

**NORTH WEST  
LABOUR  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**



**CINEMA  
CELEBRATING  
WORKING  
PEOPLE**



**6-9  
OCTOBER 2016**

**PICTUREHOUSE &  
THE PLAZA COMMUNITY CINEMA  
LIVERPOOL  
[WWW.NORTHWESTLABOURFILMFEST.COM](http://WWW.NORTHWESTLABOURFILMFEST.COM)**

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# North West Labour Film Festival

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# WELCOME TO THE NORTH WEST LABOUR FILM FESTIVAL

Having hosted four editions of the London Labour Film Festival, we are delighted to be presenting our first North West Labour Film Festival.

We hope you will join us at the Picturehouse (FACT) and the Plaza Community Cinema for an intimate celebration of working class life on the big screen, in Liverpool this October.

Kicking off with a story for our times, we begin with a special pre-release screening of the latest film from cinematic master Ken Loach. *I, Daniel Blake* won this year's Palme d'Or at Cannes, and is a searing portrait of people battling the inhumane welfare system in Newcastle. Join us for a complimentary Havana Club drinks reception beforehand, and a post-screening discussion with the film's producer, Rebecca O'Brien, who will also talk to local schoolchildren at a festival school screening the following day. We'll also present a more light hearted film with *7 Chinese Brothers*, in which Jason Schwartzman portrays a rebellious low paid worker, a great film for the era of zero hours contracts.

On Friday we move from Europe to the USA and back again, with director Michael Moore (*Capitalism: A Love Story*) back on form in *Where To Invade Next*. Uncovering progressive ideas to import to the USA, from Italian working hours to Norwegian prisons, join us for more complimentary drinks, and our all female panel Angela Rayner, shadow education minister, Julie Ward, MEP, and Lynne Collins, TUC, at the Q&A, discussing what we could learn from our European neighbours.

We are also thrilled to present our festival's film premiere *The Judgement*, Bulgaria's 2014 Oscar entry, which sees an ex-military man agree to illegally smuggle Syrian refugees. A post-panel discussion about the refugee crisis with Farouq

Habib from international charity Mayday Rescue, which will raise money for the White Helmets, a charity helping people in conflict areas like Syria.

Journalist and former Channel 4 economics editor Paul Mason will be joining blacklisted workers for a post-screening discussion about *Trumbo*, the Oscar-nominated film starring Bryan Cranston as the famous blacklisted screenwriter.

Moving through the weekend, on Saturday we screen *The 33*, a moving portrayal of the disaster that trapped Chilean miners underground for 69 days. Featuring A-List stars Antonio Banderas and Juliette Binoche, this story of survival will be accompanied by a reception serving up pisco sours and cerveza, and a discussion between Chilean and mining representatives. It's also one of several films directed by a woman or featuring a strong female lead, as is *Operator*, a brilliant BAFTA winning short backed by the Fire Brigades Union.

Finally, we close with a vintage feel with Mike Nichol's 1983 classic *Silkwood*. Relaying the inspiring story of Karen Silkwood, the union activist who mysteriously died as she prepared to expose health and safety problems in the nuclear power industry, it features one of Meryl Streep's standout performances, and will be followed by a panel discussion.

Vitaly, this year's festival coincides with the World Day for Decent Work, a global initiative mobilising trade unions from all over the world around the struggle for decent work, taking place on October 7. With no better time to celebrate working people onscreen, we look forward to welcoming you to this year's festival!

**Anna Burton**  
Festival Director

**Glen Williams**  
Festival Co-ordinator

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## SPONSORS



Special thanks to the following branches for their support:

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The TUC is proud to support both the London Labour Film Festival and the inaugural North West Labour Film Festival. With their unique focus on working-class and trade union cinema, the festivals are sure to be a brilliant celebration of some wonderful filmmaking. The diverse, international programme puts the perspectives of working people centre stage, highlighting how today's global economy is failing countless millions of workers. So spread the word, take in a great movie or two, and help put these festivals firmly on our cultural map.

# A NEW ORDER OF LABOUR FILMS

Labour films are easy to recognise but hard to fit into traditional categories. They are not genre films, like musicals or westerns, and there are as many great documentaries as feature films. They don't always entertain, sometimes endeavouring to enrage, to goad the audience into combatting injustices. They can be beautiful, and appalling.

D.W. Griffith, often cited as creating much of cinema's language, really began the labour film as a distinct form in early shorts *The Song of the Short* (1908), about a shirtwaist worker, and *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), about farm labourers crushed by a monopoly. The Soviets dominated the field in the 1920s with *Strike* (1924) and *The General Line* (1928), before the 1930s and 40's saw the United States and Great Britain explore similar themes in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), the culmination of American social realism, and British urban unemployment drama *Love on the Dole* (1941).

Hollywood turned to the seedier side of labour in the 1950s with gangster-union pictures *On the Waterfront* (1954) and *The Garment Jungle* (1957), whilst 1960s Britain encountered angry young workers in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1961) and resourceful charwomen in *Ladies Who Do* (1963). By the 1960s British and American viewers could encounter labour films from their own film industries and from those abroad. A cinematic form was born.

What they share reflects the on-going struggles of millions of workers for workplace dignity and social justice (such as *Silkwood* in this year's programme). Sometimes it's easy: if a film is about a union or labour history, it's a labour film. If it's a film about working-class life that has an economic angle, or if it targets political movements that organise for workers' rights, it's a labour film. And even when it dramatizes workplace life from a top-down perspective, the odds are it's a labour film.

As an increasing number of films turn to the nuts and bolts of globalisation—the treatment of marginalized workers (*I, Daniel Blake*, *7 Chinese Brothers*), call centres (*Operator*), the drive for profits in this global market at the expense of workers' rights and safety (*The 33*, *Daughters of a Lesser God*), transnational exploitation (*The Judgement*), to name just a selection—then we have a new order of labour films. This is definitely true of Michael Moore's *Where To Invade Next*, a 'big picture' satire about what a globalised world can teach wayward and dogmatic Americans about what they think they can do without—a good health-care system, access to abortion, workers' paid holidays, and female leadership at the top. We'll see on November 8th if the USA joins the UK in this category!

The London Labour Film Festival, and its sister festival the North West Labour Film Festival, will entertain and shock you, and make you angry and amazed. But in the end these films, like hundreds of others, will provide the visual context for the changes that workers struggle to make, and for ordinary lives.

**Tom Zaniello is the author of several acclaimed books on labour films, including *The Cinema of Globalization: A Guide to Films about the New Economic Order*.**





## I, DANIEL BLAKE

Thursday 6 Oct, 17:30

*Special release screening*

*Dir: Ken Loach/UK/2016/100 min*

Having directed more than 50 socially conscious films, perhaps no filmmaker in history has been as committed to working people as Ken Loach. His latest film, *I, Daniel Blake*, dramatizes the struggle of a Newcastle joiner with heart disease and his friend Katie, a single mother. Daniel is out of work and battling the Kafkaesque welfare system, whilst Katie is trying to get out of the hostel to which she has been assigned. *The film* for the era of austerity, food banks and the demonization of the working poor, it deservedly won this year's Cannes Palme d'Or, and won't leave a dry eye or an unclenched fist in the house. Viva Ken Loach!

*Q&A with the films producer Rebecca O'Brien  
(and Film Director Ken Loach tbc).*

## 7 CHINESE BROTHERS

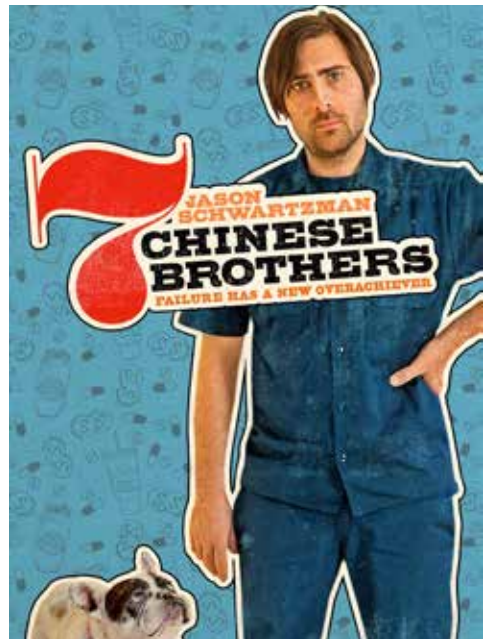
Thursday 6 Oct, 19:40

*Film premiere*

*Dir: Bob Byington/USA/2015/75 min*

The title of this immersion in the anarchistic work life of Larry (Jason Schwartzman) is based on a Chinese fable about brothers rescuing a sibling. But no one can save Larry, especially from himself. He sashays through low-paying jobs, an un-reliant member of the underclass. Fired for petty thievery, he is faithful to his grandmother (Olympia Dukakis), who is disgusted by his slacker ways. In memorable scenes, Grandma disdainfully throws her walker aside, a cook scoops up a mass of noodles, and Jason exposes a workplace bully by pushing over a barrel of ill-gotten coins. Oh, and Jason has a fat French bulldog, who doesn't like to move much either.

*Introduced by Anthony Curley, Youth officer.*



# I, DANIEL BLAKE: SEEING OURSELVES ONSCREEN

*I, Daniel Blake* is both great human drama, and a call to action. The latest film from Ken Loach, it is a response to the era of austerity and the demonization of the working poor, following Daniel, a joiner being forced to look for work despite having a heart condition, and Katie, a single mother relocated to a hostel in the North East by the state. The winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes, it set to move and anger audiences about the labyrinthine, inhumane welfare state in Britain.

"They (Loach and screenwriter Paul Laverty) visited the midlands, and they also went up north, visiting food banks, community groups, housing officials... after doing several trips, Paul focused in on the idea of an older skilled worker who doesn't have a family, who could easily get lost within the system. He also wanted to tell the story of what it's like to be sent away from your home, because in London particularly there aren't enough council houses, so people are sent out of the city into unfamiliar surroundings," says Rebecca O'Brien, Loach's long time producer.



Perhaps the most surprising thing is that the story doesn't come as a shock. "I think we do expect it," O'Brien says. "You do take it as given that this is the way people are treated now. We're told that this is how it has to be. I was just amazed, if you have a young family and you're living in a hostel, that's really hard... that everyday you have to live in a room where you have to lock the door if you want to go to the toilet. In the fifth richest country in the world, that seems a bit rich."

The most common response to the film has been anger. "As Ken says, it's conscious cruelty. It is absurd, we all recognise that. The system is so inflexible, it's one size fits all. But you have to have human contact to sort through a problem. These are life decisions. It becomes Kafkaesque, going beyond the absurd, into horror." The film is clearly going to resonate. "What's been amazing is that this one seems to have caught a nerve", she says. "Everybody knows a Daniel Blake. It's great when people see themselves onscreen, and hopefully feel they're not the only person suffering. It makes people cry, but they also understand it, and if people understand it then they want to campaign about the issues."

O'Brien will be present at the North West Labour Film Festival to talk to general audiences, as well as local schoolchildren. "At school you learn about culture, you learn about other people's lives, and showing it to young people will be really interesting... we get a lot of escapist fare presented to us; but we are out of the habit of going to the cinema to self educate, and that's the important thing about something like the Labour Film Festival. One of the things about cinema that's always been great is seeing yourself on the screen, and I think if you can build a cultural ownership of a film, if people say 'that's me, that's my film, I recognise that, I recognise me', then that film has an amazingly powerful impact. That's what you want to encourage. That's why it's worth it."





## I, DANIEL BLAKE (SCHOOL SCREENING)

Friday 7 Oct, 10:00

*Dir: Ken Loach/UK/2016/100 min*

See page 5 for details.

*Q&A with the films producer Rebecca O'Brien  
(and Film Director Ken Loach TBC).*

## MINING POEMS OR ODES

Friday 7 Oct, 17:45

*Dir: Callum Rice/UK/2011 min*

Robert Fullerton is a force. Welder turned poet or poet turned welder? It doesn't much matter in this evocation of his life and philosophy, and the forces that helped make him a mesmerising artist. "There she sits, majestic / He stands by engineering" begins his first poem, as he reminisces about being a 17-year old apprentice in Glasgow's shipyards. Self-educated, and proud of listening to his mentor Archie ("a big voice"), who commanded him to read Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, which, like *Das Kapital*, tells how workers "gift" the profits of their labor to capitalists. A film about work and poetry.

*Post-screen Q&A with Robert Fullerton  
(including a poetry reading)*





## WHERE TO INVADE NEXT

Friday 7 Oct, 18:15

*Dir: Michael Moore/USA/2015/120 min*

Having spent 25 years making films defending ordinary people, Moore is now one of the 100 most influential people alive according to *Time Magazine*. Moore now follows up *Capitalism: A Love Story* with *Where to Invade Next*, in which the formidable filmmaker tours the world to investigate what the USA could learn from other countries. Discovering that Italian workers get paid holidays and parental leave; Finland's students have no homework; Slovenians don't pay for university; and that Tunisian women have access to abortion, he also goes to Iceland, where women hold top governmental positions whilst (mostly male) bankers are prosecuted, in a brilliant film about people before profit.

*Q&A with Shadow Minister for Education, Angela Rayner, MEP Julie Ward & TUC Regional Secretary Lynne Collins.*



## THE JUDGEMENT

Friday 7 Oct, 20:45

*Dir: Stephan Komandarev/Bulgaria/2014/107 min*

The waves of immigrants being smuggled across our borders are now daily news. But how do immigrants make it to Europe through often hostile and unforgiving terrain? Whilst immigrant stories are told, we know less about the people who actually do the smuggling. This Bulgarian entry for Best Foreign Language Oscar follows Mityo who, having lost his wife, job and the respect of his son, takes up a job smuggling Syrian immigrants across the very Bulgarian/Turkish/Greek border he prevented people crossing whilst in the army. A film about the impact of momentous decisions, and the hostile mountain terrain at the heart of an illegal industry.

*Introduction or Q&A Farouq Habib (May Day Rescue/White Helmets Syria)*



# PERILOUS CROSSINGS:

## SYRIA, ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING AND THE JUDGEMENT

The plight of Syrian people is at the forefront of public consciousness. Experiencing danger and hardship, the number of people deciding to make the perilous crossing to Europe – often by illegal means – is only increasing. But the conditions of illegal trafficking, and the people who transport migrants to Europe, remains mysterious. Films like *The Judgement*, which has its UK premiere at this year's London Labour Film Festival, can play a role in increasing understanding.

“Industry only happens when the need is there”, says Ola Suliman, the Project Officer for the international charity Mayday Rescue. “Nobody would risk or pay something like 5000 Euros to cross to Europe if they didn't have a horrible situation waiting for them. Anything is less horrifying than what they have back home...you can only drag them back home by defeating the horrible things that are happening there.

“It's an industry, nobody is a good person, nobody is trying to help”, says Suliman when asked about illegal trafficking, adding that it is the work of groups like Mayday Rescue, and the easing of conflict, that will ultimately defeat an exploitative industry. “What we can do is to support communities, so we have local communities who can protect themselves and become more resilient and save their own lives”, she says.

**“It's an industry, nobody is a good person, nobody is trying to help.”**

Mayday Rescue works to provide local solutions, preventing loss of life and rebuilding local infrastructure like schools, hospitals, sewage systems and mosques, leaving local people with the experience and skills to rebuild. “We deal with local initiatives so there are local

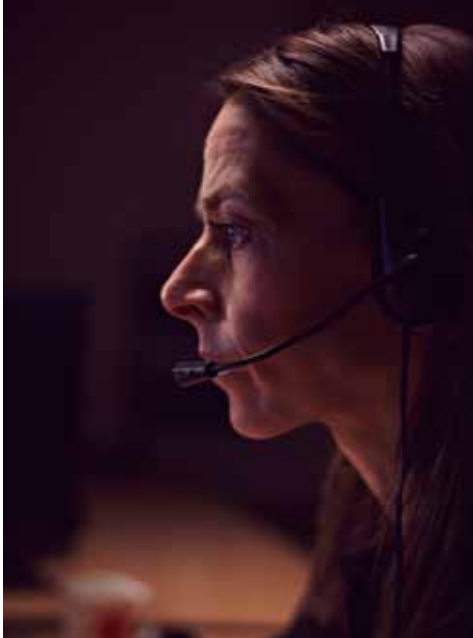
teams of volunteers rescuing people. Volunteers are local within every community; we don't force strangers from different communities [upon them]. We trained them outside Syria in the beginning but now inside Syria”.

The focus for now is protecting people from attacks. “Our approach in conflict areas is that we wait until its over, and then we start building infrastructure. But while its on going, especially where its been happening for a long time, people need some help to stay where they are. This is what our team does. They help them spread awareness, first aid, telling people what is the best way to survive an attack, early warning systems, how to make their own shelter and how to stay safe... and then we go and search for survivors”. The latter is done in conjunction with *The White Helmets*, a charity that specialises in rescuing injured victims in warzones.

There are, of course, limits to how much people can be discouraged from fleeing. “We can only do so much...I've met many Syrian refugees who have come from Syria since the Russian intervention...when the Russian bombing started, the destruction became way worse. But everyday there's a different sort of bombing, two days ago there was a chlorine attack...so the circumstances under which civil defences are trying to work is too much. But if they were ever to stop the areal bombardment, then many people would go back immediately. We wish and the Syrian people wish that it was something we could control. More than anyone in the world, the Syrian people want to go back to their country. But the world doesn't give them the circumstances for solutions that make them safe back home, so they will keep trafficking out.”

*The Judgement screens on 7th October as part of the North West Labour Film Festival followed by a discussion with Farouq Habib (Mayday Rescue/White Helmets Syria).*

[www.whitehelmets.org](http://www.whitehelmets.org)



## OPERATOR

**Saturday 8 Oct, 14:40**

*Dir: Carolyn Bartlett/UK/6 min*

Carolyn Bartlett's film zeroes in on the face of one Fire and Rescue Service centre operator (Kate Dickie), helping a distraught woman calling in a fire trapping her and her daughter. Calmly directing the woman around the room, getting her to open a window, spread a duvet under the door, and keeping her from going off the rails, the operator's voice is one we all hope we never have to hear. But it's important to know she's out there, sponsored, like the film, by the Fire Brigades Union, "the professional voice of your fire fighters." Based on true events, this incredibly powerful film recently won a BAFTA.

*Introduced by FBU North West.*

## THE 33

**Saturday 8 Oct, 15:00**

*Dir: Patricia Riggen/Chile-USA/2015/127 min*

The extraordinary story of the miners trapped for 69 days in Chile's Copiapo gold-copper mine is of a place where mining began in 1889, but which now requires work 2300 feet underground. With cracks destroying the tunnels, the 'rock' that trapped the 33 was twice the size of the Empire State Building. Reaching a pre-built shelter, and discovering that there was no first aid kit, intercom, adequate water supply or escape route, they were given less than a 1% chance to live. Led by stars Antonio Banderas and Juliette Binoche, *The 33* is about an exploited working class community, cooperating, rationing and praying for survival.

*Q&A with Chris Kitchen, General Secretary, NUM and Tom Zaniello*



# OPERATOR: THE 999 CALL THAT WON A BAFTA

A moving story of coolness under pressure, *Operator* was the worthy recipient of the Best Short Film BAFTA earlier this year. But it is more than just great drama. This tale of a 999 call taken by a fire service operator played by Kate Dickie is based on a true story, in which an operator rescued a woman and her child from a house fire. It speaks to the vital role played by public sector workers, and nobody is more convinced of this than the Fire Brigades Union, who supported the film.

“The person who took the call was a member of ours. . . the filmmakers asked if we would do it in conjunction with them. It’s really powerful stuff, and it gives a really good insight into the role of a control operator: one minute they can be dealing with a false alarm, and the next they can be dealing with somebody who is speaking to try and save their own life”, says Dave Green, National Officer at the FBU.

“They are regarded as the first line of response, and therefore fire fighters in their own right”, says Green when describing the job. “They have been under a lot of pressure with job cuts, therefore more calls. Response time is down by two minutes over the past two decades, so operators are left talking to people for a lot longer. Fire fighters rescue people in teams, whereas an operator works on their own, so it’s amazingly pressurised.” Operators themselves (who form around 5% of the union) seem to be glad of the recognition, with incredibly positive reactions within the fire service.

But is there wider recognition of the job these people do, especially from government? “I don’t see any evidence of that,” Green says. “They’re still cutting back on the fire service, so we need to air *Operator* as many times as we can. But it will only have a positive effect if our employers and the government do something about it and support the fire service to a far greater degree. I’d like to think that a lot of people are increasingly concerned that all our public services are being starved of cash. Austerity is a political choice. If people watch this film, and if they want to do something they need to contact their MPs. At some point our communities will bitterly regret the actions of this government in cutting back not just on the fire service but on all public services, because we will be needed at some point”. Watching *Operator*, it’s very easy to understand why

**“It’s really powerful stuff, and it gives a really good insight into the role of a control operator: one minute they can be dealing with a false alarm, and the next they can be dealing with somebody who is speaking to try and save their own life.”**



## TRUMBO

Saturday 8 Oct, 17:45

*Dir: Jay Roach/USA/2015/124 min*

Bryan Cranston, famous for his turn as a schoolteacher turned kingpin in *Breaking Bad*, proves he's capable of doing anything in *Trumbo*. Dalton Trumbo, a top Hollywood screenwriter, ran afoul of the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947, where he was jailed for eleven months for refusing to testify. Known for writing scripts in the bathtub, his pre-conviction hits included working women drama *Kitty Foyle* and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, about WW2. Whilst blacklisted he wrote *Spartacus*, about the revolt of Roman slaves, and *Exodus*. Packing a remarkable life into two hours, this is a crackling story of a man determined to fight for the underdog.

*Q&A renowned journalist and broadcaster Paul Mason and US author on labour cinema, Tom Zaniello.*



Sunday 9 Oct, 13:30  
Picturehouse Bar

*Short talk on labour cinema with Tom Zaniello (USA) author of Union Maids, Reds and Riff Raff and the Cinema of Globalization.*



## SILKWOOD

Sunday 9 Oct, 15:10

*Dir: Bob Fosse/USA/2015/75 min*

A cinematic classic *Silkwood* is based on the true story of Karen Silkwood, a union activist for the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers in a Kerr-McGee plutonium-processing plant. Guilty of dangerous, cancer-inducing contamination, Silkwood's activism was seen as a sign of trouble. Believing that the company was tampering records, Silkwood was on the way to meet the *New York Times*, only for her car to mysteriously crash, and for the evidence to disappear. A breathtaking combination of drama and message, with a towering performance from Meryl Streep, who captures the spirit of a woman whose death helped ensure the passage of important safety legislation; a heroine for the nuclear age.

*Q&A with Sellafeld union activist/reps.*

# BOOKING INFORMATION

## PICTUREHOUSE

Tickets: £7

To book:

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## THE PLAZA COMMUNITY CINEMA

Tickets: £5

To book:

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The logo features the word "UNISON" in a bold, sans-serif font with a stylized wave graphic above it. Below "UNISON" is the text "North West" in a smaller, italicized serif font.

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