

Report of F.I.A.F. Executive Committee Meetings in
Paris, 23/26th May 1952

Participants

In addition to myself the following were present:

M. Henri Langlois (Cinematheque Francaise)
M. Thirifays (Cinematheque de Belgique)
M. Jan de Vaal (Nederlands Film Museum)
M. Rognoni (Cineteca Italiana)
M. Sales Gomes (Film Archive of Sao Paulo, Brazil)
Miss Catala, FIAF Executive Secretary

Programme

During the week-end there were four business meetings, one reception and one joint meeting with officers of the International Federation of Film Societies.

Agenda

For the F.I.A.F. Committee Meetings the agenda was not rigidly adhered to and other subjects were introduced during the course of the discussion. I will, therefore, summarise the results of the meetings under their subject heads instead of reporting on each item of the agenda.

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Other International Film Organisations

Langlois reported that on the 10th February 1952 a meeting had been held, attended by the following representatives:

International Federation of Film Archives	- M. Toeplitz (Poland) - M. Langlois (France)
International Federation of Scientific Film Societies	- M. Painleve (France)
Federation of Films on Art	- M. Francastel (France)
International Institute of Filmology	- M. Cohen Seat (France)
International Federation of Film Clubs	- M. Sadoul (France)

General agreement had been reached on principles of co-operation between these organisations (the vagueness of this statement suggested that, in fact, no specific decision had been reached).

Historical Research

Langlois referred to the project of creating within F.I.A.F. a bureau of historical research into the cinema. Invitations had been sent to a number of prominent film historians and their replies were awaited. The main object of this manoeuvre was to prevent the historians from forming an independent international organisation of their own, a move which was started abortively by the exiled Carl Vincent two or three years ago. M. Rognoni mentioned the possibility of a big film history exhibition

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being organised in Italy perhaps next year, and it was agreed that this might be a convenient occasion for a convention of film historians organised under the auspices of F.I.A.F.

International Association of Experimental Film Makers

Langlois expressed a desire to form an international association of this kind, also under the auspices of F.I.A.F. He has the following in mind as officers:

Honorary Presidents: Leger, Painleve and Prevert (France)
Cavalcanti (Brazil)
Ivens (Holland)
Richter and Strand (U.S.A.)
Bunuel (Mexico)

President: Man Ray (U.S.A.)

Vice-Presidents: Storck (Belgium)
Gras (Argentine)
MacLaren (Canada)
Grimault and Cousteau (France)
Sucksdorff (Sweden)

Secretary-General: Forman (Gr. Britain)
Resnais (France)

Joint Secretary-General: Langlois (France)
Kyron (Greece)
Michel (U.S.A.)

Treasurer: Gaffary (Persia)
Franju (France)

Archivists: Thirifays (Belgium)
Brusendorff (Denmark)
Mitry (France)

What is likely to develop from this fantastic house of cards I do not know, but Langlois has the intention of coming to England to discuss the whole project with Mr. Forman.

Distribution Pool

This is a project which Langlois has been anxious to launch for some time. He suggests that each of some half-dozen film archives should provide, at their own expense, a 16mm. print of four to six feature films or programmes each, and send these copies to Paris, which would act as the distribution centre. In this way Paris would accumulate a pool of anything from 25 to 35 or more 16mm. films or programmes and these would be available on hire to any archive. It is suggested that for the loan of such a film or programme a hire fee of \$25 should be charged, exclusive of transport costs; \$5 of this amount would go to the F.I.A.F. funds as a servicing charge and \$20 would go to the archive which originally supplied the film. Such an arrangement would relieve the pressure on individual archives, would give them a financial return, and would provide a source of supply invaluable to small archives which had few films.

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It struck me that this idea had, in theory, some merit, although there are many practical difficulties (for example the passing of money from one country to another) which were not discussed in detail. It was suggested that we should supply the following programmes for the pool:

- a) SHOOTING STARS
- b) MAN OF ARAN
- c) BRITISH DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME
- d) WARNING SHADOWS

I promised to investigate the extent to which we can participate.

F.I.A.F. Magazine

Langlois suggested that if F.I.A.F. were to publish a magazine of information and criticism of film matters it would meet a need, except perhaps in England which was already well catered for by "Sight and Sound". He suggested a publication every two months of a periodical in three languages, English, French and German, and that this could be done for £3,000 per annum, a sum towards which the larger archives would be required to contribute. I expressed the gravest doubts about the practicability of this scheme and referred to the difficult time we had had with "Sight and Sound", but Langlois was not to be dissuaded. Nothing definite, however, was decided and I am quite sure that the idea will never be realised.

The Film Society Movement

Relations with the film societies were discussed at considerable length and were the subject of the meeting with officers of the International Federation of Film Societies. Langlois recalled that the International Federation of Film Societies originally developed because the French Federation was unable to get films from the French Cinematheque and, in fact, it was really a combination of the French and Italian Federations rather than a genuinely international body. At the Rome Congress of F.I.A.F. in 1949, however, a gentleman's agreement had been reached between the International Federation of Film Clubs and F.I.A.F. and since that time the difficulties in France had gradually resolved themselves.

Difficulties, however, had recently arisen in Switzerland, Holland and Italy. In Switzerland the Swiss Federation of Film Societies had complained that the Swiss Archive supplied films to societies which were not members of the Swiss Federation.

In Holland Langlois alleged that films which were in commercial distribution in France, but not in Holland, were being offered direct to the Dutch Federation of Film Societies by the French Federation, in contravention of the Rome agreement.

In Italy was reported a far more serious situation complicated by political divisions. Most Italian film societies are members of the Italian Federation, whose secretary is M. Tosi. Mr. Tosi is a Communist and the

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Italian Government do not want to support his Federation. Therefore a certain number of societies (apparently about 40) have formed a rival organisation, the Union of Film Societies, right-wing in character. Apparently this Union is seeking admission to the International Federation of Film Societies, but the latter is not anxious to admit it, because it naturally wants to support Mr. Tosi's Federation which represents so much of the present strength of the International Federation. The fact that Sadoul and Painleve are also Communists strengthens this tendency.

Langlois feared that if the Italian Union was unable to gain admission to the present International Federation, it would try to build itself into a new international federation and would endeavour to attach other national federations to it. On the ground that it was deplorable that political divisions should enter into the field of international film organisations, which had until now been entirely non-political, Langlois argued that we ought to support the existing Federation of Film Clubs and help in every way we could to ensure that it rallied to its support its weaker members, namely the federations of Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Argentine, Brazil, Uruguay and Germany (incidentally I heard it reported during this discussion that the English Federation of Film Societies was applying for re-admission to the present International Federation and had already paid its subscription). Although some of the officers of the present International Federation are known Communists, the Federation as an organisation is not, and it receives the support of the French Government. This fact suggested to me that in addition to the other factors there was, perhaps, some rivalry here between the Italian and the French Governments to secure the international centre of cultural film activities in their own country.

Reports of Members

Most of the reports were written and will presumably appear in the reports of the meetings in due course. As far as our own progress was concerned, I referred to our financial difficulties, the Telecinema, the expansion of membership, Critics' Choice, the P.E.P. Report and Harold Brown's paper on the storage of film for archive purposes.

Congress

Plans to hold a Congress in Warsaw or Copenhagen have fallen through and no other host has come forward. Langlois attributed this situation to the bad habit which had arisen since the 1948 Congress in Copenhagen of looking to a single country to provide all the hospitality. This had been done for the first time in Denmark and had been followed by Rome and London; but before Copenhagen delegates had paid their own expenses (e.g. in New York and in Paris), and the country acting as hosts had merely been expected to provide a simple reception. The countries which could afford to provide hospitality were few in number and were growing fewer, and if F.I.A.F. was to depend upon such hospitality it would be welcome nowhere. It was suggested that instead of waiting for a country to invite us, we should ourselves ask to go to

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a member country of our choice, on the clear understanding that delegates would pay their own travel, lodging and feeding expenses.

On this basis it was agreed that we should ask for the next Congress to take place on approximately October 15th at Amsterdam and De Vaal of Holland offered to do his best to make this possible.

Festival

Quite apart from the Congress, Langlois suggested that there should be a Festival this year and it was agreed that the best place would be Edinburgh. I was therefore asked to offer to the Organisers of the Edinburgh Film Festival a series of FIAF programmes on the historical origins of documentary, which I promised to do. Personally I am not enormously enthusiastic about this idea.

Germany

Germany was one of the founder members of F.I.A.F. but its place has of course been vacant since the beginning of the war. Langlois now reported that by far the greatest progress towards the creation of a German Film Archive in the West was being made by Dr. Laviess. Laviess, who until recently has concentrated mainly on a library of film books, is at present in the United States as guest of the State Department, and has been presented with a considerable quantity of German films in their possession. Langlois suggested that F.I.A.F. should make contact with Laviess (he was already in touch with him on behalf of the French Cinematheque) and if he wanted to be a member we might consider accepting him as the second German representative, still leaving a space open for the German National Film Archive if it should ever be re-formed in other hands than those of Laviess himself. This would leave the way open for anything which might develop from the present political situation in Germany and would avoid the risk in particular of offending the authorities in the Eastern Zone by appearing to favour the Western Zone to their exclusion.

Executive Secretary

Since the resignation of Mrs. Malevsky last year F.I.A.F. has had no Executive Secretary of similar stature. Langlois regards this as an omission and has suggested that we could repair it by making use of the services of Mr. Gaffary. Mr. Gaffary is the son of a Persian diplomat who lives in Paris and at present represents the Persian Film Archive. It seems probable, however, that political developments in Persia may lead Gaffary to sever his connections with this archive and to live permanently in Paris where he has spent most of his life. He is an extremely intelligent and well-educated young man and I personally would have nothing against this suggestion providing it does not involve F.I.A.F. in great expense.

United States

Langlois reported that although from time to time he heard rumours and suggestions that Iris Barry had been dismissed from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, the contrary was so far true that she was well in with the Library and was employed to act as its representative in Europe. In European matters Richard Griffith took the

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advice of Iris Barry and she would continue to represent the Museum of Modern Art at future F.I.A.F. meetings.

Preservation Pool

Langlois reported that he had received prints of the following films from Argentina for duping:

ZVENIGORA (U.S.S.R.)
NEW BABYLON "
FORCED LABOUR "
TWO DAYS "
PROCES DE TROIS MILLIONS (U.S.S.R.)
LOVE OF JEANNE NEY (GERMANY)
TARTUFFE (GERMANY)
FILLE CARTON A CHAPEAU (U.S.S.R.)

He did not have the money to make dupe negs of all these films and argued (making a virtue out of poverty) that it would be unnecessarily extravagant for each archive to make negatives of the same films. If, however, the process of duping were shared amongst the archives on the understanding that the negatives were available to all those participating, we should each have a considerable range of material available to us for a comparatively small expense. He suggested that the film we should dupe should be THE LOVE OF JEANNE NEY, on condition that the negative should be made available to other members of the pool.

This seemed to me a reasonable proposal and I offered our co-operation to the full extent of such resources as we had. Action on this will have to be immediate.

Langlois is also expecting to receive the following Douglas Fairbanks' films, made 1916/1919, from Richard Griffith:

MANHATTAN MADNESS
MODERN MUSKATEER
REACHING FOR THE MOON
KNICKERBOCKER BUCKAROO
WILD AND WOOLLY
HEADING SOUTH
SAY YOUNG FELLOW.

These films would be cheaper to dupe because their maximum length was five reels; in any case they had already arrived and the sharing out of these films could accordingly be left over until October.

Supplementary Item: Exchange of Films with Italy: Rognoni is very anxious to complete an exchange of films with us. I had had tentative discussions with him in January, and expressed interest in VAUDEVILLE and THE PILGRIM. He says he now has prints of both these films to send us, and in exchange he wants either CIVILISATION or WESTFRONT 1918. I should like to make this exchange, but I see no chance of doing it on our present budget. He suggested that for further exchanges we might exchange negatives, and do the duping in our own countries. I do not see much advantage in this; we could only do it with distribution negatives, and the risk would be considerable.