sentence out to replace it with a declarative sentence: 'The Americans are willing to pay the 1975 UK tax on 50% of their world-wide earnings, for services rendered in Britain'.⁷⁴ Kubrick also further inflates the ego of American filmmakers, stating, 'most of the important productions made in Britain have been produced and directed by Americans, rather than Britons. If these Americans are forced to leave [...] the British film industry will be left absolutely flat'.⁷⁵

An additional opening paragraph was added to the final version that would be sent to MPs. The tone of this new opening paragraph contrasts with Kubrick's writing and it is possible that Sapper or someone else at the ACTT added it to the letter: 'It is not my purpose in this letter to offer any direct criticism of the intent behind the recently enacted income tax legislation as it affects foreign nationals, as I can appreciate the essentially equitable purpose behind it'.⁷⁶ This paragraph deflates the emotional impact of Kubrick's argument and even undermines it by suggesting that the new tax provisions were reasonable. The letter, printed on ACTT letterhead and signed by Alan Sapper, would not be circulated to MPs until July 1975.

Kubrick and the Film Industry Working Party

By May 1975, Kubrick was in contact with Sir John Woolf. Woolf, a renowned British film producer, was one of several senior British film industry figures invited by Prime Minister Harold Wilson to a private dinner at 10 Downing Street in early May 1975. The aim of Wilson's dinner was to consider how to ensure a 'viable and prosperous' British film industry over the next decade.⁷⁷ Prior to the dinner, Woolf wrote a memo for Wilson of 'matters of importance to the British film industry', which was undersigned by seven other British film industry figures who had been issued invitations by Downing Street.⁷⁸ Woolf included a paragraph on the issue of income tax in his memo, in which he reiterated the arguments that had been put forth by Kubrick, but also acknowledging that,

The avoidance of tax as seen by any Government is undoubtedly reprehensible, but the fact remains that in the film industry a few people, from time to time, earn large sums of money as a result of their creative art being applied to a successful film. It is perhaps not unnatural that these artists, having no certainty that they will ever repeat their success, seek ways of protecting the money they have earned.⁷⁹

Woolf, rather than calling for the government to abandon its tax policies, asked for a 'relaxation of these tax regulations'.⁸⁰ Wilson's dinner led to the establishment of a Film Industry Working Party, which would commence work in August 1975.

Woolf had been in contact with Kubrick prior to the Downing Street dinner and had asked him to provide a memo about the impact of the Finance Act on the British film industry, as well as for a letter stating how it would impact Kubrick personally. Kubrick's first draft of this 'personal' letter indicates a more conciliatory tone, writing, 'I would very much like to stay and continue making films in England but [...] I'm afraid I cannot afford to'.⁸¹ Kubrick was once again using emotive language to describe his own situation: 'I believe my contirbution [sic] to English society the English economy is still a very positive one even if I am only taxed at the 1975 rate'.⁸² Kubrick's personal letter appears to have been an attempt at evoking empathy. He explains that he is not a filmmaker who wanted to avoid tax, but someone that could not afford the new tax, someone with a family that he needed to care for. As such, Kubrick personally needed to be exempted from the new tax provisions. But Kubrick ends the letter with an underlying threat: 'If the 1976 provisions are not amended or postponed, I shall have to leave England and set up home and shop somewhere else'.⁸³ Kubrick forwarded the letter, along with an amended version of his research memo, to Woolf. Woolf in turn forwarded the letter and memo to Harold Lever, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (a sinecure office of the British government). Lever had apparently told Woolf that 'if the case were proved' he would raise it with the prime minister.⁸⁴ In his letter to Lever, Woolf emphasised Kubrick's threat to leave the country and argued that his departure would be a significant cultural and financial loss to the UK. He concluded that Kubrick's case required 'intervention at ministerial level'.⁸⁵

Lever forwarded both Woolf's and Kubrick's letter and memo to Harold Wilson and Denis Healey on 16 June 1975, telling the prime minister and chancellor that the tax provisions of the Finance Act were going to have an alleged direct

impact on American filmmakers.⁸⁶ Healey, however, remained resolute in face of opposition to the tax provisions. Whilst Healey acknowledged that it would be 'disturbing' should overseas producers and directors leave the UK, he did not agree that meant abandoning tax legislation and that there was a 'limit to the extent to which we can give tax concessions to foreigners working and living here on a long-term basis'.⁸⁷ Healey specifically dismissed Kubrick's research memo and the crisis narrative he had crafted, stating that it was 'difficult to accept' that the nightmare scenario outlined—the collapse of the film industry—was a 'necessary consequence of the new provisions'.⁸⁸ Healey said that Kubrick's memo provided a misleading 'comparison of rates of direct taxation' and did not,

give any weight to the special reliefs which are available in respect of their foreign obligations to those who are not domiciled in this country and working for overseas concerns, nor to the extremely favourable treatment which they receive in respect of their overseas investment income.⁸⁹

Kubrick continued to seek ways of pressuring the government throughout the summer of 1975. He forwarded news clippings to Woolf, including an article that stated the Canadian-born director Norman Jewison was leaving the UK because of the new tax provisions. Kubrick—still not having heard back from the government at this stage—told Woolf that the news clipping 'will be of use to you in your contact with the government. [...] Perhaps this matter will soon obtain some kind of response from the powers that be'.⁹⁰ A week later, Kubrick sent Woolf another clipping from the *Evening Standard* which stated that Carl Foreman was leaving the UK to live in Los Angeles. Kubrick felt this was clear evidence of the 'negative results we are predicting', saying the clipping needed to be forwarded to the government.⁹¹ The news story concluded by stating that Kubrick was also 'considering the necessity of leaving Britain because of Mr Healey's tax changes coming into effect next April'.⁹² There is no direct evidence that Kubrick planted this story in the *Evening Standard*, but it is highly conceivable that he did so, particularly given that it mentions him and his intentions directly (Kubrick had form when it came to planting stories in the press, doing so since the early 1950s in a bid to further his own career).⁹³ Woolf, however, was not receptive to Kubrick's letter. Woolf told Kubrick that the news story was inaccurate. Foreman had not left the UK but was only filming in the USA because that was where the story of his new film took place. Woolf knew this because he was producing it in association with Foreman. Woolf also felt there was no need to forward further material to the government as ministers had all the information they required.⁹⁴

Faced with an impasse, Kubrick turned to ways of further utilising the ACTT to apply pressure to the government. Kubrick wanted the ACTT to issue the letter he had drafted for Alan Sapper before the parliamentary recess.⁹⁵ Alan Sapper agreed and the letters were circulated to the prime minister, the chancellor, and most MPs and ministers by mid-July 1975.⁹⁶ In addition, Kubrick drafted an ACTT press release for Sapper titled 'Extinction of British Feature Film Industry Forecast if Taxes Drive Americans Out'.⁹⁷ The three-page press release was the culmination of Kubrick's work and his various draft memos and letters from the previous five months. The press release falsely attributed quotes directly to Sapper

that were in fact lines written by Kubrick in April 1975. Nowhere in the press release is Kubrick mentioned. MPs and journalists reading the press release, and the letter sent in Sapper's name to MPs, would not be aware that both had been written by Kubrick. Instead, authorship of the press release and letter was attributed solely to the ACTT. The letter and the press release implored MPs to urge the government to abandon the Finance Act's tax provisions because a failure to do so 'almost certainly means the extinction of the British feature film industry'.⁹⁸

Archival records in the Harold Wilson papers and The National Archives indicate that the ACTT press release and 'Alan Sapper's' letter caught the attention of senior politicians. Martin Brown, the private secretary to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Sheldon, circulated a copy of Sapper's letter (what he referred to as a 'campaign letter'), along with news clippings, to cabinet ministers and civil servants, including Robin Butler, the prime minister's private secretary.⁹⁹ Similarly, Harold Lever contacted Denis Healey about Sapper's letter, stating 'Mr Sapper's letter confirms my point that the Unions are as much concerned as anyone about the effects of the new tax rules on the film industry'.¹⁰⁰ Sheldon had requested an official reply to Sapper's letter from the Inland Revenue.

On 7 August 1975, Sapper received an official response from Sheldon. Sheldon said that concessions had already been made as part of the 1974 Finance Act and that he did not believe the tax provisions would have the 'disastrous effects' on the British film industry that the 'Alan Sapper' letter predicted. Sheldon said that the new tax provisions were fair 'to those people affected by it and also fair to United Kingdom citizens who do not enjoy the tax advantages which these long-stay foreign residents will still enjoy, even after the new provisions come into force'.¹⁰¹

By August 1975, the Film Industry Working Party had commenced work and was receiving increased representations about the tax provisions, perhaps in part induced by the 'Alan Sapper' letter and the ACTT press release. Official submissions to the working group that requested changes to the Finance Act's tax provisions included Carl Foreman (who recommended a version of the USA's tax shelter scheme in the UK), the Cinematograph Exhibitions' Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Film Production Association (which claimed that the recent press release issued by the ACTT indicated that this was not a matter 'involving party political alignment'), Alexander Walker, and Stanley Kubrick's memo submitted by John Woolf.¹⁰²

The Working Party concluded its work by the end of the year and released a white paper in January 1976 titled *Future of the British Film Industry*. The white paper included a recommendation on personal taxation in light of the 'serious effect of British tax rules, notably the changes brought about by the Finance Act 1974, upon foreign film makers and artists ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom'.¹⁰³ Kubrick had been central to ensuring that the 1974 Finance Act's tax provisions were considered by the Working Party and he was integral to connecting the provisions to a crisis narrative about the British film industry. As the white paper noted, 'we accept the fact that these problems are not peculiar to the film industry, but we wish to emphasize the seriousness of the situation'.¹⁰⁴ However, the white paper erred on the side of caution, recognising the 'extreme difficulty' faced by the chancellor 'in effecting a lowering of rates of taxation in

the higher bands'.¹⁰⁵ The white paper instead offered a compromise: the spreading of tax payments by the affected foreign filmmakers, and other 'artistic, creative and technical individuals', over a period of years.¹⁰⁶ There was a general positive reaction to this specific recommendation in the right-wing press, which said it paved the way for exiled pop stars and other celebrities to return to the UK. As John Blake put it in the *Evening Standard*, 'The green, green grass of home was looking a lot more attractive to Britain's exiled pop stars today', whilst Brian Wesley in *The Sun* said that it amounted to an 'easing of the tax burden to encourage exiled British superstars to come home'.¹⁰⁷

Kubrick's reaction to the white paper was one of disappointment, however. Writing to Woolf on 27 January 1976, Kubrick said that the Working Party's recommendation was an inadequate solution:

Spreading my income for three years would not help me in anyway as I earn more or less an equal amount each year, and obviously by the end of the third year I would be paying tax on the same amount as I would be at the beginning of the first year, without the income spreading measure.¹⁰⁸

Kubrick maintained that there was only one solution: for the government to abandon the Finance Act's tax provisions and to instead allow him to continue paying tax on 50% of his earnings. He asked Woolf to make this clear to the Working Party and to 'formulate a more meaningful solution'.¹⁰⁹ Kubrick also wrote to Sapper reiterating that the recommendation was disappointing and that he would now 'definitely have to leave the country unless the tax bill is amended'.¹¹⁰ Kubrick urged Sapper to let the Working Party and government know that this was his plan.

Woolf responded to Kubrick to say that there was very little that could be practicably done at this stage: 'Quite frankly I do not think that there is any hope of the government agreeing to any relaxation of the tax rules specifically for the film industry'.¹¹¹ Woolf indicated that Kubrick should be satisfied with the white paper recommendation. Woolf argued that what had been achieved in including the recommendation was 'help [for] individuals in film production whose employment is spasmodic'.¹¹² Woolf acknowledged that this would not 'help you [Kubrick] and the other few in your bracket', perhaps indicating that Kubrick was part of a wealthy elite that should be standing up for the rights of the whole film industry work force, particularly its precariat, rather than just for himself.

The secret politician

By April 1976, the Finance Act's tax provisions had come into effect. As such, Kubrick now turned his efforts to forcing the government to amend the Finance Act, once again using Alan Sapper and the ACTT to influence events. Kubrick suggested that Sapper write a letter to Denis Healey 'to present your views' and to arrange a meeting with him.¹¹³ Kubrick was also pressuring Sapper to do further media interviews, telling him:

Someone like Alexander Walker, who is very knowledgeable and sympathetic would probably give you important space for an interview which presented your views. I know Alex very well, and if you are interested in discussing this

with him, I will be happy to ring him up and tell him how you feel. I don't think we should leave things as they stand.¹¹⁴

When using the phrase 'your views', Kubrick arguably was suggesting that Sapper represent Kubrick's views, not his own. Still, whatever Kubrick's intentions, Sapper agreed. Kubrick arranged the interview with Alexander Walker, along with subsequent radio interviews.¹¹⁵ Kubrick was taking on a public relations role for Sapper, recommending that he alter his language and argument in future interviews. Having consulted 'high powered tax lawyers', Kubrick told Sapper that when discussing the tax provisions he should not mix 'foreign people with British people as the change in the tax law which would include the British people, would be so sweeping as to make it beyond reasonable consideration at this time'.¹¹⁶ In effect, Kubrick was steering Sapper away from representing British workers to represent just him instead. Kubrick was also at this time receiving advice from his tax lawyers to help him write a proposed clause amendment that would create a special tax category for foreign filmmakers. The clause amendment would exempt foreign filmmakers from paying full UK tax on 75% of their worldwide earnings, and instead pay it on only 50%.

In May 1976, Kubrick suggested that the ACTT participate in another campaign mail-out to all MPs, with the aim of soliciting support for his amendment clause. He told Sapper that a new statement should be written ('in the form of an announcement from you [Sapper]') and circulated, along with news cuttings from the *Evening Standard*, including a story about Joseph Losey moving to France to avoid UK tax.¹¹⁷ Kubrick said that he would get his own staff to take care 'of the whole mailing for you [...] we could have it duplicated and arrange for the envelopes to be addressed and stamped, the articles reproduced'.¹¹⁸ Kubrick drafted the new statement throughout May 1976, and it was typed onto ACTT letterhead in June 1976. The letter was again signed by Sapper, with no mention of Kubrick's involvement. In the letter, MPs were warned that 'The British Film Industry is in danger of becoming a cottage industry' because of the Finance Act's tax provisions.¹¹⁹ And the letter reiterated the facts about the tax provisions that Kubrick had set out many times over the past year. The letter refers to Joseph Losey having left the UK because of the new tax provisions, with more American filmmakers planning to follow. The situation was 'disastrous' for the British film industry, which the letter warned 'exists on a perilous level'. The letter ended by proposing an amendment to the Finance Act:

Foreign creative artists [...] would pay full U.K. tax on 50% of their worldwide earnings, derived from work performed in the United Kingdom, rather than the present 75%. This would bring their tax payments into line with the U.S. tax which they pay, and would eliminate the problem.¹²⁰

The letter asked for MPs to endorse the amendment clause in principle by responding to Sapper directly. The letter was circulated with a press release, again written by Kubrick, titled 'Union forecast of film industry collapse if new taxes force foreigners to leave'.¹²¹ And, as before, the press release was reported in national and international media, attributing the facts and quotes that had been written by Kubrick to Sapper.¹²² Kubrick's name, once again, was absent.

The new mailout came after Alan Sapper had received correspondence from Robert Sheldon, the Financial Secretary, on 3 June 1976, in which it was confirmed that the Treasury would not alter the Finance Act's tax provisions. Sheldon confirmed the Treasury's position as follows:

We found it difficult to justify allowing a situation to continue indefinitely where for example an American executive employed by an international company who has been living here for more than nine years, and is to all intents and purposes settled here permanently, pays tax on only half his salary while his British colleague with the same company pays tax on the whole. Even on the 75 percent basis of taxation, the long-stay foreigner will still be getting tax concessions.¹²³

On being given the letter by Sapper, Kubrick immediately sought advice from tax lawyers and drafted a response to Sheldon. Again, the letter was signed in Sapper's name, despite being written by Kubrick.¹²⁴ Kubrick argued that the problem was the rate of tax in the UK. In the USA, foreign artists would only pay 50% tax, compared to the 83% rate in the UK on 75% of their earnings. This, Kubrick argued, represented a 'maximum tax rate of 62.25%, which is an increase of 25% on the tax which would be paid in the United States'.¹²⁵ Kubrick was ignoring the democratic argument that Sheldon was making: that those who lived in the UK were required to pay an equal amount of tax compared to British citizens. Instead, Kubrick was focused on his UK rate of tax compared to the USA. Kubrick said Sheldon's reasoning was wrong because foreigners were not UK citizens and they 'always had the option of returning to his own country'.¹²⁶ The letter concluded by proposing Sheldon consider implementing the amendment clause to the Finance Act.

With the Labour government refusing to make any concessions on tax for wealthy foreign residents, Kubrick decided to emerge from the shadows and make direct contact with Denis Healey. Writing to Healey on 23 May 1977, Kubrick requested a meeting to discuss 'The crisis in the British film industry created by the departure of the American film colony'.¹²⁷ Kubrick used the same arguments as before: that the Finance Act's tax provisions were destroying the British film industry because it was propped up by American filmmakers, who were now leaving the UK. He claimed that 'only an ever dwindling handful of Americans remain' and that they too were preparing to leave.¹²⁸ Regardless of what Healey might think or want, Kubrick insisted that the only sustainable form of funding for the British film industry came from Hollywood, and suggested that government interventions had always, and would always, fail:

The much publicised but token efforts to prop up the British Film Industry, which seem to occur from time to time, are not in any way meaningful, and without a renewed American investment programme there will soon be no British Film Industry at all.¹²⁹

Kubrick said that the only solution was his draft amendment clause to the Finance Act, which would allow long-term foreign residents in the UK like himself to pay, in effect, a maximum tax rate of 50% on 50% of their world-wide earnings:

This proposal would put the tax paid by Americans in Britain in line with the tax they pay to the United States [...] and I am certain that it would very quickly bring back almost all of the people who have left.¹³⁰

Healey replied to Kubrick on 21 June 1977. He dismissed Kubrick's amendment clause, writing that it was not 'the most effective way of tackling the industry's problems'.¹³¹ Healey reiterated the previous argument made by Sheldon: that there was an underlying democratic need to tax people like Kubrick—long-term foreign residents living in the UK—in the same way that British citizens were being taxed.

Perhaps in anticipation of Healey's negative response, and maybe sensing that Labour would not remain in government come the 1979 general election, Kubrick approached the Conservative Party, asking for a meeting with the Shadow Chancellor Geoffrey Howe.¹³² Kubrick sent Howe a copy of his amendment clause. Howe's response to Kubrick was more positive: 'I have not previously seen suggested the particular solution that you put forward and I will certainly give it close consideration and be in touch with you again'.¹³³ Howe recognised that Kubrick was trying to create a special tax category for himself, what Howe described as a 'special escape route from the nonsensical UK tax system'.¹³⁴ But whereas Healey ultimately found Kubrick's attempts at exemption unfair and undemocratic, Howe was receptive saying, 'it may well be justifiable in this case to reach out for part of the cake until one is in a position to go for the whole'.¹³⁵

Kubrick did not achieve his goal of forcing the Labour government to abandon or amend its tax provisions on the wealthiest in the UK. However, two years later, following the election of Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party, Geoffrey Howe delivered a budget in June 1979 in which the maximum UK tax rate was reduced from 83% to 60%. This would be reduced further throughout the premierships of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Kubrick's special tax status may not have been granted, but it was not necessary by the 1980s, as he had received what he wanted in the form of substantial income tax cuts for the rich.

Conclusion

Archival records indicate that Kubrick was engaged in a process of manipulation and deception in a bid to force the Labour government to either abandon or amend the tax provisions of the 1974 Finance Act. Kubrick's aim was to create a special tax category that would exempt him, and other foreign residents that had lived in the UK for a decade or more, from Labour's legislation and instead allow him to pay tax on only 50% of his earnings. Kubrick was working in the shadows to influence political events and change tax policy. He was responsible for writing ACTT press releases and letters, and organising ACTT campaign mailouts, in which he misrepresented his own views on income tax as that of the wider union membership. Material written by Kubrick was being signed in the name of Alan Sapper and circulated to the press, MPs, ministers, and even the prime minister. In effect, Kubrick was undermining and subverting trade union democracy. The ACTT was also complicit in this process, with Les Wiles and Alan Sapper both

aware of what was happening. They could have made it clear that the letters and press releases had been drafted by Kubrick but chose not to do so. The ACTT campaign was, therefore, misleading. Kubrick's efforts also indicate a level of manipulation of Alan Sapper and the ACTT, using the union for his own lobbying efforts and to represent the views of a small handful of very wealthy, very powerful, and very well-connected American filmmakers.

The archival record also reveals that Kubrick was central to exacerbating a crisis narrative that blamed Labour's Finance Act for the imminent collapse of the British film industry in the 1970s. Kubrick exploited this crisis narrative for his own personal gain. And he disseminated the narrative through his media contact Alexander Walker, writing and planting stories in the *Evening Standard*. He was also using his own staff to organise media interviews for Alan Sapper, as well as briefing Sapper on what to say. Kubrick had the wealth and access to high-level tax lawyers and accountants that allowed him to write expert-informed memos and to draft an amendment clause. He also had the power, access and privilege to directly contact senior politicians, including the chancellor and shadow chancellor, to propose his own exemption from tax legislation through his amendment clause. Kubrick's power, wealth, and privilege entitled him to threaten senior politicians that he would leave the UK and thereby imperil the film industry. Whilst Kubrick failed to force the Labour government to abandon or amend the Finance Act's tax provisions, he did succeed in ensuring that income tax was given consideration by Harold Wilson's Film Industry Working Party and that ultimately a recommendation was made in the 1976 *Future of the British Film Industry* white paper.

The case study reveals new perspectives on Kubrick's power, privilege, and access by the 1970s that allowed him to undertake this activity. He had key contacts at high levels that allowed him to manipulate events and who facilitated his contact with politicians and the media. Journalist Alexander Walker was complicit in collaborating with Kubrick on news stories for the *Evening Standard*. Given what the archival record reveals, Walker's account of the 1970s in *National Heroes*, in particular his discussion of the 1974 Finance Act, must be considered highly unreliable.

The case study also reveals new perspectives on the British film industry's crisis in the 1970s. The archival record reveals how Kubrick was persistently redrafting letters and press releases to further heighten the crisis narrative about the British film industry, adopting ever more dramatic language and phrases for emotional impact: from 'ruinous loss' to 'peril' to 'collapse', Kubrick moved his argument from being about the 'exodus' of a group of American filmmakers to emphasise the annihilation of an entire industry. I would suggest there is further work to be conducted on the crisis narratives that have perpetuated throughout the history of the British film industry, building on the recent work of scholars like James Chapman. As Chapman has argued, despite the persistent claims of the imminent collapse of the British film industry, it has always managed to survive.¹³⁶

There is no indication in the archival record that Kubrick had any wider interest in what he was doing beyond forcing the government to abandon or amend its tax policies. But despite Kubrick's claims, the British film industry did not ultimately collapse, and Kubrick did not follow through on his threats to leave the UK.

Instead, his threats can be seen as typical behaviour by those in the Establishment seeking to intimidate governments into reversing unfavourable policy. Arguably, by the 1970s, Kubrick was part of the Establishment. Owen Jones defines the Establishment as a powerful network of wealthy individuals (regardless of their background, sexuality, ethnicity, gender) who are 'bound together by common economic interests and a shared set of mentalities: in particular a mentality that holds that those at the top deserve ever greater power and wealth'.¹³⁷ The Establishment are unaccountable and subvert and threaten democracy. The mentality of this powerful network is summed up, according to Jones, by an attitude of 'because I'm worth it'.¹³⁸ In other words, the Establishment believes in its own deserving position, in its own wealth, and in its own right to be rich.¹³⁹ This attitude is on display repeatedly in the archival record, with Kubrick often talking of the inherent worth to the British economy of a handful of American film directors.

The terms of the political debate are simultaneously set by the Establishment through its ownership of media outlets or the shared common network that allows access to the media. This hegemonic control sees the Establishment maintain its position and dominance through consent. As Jones points out, 'the British media is an integral part of the British Establishment; its owners share the same underlying assumptions and mantras'.¹⁴⁰ The archival record reveals exactly this shared common interest, with Alexander Walker and Stanley Kubrick's news stories in the *Evening Standard* arguing that whether fair or unfair, the rich had to be taxed less.

Jones argues that the Establishment prefer that its privilege, power, and access remain hidden from public view. Kubrick clearly demonstrated such an attitude, keeping himself anonymous wherever possible and manipulating events from the shadows. With little scrutiny, the Establishment can subvert democratic rules and law: from tax avoidance to financial impropriety, excessive banking bonuses or expenses scandals. Tax avoidance by the wealthiest in society is central to the continued cycle of inequality in the UK.¹⁴¹ While tax avoidance is technically not illegal, it is symptomatic of the inequalities inherently built into the UK's economic and social structures that allow the Establishment to behave in such a way. As Jones argues, the law is 'rigged in favour of the wealthiest' and the wealthy are able to 'hire an army of accountants and lawyers to avoid paying the amount of tax intended by parliamentary legislation'.¹⁴² It is this kind of behaviour that was exposed, but not stopped, by *The Guardian's* Panama Papers investigation in 2016. The investigation revealed that Stanley Kubrick was one of many wealthy individuals who used tax shelters. A tax shelter is, 'an arrangement protecting part or all of a person's income from taxation'.¹⁴³ *The Guardian* investigation showed that Kubrick, 'created tax shelters to protect not just the value and ownership of his home, but also profits from some of his movies through a complex network of off-shore companies'.¹⁴⁴

Whilst Kubrick's efforts to force Labour to change its tax legislation failed, the case study in this article is illustrative of the wider (and usually hidden) structures of inequality and networks of power, privilege, wealth and access in the British film industry. Archival research can open and expose these networks, revealing how they subvert and undermine democracy, and even potentially challenging the deep-seated structural inequalities that are at the heart of not only

the British film industry, but the British and Western society and economy more broadly.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes

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