

## Introduction

The project investigates the use of documentary film as a public relations tool by the United Nations (UN) for worldwide promotion of its first peacekeeping intervention. In October 1956, the UN General Assembly deployed the first multinational UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to Egypt with the consent of the Egyptian Government. The force was sent to help resolve the crisis which had arisen following the invasion of Egypt by British, French and Israeli forces in October 1956 with the aim of controlling the Suez Canal and toppling Colonel Nasser, the Egyptian President.

This multinational military intervention was communicated using a new type of public relations that sought to win support for the UN's post-war peacekeeping work from a global public. The 1957 documentary film, *The Blue Vanguard*, was made by the UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) to capture this episode in a filmic format and promote the idea of transnational intervention worldwide through cinema. It was one of the first films made for the UN by UK film director, Thorold Dickinson, who arrived as Chief of Film at the UN in October 1956, and was intended to provide a visual record of the UN's success in enforcing peace in the post-war era. Against the temporal background of a World War that had ended just 10 years previously, *The Blue Vanguard* has a place in public relations history as an early attempt to use documentary for cross-border communications of the work of the UN as an institution of global governance that relied on transnational support in order to operate.

This article offers critical historical reflection on the filmic public relations narratives in *The Blue Vanguard* that advocated global co-operation and support for the transnational governance proposition of the UN in the post-war period. The project also provides an interpretation of the iconography and visuality of peacekeeping (Loukopoulou, 2016) in the documentary, and the different filmic genres used to convey the UN's desired public information messaging. The article is offered as a transnational addition to a public relations history that has so far – and understandably perhaps – focussed more on “fostering national histories” or perspectives (Watson, 2015, p. 17) which almost by definition have the drawback that that they do not always take account of transnational PR activity (Fitch and L'Etang, 2017, p125). More specifically, the project seeks to inquire into the use of a documentary film in an early episode of the UN's transnational public relations outreach and also to investigate what has been described as the “fascinating and underexplored period” (Horne and Swaab, 2008, p. 17) of Thorold Dickinson's years at the UN's Department of Public Information as it grappled with

the challenges of didactic film-making as part of its global public relations mission on behalf of the UN.

### **From wartime propaganda to the visual communication of peace**

The post-war project of re-construction and peace-building in Europe followed an era of public relations in the continent described by Bentele (1997) in his stratified model as media relations and political propaganda under the Nazi regime in the case of his native Germany. If the Nazi Party association is put aside, this descriptor can be fairly applied across the continent for government communications throughout the 1930s and 1940s as nations shared a common goal of state-level communications in order to achieve nationalistic war goals. This genre of national propaganda typically combined material targeted at the local population in order to “maintain morale at home” with external propaganda that stressed the military strengths of the country in order to discourage the enemy and “influence opinion abroad” (Welch, 2016, p. 7). During this era of nation-based wartime promotion of military effort – which as Moloney (2006, p.43) has pointed out was highly successful - the interchange of the terms public relations, public information and propaganda was commonplace and uncontroversial. Although this usage may appear inaccurate to a modern audience, according to L’Etang (1998, p. 414), it is “historically more authentic to employ terms this way”. McKie and Munshi (2007, p.33) brought rare attention to the idea of public relations or propaganda for peace in their discussion of the “euphemism of public diplomacy” (or transnational public relations) as practised US State Department and the US Information Agency and in particular the description of its operations by a former employee, Nancy Snow. Her central insight is that propagandists acting on behalf of states and non-state actors dominate the media landscape “though message and force” and that “peace propaganda needs the same amount of diligence and hard work” if it is to succeed (Snow, 2004, p.2).

Beyond academic literature, in March 2017, London’s Imperial War Museum presented a major exhibition entitled *People Power: Fighting for Peace*, that consisted of written and visual artefacts how peace activists over the last 100 years or so had used “the creative against the destructive in ways that reflect the cultural mood” (Imperial War Museum, 2017) to propagate their message. The visual aspects of peace were the subject of a Tate Liverpool Exhibition in 2010 entitled *Picasso: Peace and Freedom* which included a chronicle of the artist’s involvement in the peace movement from 1944 onwards (Loukopoulou, 2016), with his art during this period recording human conflict but also expressing “a deep desire for peace,

international understanding and equality” (Tate Liverpool, 2010). The exhibition centred on Picasso’s dove which was adopted as the international emblem of the post-war peace movement. The distinctive dove drawing expressed internationalism through a symbol of hope that transcended the aesthetic, ideological and nationalistic divisions of Eastern and Western oppositional politics in the Cold War. A related concern with the “aesthetical dimension” of public relations was at the core of Xifra and Heath’s (2018, p. 28) analysis of Picasso’s Guernica mural of the Spanish Civil War as fulfilling a rhetorical and discursive role of “publicizing atrocity” Alongside these varied artistic visions of co-operation, the UN and its various agencies were also taking practical steps to transcend national boundaries, to encourage a more global political outlook and to generate support among citizens for its vision of transnational governance and peacekeeping.

### **The United Nations and the Department of Public Information**

The United Nations Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by 50 countries. The Department of Public Information (DPI) was established a year later in 1946, by General Assembly resolution 13 (I) with a mission to “to promote global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations” (UNDPI web site). In addition to the efforts of the UN’s Department of Public Information to communicate the organisation’s goal of global peace, by the early 1950s, other agencies of the UN had begun to promote these themes. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) based in Paris undertook a range of projects under the “for a better world” theme that included exhibitions, posters and sponsorship of the International Society for Education through Art. UNESCO’s role in promoting peace was described by one UN historian as the persuasive task of “mental engineering in the shadow of the aggression of World War II” (Duedahl, 2016, p. 3). In order to achieve this goal, UNESCO was an enthusiastic commissioner of what it called information films, which were deployed at a time when cinema going was at a high point ahead of the audience fragmentation that followed the adoption of television. Back and UN headquarters in New York, minutes of a 1946 meeting of the UN’s Consultative Committee of Public Information formalised the ambitions that the UN had for the use of film in its public information and public relations outreach, using the terms interchangeably (Consultative Committee of Public Information of the United Nations, 1946). This meeting was followed by to the establishment of the United Nations Film Board (UNFB) in New York in 1947 as part of the UN’s Department of Public Information with a mandate to coordinate production and distribution of film within the UN and its associated agencies. The creation of the board reflected the UN’s enthusiasm for film

as a tool of communication that was “as necessary for peace and construction of the post-war world as it had been for the war effort” (Langlois, 2016, p. 75). Soon afterwards, UN publications recorded how film was seen by the institution as “a universal medium to propagate a universal declaration (“Films,” 1950) at a time when the idea of a propaganda for international co-operation was judged uncontroversial.

### **Documentary film making, propaganda and public information**

The use of public information films in political communication has been included within the scope of public relations historical scholarship by L’Etang (2004) who included the documentaries of John Grierson and others as part of the history of public relations in the UK. The persuasive intent of Grierson’s filmic output was assessed by Moloney (2006, p. 8) as “promotional documentary” and the place of documentary films in public relations history and its role as a tool of public information was confirmed by Anthony (2012, p. 13) who described the life of Sir Stephen Tallents, an important commissioner of documentaries from Grierson and others while he was director of the UK’s Empire Marketing Board (EMB). Propaganda films of World War II, including documentaries, have been the subject of communicative historical investigations such as Xifra and Girona’s (2012) analysis of Frank Capra’s *Why we Fight* documentary and Arnett and St. John’s (2014) case study on The National Association of Manufacturers’ short film *Your Town*, which they placed in the “community relations” category. Investigations by cultural and filmic specialists have provided sociological and ideological perspectives on wartime cinema that complement the communicative focus of public relations scholars and offered fresh insight into “a means of persuading and communicating that was also spectacle” (Fox (2007, p. 1). This varied scholarship is evidence of interest in critically examining films as historical artefacts in their own right and also their role (or intended role) as cinematic “propaganda and public relations discourse” (Quintana and Xifra, 2016, p. 288). The overtly didactic intent of both the UN and Thorold Dickinson in propagating the UN’s vision of transnational governance makes *The Blue Vanguard* documentary a suitable object for historical investigation from a public relations perspective, because of the strategic intent of both parties (as commissioner and producer) alongside human agency on the part of its intended global audience in the terms of Russell and Lamme (2016). Additionally, the film functioned as part of a wider programme by the United Nations and related agencies such as UNESCO to promote a transnational governance role, acknowledging as Dickinson himself did that in the post war political environment, “the World is our Public” (Dickinson, 1957a) and the role of the UNDPI’s Film Unit in this effort was “generalising the

way in which film can tell particular stories” in order to achieve this supranational communicative goal. What follows is an attempt to investigate how the UNDPI’s Film Unit sought to propagate that vision and use film to communicate the idea of peacekeeping to the post-war world, and specifically to address the following research question:

What cinematic narratives and iconographies were used by the United Nations Department of Public Information to create a public relations discourse of transnational co-operation in *The Blue Vanguard* documentary?

## **Methodology**

The methodological basis for this historical paper was a triangulation of three approaches that were combined to provide an interpretation of the narrative and visual aspects of *The Blue Vanguard* that make up the public relations discourse in the documentary. The rationale for this combination was the need to extract the public information content from the film in the form of the meanings, ideologies and narratives of the UN deployment, alongside the aesthetics of how the UNEF’s was represented in the film. These elements are summarised in the discussion of findings with the individual and institutional drivers behind the making of the film also investigated.

## ***Auteur Study***

Auteurist (or authorship) study addresses how and why a film was made in a theoretical formulation that sees the director and sponsors as embodying the cinematic output (Allen and Gomery, 1985, p. 71). This theoretical frame is highly practical as it points to the types of sources and material that could be useful in understanding the individual and institutional motives and communicative goals behind the making of the film and its communicative goals. The element of institutional authorship in this case came from the United Nations, which funded the project through the UNDPI. Consideration of this institutional authorship was organised using aspects of historical institutionalist methodology (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Bannerman and Haggart, 2015; Sandhu, 2015) alongside more conventional individual authorship study into the “form, style and meanings” (Thompson & Bordwell, 1994, p. 492) of the film. The authorship investigation was based on scrutiny of biographies, archival papers and published interviews with Thorold Dickinson relating to the film. Sources consulted included primary historical documents in three archives with comparisons made across source material relating to *The Blue Vanguard* in the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archives in London, the personal papers of the director, Thorold Dickinson in the University of the Arts

London Archives and Special Collections Centre and the United Nations Archives and Records Management Section in New York. The line of historical inquiry was enhanced by notes for speeches prepared by Dickinson around the time of the film's production and aftermath, in which he discussed the project, his work at the UN Film Unit and the role of film as a tool for public information on behalf of the UN. .

### ***Narrative analysis***

Both the narrative and visual analysis depended upon an interpretive approach, in which the film, its meaning and its compositional elements were analysed using methodology based on Geertz's (1973) semiotic approach that assumes films can be read in the same way as texts (Monaco, 1981, p. 450). Interpretive notes from viewings and resulting analysis led to coding of the different symbolic and communicative aspects of the film in a process that reduced the visual artefact "to its own grammatical components" (Howells, 2003, p. 193) or visual vocabulary. The film itself was viewed and analysed using the critical visual methodology proposed by Rose (2012, p. 27) to investigate the "site of the image" alongside a consideration of composition and meaning, treating the documentary as a realistic text.

### ***Visual analysis and iconography***

The aim of the visual investigation was to extract and interpret the meanings, messages and ideology of the UNEF deployment that appears in *The Blue Vanguard*. This was achieved through an interpretive analysis of the visualisations of the territory, the soldiers of the UNEF and the imagery selected to document their peacekeeping intervention. This line of inquiry also included a focus on the iconography of soldiering and military hardware being deployed for peaceful ends, as well as considering the different filmic genres used to show the deployment and the promotional aestheticisation of the multi-national force. Such iconography was considered in relation to the "visual language of a genre" – such as the talking heads of documentaries - which is central to thinking about a system of "genre recognition and meaning" (Hansen et al., p. 173) in which physical objects are signifiers, such as the buffer zone markings, empty deserts and the soldiers integrating with locals.

## **Findings**

### ***Auteur Study***

Thorold Dickinson was a successful British film director, who had worked in the Ealing Studios in London before making several public information films in World War II. He was invited to

become the first Chief of the United Nations Film Services Office, part of the UNDPI, on 2 October 1956 and had five film projects underway by November 1956. Understandably in view of the volume of work, Dickinson did not direct but gave himself the role of “UN production liaison” on *The Blue Vanguard* fulfilling a role he described as filmwright” (Richards, 1986, p.24) and appointing Ian MacNeill as both script writer and director on the ground, although he remained actively involved in the editing process. Because the UN’s film-making infrastructure was limited, the production was made by the National Film Board of Canada for the UN Department of Public Information. According to a news report in Canada, the UNDPI’s “limited budget and lack of plant and equipment” at the time meant that it relied on “the facilities of its member states for most of its film production” (Montreal Star, 1957). In line with his international outlook, Dickinson is swift to praise his Canadian crew for adopting the UN’s international outlook and going on to produce a film from the viewpoint of the United Nations rather than Canada. “When they left the Dorval Airport at Montreal, these Canadians also left their nationality behind them” said Dickinson in an interview with the Montreal Star (1957).

Dickinson seems to have thought deeply about the intersection between documentary and propaganda and had an enduring concern that “in the field of putting ideas on film, worship of the word documentary needs to be re-assessed” and that “a fresh slant on the film medium as a motivational force and a creative art is in order” for a term that “has come to be identified with pamphlet films and dull narratives,” as well as “slippery propaganda” (Dickinson, 1957, p. 5). He described his task in the UN’s Public Information Film Division as “increasing the impact of the UN visually” with his primary target audience being the “awkward adult” who may not be accepting of the UN as a world force, either through disillusionment with earlier attempts to create an effective peacekeeping institution or through a lack of information (Dickinson, 1957b). In particular, he felt that the urgent task for his UN public information films was to encourage “the development of understanding and compassion [...] the creation of a climate of sympathy as opposed to the prevailing clangour of fear or the dead weight of indifference” (Dickinson, 1963, p. 150)

### **Narrative Analysis**

The public information narrative of *The Blue Vanguard* stresses the modernity of the UN’s transnational approach from the outset, with a voiceover in the opening sequence describing the novelty of the UNEF’s supra-national role:

A new kind of Army with a new kind of job. To keep the peace through a buffer zone.  
An international force. (The Blue Vanguard, 1957)

This opening narration is accompanied by an original score of symphonic and military-style music by Canadian composer, Colin McPhee that softens as the film moves to scenes of life in Egypt. The narrative is structured in date sequence and skilfully mixes realistic newsreel-type footage of diplomatic activity at the UN General Assembly in New York (that was in fact shot under Dickinson's supervision) with, operational planning and troop deployment in multiple locations. Some segments also use newsreel footage of the action on the ground in Egypt and this realistic approach and the use of actual participants in the UNEF deployment (rather than actors) and contemporary newsreel is a recurring feature of Dickinson's film-making that was first explored in the wartime training and public information film, *The Next of Kin*. In this case, it is used as a narrative device to emphasise to a global audience that the UN's work is not a political abstraction but involves real soldiers from around the world working together as one united force to establish and maintain the ceasefire on the ground. This narrative is recorded using the observatory camera angles used in documentary, which is in keeping with the factual and newsreel style adopted for the film overall. The demarcation line appears several times in the film on maps as UN diplomats and commanders in New York makes plans and the relevant committees of the UN discuss the deployment. Together, these elements form a visual propagation of how the UNEF is executing a new type of military intervention that depends on transnational co-operation in order to enforce peace. Lengthy aerial views of Egypt at the beginning of the film are central to the narrative that establishes the reality of the buffer zone in the documentary.

Varied national voices in the narrative and verbal registers - from the formal to the casual, from heads of state to soldiers on the ground - are used to convey the multi-cultural nature of the UNEF – emphasising differences in tradition, dress and religion, for example. In addition to the narrator, we hear the campaign narrated through the eyes (and also hear the voices) of Norwegian and Canadian soldiers, as well as seeing troops from different nations (including Ghana, India and Indonesia) sharing their cultures over Christmas. Columbians decorate a Christmas tree, Indian pipers provide music and Indonesian dancers some entertainment. Despite their small numbers, the Yugoslav contingent feature prominently as it was the only communist country to send troops and this involvement was a message the UN wished to emphasise. Similarly, there is a pervading tone of optimism and use of humour in places to defuse any sense of tension. In one sequence, a Norwegian soldier narrates how he and his



comrades passed British and French soldiers who waved at them on the train, observing that “they seemed friendly” and “there was no trouble.”

The sequential narrative material of the Suez crisis being defused step by step through the mixture of diplomatic settlement at the UN in New York and the peacekeeping action in Egypt is interspersed with vignettes of individual soldiers’ experiences, such as that of a Canadian bomb disposal specialist, who talks in a folksy style of taking out the “fangs” or pressure switches from landmines and so making them safe. Again, the narrative is one of threats being removed and danger defused by the men of the UNEF. When the operation moves into a peacekeeping mode as a political settlement is reached, the narrative – and related iconography – conveys a message of cultural education as troops from different nations share their culture. This narrative echoed UNESCO’s campaign themes from the period for education and cultural sharing “for a better world” and the film includes scenes of soldiers taking tours of the pyramids and laying on displays of national dancing and music for their UNEF colleagues. As the canal is cleared and the first convoy of merchant ships sails up the Suez Canal again, the narrator closes the story with a series of public relations messages that celebrate the success of the UNEF: “The UNEF has worked well. Swiftly, competently and almost without serious incident.”

Over soaring symphonic music and aerial footage of the buffer zone, the film concludes in a voiceover:

The orders were carried out. This was the result. The defence line. A frontier where men must be diplomats as well as soldiers. The men of the United Nations Emergency Force are in the middle. To this frontier, these men brought peace.  
(The Blue Vanguard, 1957)

### **Iconographic analysis**

The iconography of the *The Blue Vanguard* documentary starts with the title itself and the opening still shot which shows a tableau of the light blue helmet of the UNEF against the light blue flag of the UN (UNEF soldiers were known as the blue helmets or the blue berets because of their light blue headgear). This piece of iconographic messaging is followed by the aerial views of the buffer zone that the blue helmets have come to enforce. This use of aeriality in documentary films in this period has been regarded as highly iconic in the way it was deployed to both “transform social perceptions of space and terrain” and also influence (in the terms of cinematicity) “how those spaces were managed and controlled” Geiger, 2015, p, 133) using a

cinematic device not only as representation of the UNEF's role and also to encourage the global public Dickinson identified as his audience to "come to terms with an increasingly globalised world". The imagery of soldiers sharing their culture through entertainments featuring traditional dancing and music was a further expression of this new globalised world coming to life on the screen as a visualisation of cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

As the demilitarisation phase gets underway in Egypt after agreement is reached at UN headquarters in New York, there are iconic scenes in which Britain sells some of its military vehicles to the UN to be used for patrolling the buffer zone. The film shows the vehicles being painted white for this new peacekeeping role, as a symbol of transformation of the machinery of war to pursue peaceful goals. Other iconography of the old nationalistic military infrastructure giving way to the modern transnational peacekeeping governance of the UN includes the film sequence of a British Army commander handing back the airfield seized at Port Said and the French handing over facilities to the Columbians. The UN's role as honest broker and the novelty of the role is reinforced verbally as the narrator describes as a "real formal affair" in the form of a specially-designed ceremony, because no-one had ever handed an airport over to the UN before." As peace prevails in Egypt, this fluidity and transformational change for the good is emphasised with the imagery of the soldiers enjoying exploring the sites of Egypt and the new global culture as "the men of United Nations begin to mix their roles as tourists as well as soldiers".

### **The Aftermath**

This filmic response by Dickinson faced the challenge of telling the story of the UNEF to a global audience, while also not offending the multiple sponsors at the United Nations. It was a fate that Dickinson anticipated in a letter he wrote during final editing and re-recording of the *Blue Vanguard* in Montreal in an hour-long format for television, addressing what he called the "inevitable question: Have you been banned again?" (Dickinson, 1958). In fact, the film was never put on general release due to objections by the three aggressor nations in the Suez crisis, France, Great Britain and Israel. In a memorandum to Dickinson dated 22 May 1958, the deputy director of the UNDPI's Radio and Visual Services Division, Franco Passigli, passes on an aide memoire of his own impressions of the objections of the French Delegation along with a copy of the letter of objection from the Israelis. The attached summary contains a list of objections to the public information narrative of the film and its iconography from the French point of view:

1. Egypt appears to be an innocent victim.
2. The Anglo-French forces appear to have sunk the ships in the Suez Canal.
3. A UNEF soldier's remarks (Norwegian?) give the impression that UNEF was operating against UK and France, not with their consent.
4. Frequent photos of Nasser give a pro-Nasser, pro-Arab "allure." (Passigli, 1958, TD?).

In the case of Israel, the summary offered includes the following points of objection:

1. There is no hint of the causes which led to Israel's advance into Sinai. The film oversimplifies and so distorts history.
2. Egyptian victory demonstrations are made to appear spontaneous: in fact they were organised. The film appears to promote the political fortunes of Nasser.
3. The Israeli destruction of the Sinai roads appears to have been done to obstruct UNEF rather than Egypt as was the real case.
4. There is a gratuitous reference to Arab refugees, but no reference to Egypt's belligerence against Israel or the barring of the Suez Canal to Israel. (Kidron, 1958)

These points of summary were significantly expanded in a letter dated 16 June 1958 to Dickinson from Israel's First Secretary of Israel's Mission to the United Nations, which contained three pages of objections (Karni, 1958). The result was that after initial copies were sent out to UN Centre Directors around the world, the film was re-called in a letter from the UNDPI in New York of 11 June) that stated simply that "after further consideration, it has now been decided that we are not to proceed with distribution of *The Blue Vanguard* film at this present time." Writing later in his career, Dickinson remained frustrated by the constraints of his role at the UN as a communications agent tasked with using film to convey the institution's global public relations messages while at the same time pleasing the multiple national sponsors as well as managing the influence of a dozen or more specialised UN agencies.

The United Nations is a club which can never succeed 100% unless its membership is 100%. The last thing the UN want to do is to publish a communication that comments or even implies comments questioning a member's behaviour. (Dickinson, 1963, p. 147)

## Discussion and Conclusion

Against the temporal background of a World War that had ended just 10 years previously, *The Blue Vanguard* is a fascinating early attempt to use documentary to promote the work of the UN's first peacekeeping force. The UN was establishing its role as an institution of global governance and sought transnational support for its deployment of force in Egypt – and indeed its wider peacekeeping mission – from a worldwide audience. The problems the UN encountered with objections to the narration and visuals from the combatant nations led to Dickinson rethinking his approach to cinema as the basis for communicating globally. In particular, he went on to develop his use of film for UN's public relations in ways that cut down on explicit narrated scripts and iconography. . This approach to visual messaging also meant that the films had wider global potential as they were freed from the language constraints of a voiceover and also avoided presenting UN member states with text to which they could easily object on the grounds that the UN's public information message conflicted with an individual country's national priorities. In order to appeal to supranational audiences, public relations narratives can be expected to contain a necessary degree of “hybridity” of culture, although such hybridity will tend to be dominated by concerns of “globalization and the modern Western paradigm” according to Debeljak (2012, p. 42). *The Blue Vanguard* fits this assumption to some extent in its promotion of the Western worldview in its public information narrative but did also present a firmly post-colonial message with regards to space, land and power, and in particular the Egyptian government's right to self-determination with regards to legitimate government of General Nasser and the Suez Canal. Indeed, the filmic narrative's openness towards the Egyptians and what the perceived promotion of “the political fortunes of Nasser” was a central point in the objections to the film lodged by the Israeli delegation to the UN. The vehemence of the objections to some of the public information narratives in the film suggest that it did succeed in offering an internationalist message, albeit one that offended the entrenched nationalist priorities of the three aggressor nations that invaded Egypt. In itself, this response demonstrated that the idea of a global public information cinematicity that takes the world as its subject and audience was a controversial matter 60 years ago. In the area of literature, Kirsch (2017a) has suggested that despite the retreat of internationalism in some aspects of contemporary politics, there is clearly a need for a global literature that imagines at the world-level and addresses contemporary concerns alongside recurring themes. Yet there is distrust of the idea of the global in some political circles. Instead of promoting global co-

operation, President Trump's chief strategist, Steve Bannon, has derided what he has called the establishment of "corporatist, globalist elites" which he claims have undermined the US national interest (Lawler, 2017). This makes consideration of the film's focus on transnational co-operation for peacekeeping a topic that has currency and relevance to modern public relations because of the pressing nature of international challenges such as displacement from the Middle East and other conflict zones that require transnational solutions. Despite this need for more global co-operation, the stridency of nationalistic messages in certain countries, such as the UK and USA, and the popularity of political parties and messages that emphasise national primacy - in the form of "taking control of borders" in the UK and "putting America first" in the latter case –seems to actively discourage such co-operation.

The aerial depiction of the political geography of the Suez Crisis and in particular the aerial cinema of the buffer zone or demarcation line is a core cinematic motif of *The Blue Vanguard*. It represents a new type of border that has been "artificially drawn", to use the words from the film's narration, is separate from national boundaries, has the modernity of the new transnational era and will be enforced by the UN's new kind of peacekeeping army. The use of aerial photography in *The Blue Vanguard* is noteworthy for its narrative importance but was not unique. According to Geiger (2015, p. 145), aerial photography had been used since the 1940s in ways that married "aesthetics and ideology to visualise the aims of the modernist state" and combine "airborne imagery and documentary's social currency" in ways that would delivered the potent propaganda of "hypernationalised worldviews", such as Leni Riefenstahl's depiction of Adolph Hitler's plane flying over Germany in *Triumph of the Will* (1935). The roots of this potency lay in what Virilio called the "deadly harmony" between aerial photography and war-making (Virilio, 1989, p.69) in his visionary appraisal of aeriality in World War I. In the case of *The Blue Vanguard*, the focus on a new type of boundary for peacekeeping that is beyond national lines and coupled with intimate vignettes of international co-operation to offer a positive, uplifting and post-colonial vision of the potential for global peacekeeping conducted by a mosaic of nations.

Investigation of *The Blue Vanguard* raises wider questions about the nature of global public relations and the feasibility of truly global public relations narratives and their distribution. The UN's attempt to use documentary film as a vehicle for international, cross-cultural public information was an attempt to bridge cross the barriers and boundaries associated with culture, language and political differences with a universal cinematicity, to communicate the idea of global governance. More broadly, the hope is that the project will stimulate further exploration

of the concept of cinematicity in transnational public relations and its relevance to public relations more generally.

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