

## FIAF COMMISSION ON DOCUMENTATION

Minutes of the meeting held March 16-18, 1976, at Sofia

### Participants

- Members: Eileen Bowser, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art  
Brenda Davies, National Film Archives of the British Film Institute  
Karen Jones, Det Danske Filmmuseum  
Alfred Krautz, Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR  
John Luijckx, Nederlands Filmmuseum  
Aura Puran, Arhiva Nationale de Filme  
Eberhard Spiess, Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde  
Milka Staykova, Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka
- Observers: Magdalena Kirkova, Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka  
Nikolai Kaftandjiev, Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka

### I. Opening

The Commission met at Sofia as guests of the Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka, and were received by Milka Staykova. Eileen Bowser, President, accepted on behalf of the Commission the generous hospitality of the Filmoteka, and then declared the session open. Eileen welcomed to the Commission the new member, Aura Puran, and the return of Brenda Davies. Eileen reported that the other new member, Frances Thorpe, Editor of the International Index to Film Periodicals, was unable to attend due to pressure of the work of completing the annual volume for 1975 at this time. Milka read a message of regret from Frances. Eileen also welcomed the two observers at the meeting, Magdalena Kirkova and Nikolai Kaftandjiev, of the Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka.

### II. Agenda

Some changes were made in the draft agenda, to permit the delay of the discussion of topics for which Eileen had brought documents, in the hopes that her missing suitcase would arrive, and the revised agenda was then adopted.

### III. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved after two changes were made: 1) John Luijckx's proposal was not intended to revise the section in the Basic Manual, but instead to prepare new guidelines for cataloguing, filing and preserving film posters; and 2) Alfred Krautz's position vis-à-vis CILECT was not to be understood as official representative of FIAF, but only as reporter between CILECT and the Commission, as had been the true sense of the decision taken at Bautzen.

#### IV. Topics discussed

##### A. List of unpublished script holdings in FIAF archives

Eberhard Spiess made proposals on the method which should be used to establish the list of script holdings, and added that he would start with the scripts held in the Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde and at the library of the Deutsche Film-u.-Fernsehnakademie. The Commission discussed the questionnaire to be sent to FIAF members and in the end decided to simplify it as much as possible, asking only:

- 1) How many scripts are you holding (not including translated material)?
- 2) Are they catalogued? If yes, please enclose some samples of your catalogue cards or pages from your lists.
- 3) Are you willing to participate in the project by providing xero-graphed copies of cards or lists of your holdings?
- 4) If yes, are you able to complete the work by April, 1977?

It was also decided to head the questionnaire with "Definition: by scripts, we mean all unpublished script materials of completed films, including dialogue lists in the original language of the film." An accompanying letter was drafted to explain the purpose of the project. It was agreed that Eberhard will send out the letter and questionnaire immediately, asking for a reply by May 1, 1976.

An examination of the problems which could be expected to arise from the project resulted in the discovery that if all archives listed in the FIAF Directory of Film and Television Documentation Sources should cooperate fully, a list of 75,000 scripts might be the result, a much larger project than we had anticipated. The Commission decided that the information on each script should include original film title (or film titles, in the case of co-production), country (countries) of production, year of first public showing, director and scriptwriters. On receiving the samples, Eberhard will correspond with the senders to find out if this information can be provided, if not already appearing on the cards or lists. Karen Jones pointed out that on the basis of her previous experience as editor of the Index, it would be necessary to check all the information provided for accuracy, as one could seldom rely on the information sent by the archives. This checking is an enormous task, and might be more work than Eberhard had envisioned. It was suggested that after the information had been gathered, it might be possible to divide the work of checking, as for example, Aura Puran might be able to undertake it for the films of socialist countries. However, this task was left to be discussed at the next meeting of the Commission.

##### B. FIAF Directory of Film and Television Documentation Sources

John Luijckx, who had taken over this project temporarily in the absence of Brenda Davies, reported on the results of the second sending of questionnaires, and texts for revision. The new FIAF members had not replied, but two archives which had not replied previously now supplied information. The draft texts were sent to 37 archives, with 26 returns. This is a total of 39 returns out of a possible 52 archives. It was agreed to publish the Directory as soon as Brenda completed the final editing, and John thought it would be possible to do the printing in Amsterdam in time to be ready for the FIAF Congress in Mexico in May, 1976. Some final details were discussed, such as the problems of the status of non-FIAF documentation departments, etc. The Commission also examined the Mass Media Manual: World Film and TV Study Resources, prepared by Ernest D. Rose of the U.S.A. and published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in 1974, a copy having been brought by Karen. Several members found it to be very inaccurate as concerned their own archives, and complained that they had not been asked to provide the information included.



C. International Directory of Set Designers

Alfred Krautz reported from the subcommission working on this project. Alfred showed the Commission the draft copy of the first volume of the Directory, which includes Belgium, Deutsche Demokratische Republik, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania. The plans are to make corrections, and to print it in April in Amsterdam, the paper to be provided by the Deutsche Institut für Filmkunde, the covers by the Hochschule für Film-und-Fernsehen, and the labor by the Nederlands Filmmuseum. It will then be submitted to the FIAF Executive Committee in Mexico in May, 1976. Should it then be approved, it could be distributed to all FIAF members. 200 copies are to be printed, 100 copies to be reserved for FIAF, and one hundred copies to be available for sale to others. Of these, Alfred proposed that 70 copies be sent to the Secretariat for sale purposes, and 30 copies to Berlin, in order that they could be sold in socialist countries, avoiding currency problems. Eileen agreed to ask the Executive Committee whether this would be possible. The selling price has also to be determined. The Commission members discussed the future of the project, and whether it would be possible to continue publication in the same manner for future volumes, but this could not be determined at the present time. Questions were raised about the inconsistency from one country to the next, where some had supplied biographical information for the designers and others had not. It was also noted that corrections in the English language were necessary. As no member of the subcommission was native English-speaking, it was agreed that Alfred would seek the help of some expert in Berlin. The second volume, on the set designers of France and Finland, is expected to be completed next year, and the following volumes will cover Italy and Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.

D. Guidelines for collecting, cataloguing, filing and preserving film posters

John Luijckx discussed his proposal, which he outlined as follows: an introduction concerning the unique position of the film poster in the archive collections, as a work of art as well as documentary material, and the problems of building up a collection; acquisition (selection and sources); cataloguing principles; storage; preservation and restoration; accessibility to the public; and a bibliography. He proposed to send a draft to members of the Commission and also ask for experts' names to be consulted. He thought that the Nederlands Filmmuseum would probably publish the final booklet. He hopes to complete the draft in time for discussion at the FIAF summer school on documentation. The Commission agreed to this project.

E. FIAF Summer School on Film Documentation

Karen Jones presented a written proposal for the summer school to be held in Copenhagen in August 1977, and asked for the advice of the Commission on the plans she had made. She reported that the language would be English, that about 25 participants would be expected, and that the school would last 14 days. She had not yet been able to find cheap accommodations, and said it would be difficult to keep down costs in high season in Copenhagen. However, lunches would be arranged cheaply on the premises of Det Danske Filmmuseum. Film viewing sessions and excursions were planned, and each student would receive a certificate. The teaching method, it was agreed by all members of the Commission, would be informal, with group discussion and practical exercises rather than formal lectures. The subjects to be discussed followed very much those in the Documentation Chapter of the Basic Manual, and the Commission spent some time working on the program, trying to decide how much time should be allotted to each topic and which could be combined; the final plan will be completed by Karen. It was agreed to send in advance to all participants as many papers as could be prepared: for

example, the Basic Manual chapter, the draft poster guidelines, the script guidelines, the various systems in use in archives, and the two classifications for film literature schemes. Karen explained that she had few staff members other than herself to do the teaching, and that it would be necessary to bring in experts from other countries. She asked Commission members if they could attend either as participants or as instructors, and after some discussion it was decided that the most practical scheme would be to have the next meeting of the Documentation Commission in Copenhagen in the days immediately preceding the summer school. In this way, members would have their travel money to come to Copenhagen from their institutions. It was decided also to ask if Gillian Hartnoll of the British Film Institute could attend as instructor, with the hopes that the British Film Institute would pay her travel costs. The Commission agreed that FIAF would be asked to pay the trip of Michael Moulds of London, and that he would be asked to complete his classification scheme in time to distribute it in advance to the participants, so that he could discuss it at the summer school. In addition, the staying costs after the Commission meeting for three members from the socialist countries would be asked from FIAF. Karen will prepare a budget for these requests from FIAF, to be presented at the next Executive Committee meeting in May, 1976, together with an outline of the plans for the summer school. There was an attempt to assign the various topics of the school to the members most qualified to undertake them, and Karen asked for volunteers to prepare certain topics, since she could not do it all. Among other topics not mentioned in the Basic Manual, Milka Staykova proposed to conduct a session on the problems of handling the Slavonic languages in documentation departments. It was agreed to ask archives, when the summer school invitation was sent out, whether it would be possible to send the person who was responsible for the indexing for the International Index to Film Periodicals, as this could result in useful discussions with the Editor concerning the problems. Although it was agreed that it was very desirable to find a way to help financially a certain number of students who could not otherwise attend, no practical solution to this was found, especially as we would have to ask FIAF for help with the expense of bringing in expert instructors. It was agreed that 45 to 50 hours of instruction would be sufficient, to give students time to absorb and to discuss the ideas among themselves. The final plans for the school will be made by Karen.

#### F. The classification of film literature

Gillian Hartnoll of the subcommission responsible for this project had completed her scheme and printed a number of copies. She had sent by way of Eileen a number of copies for the Commission, but these were missing in Eileen's luggage. Karen reported that Michael Mould's scheme was still not finished, although she and Michael had done some further work on it when the subcommission met in London in October, 1975. It was hoped that Michael would be interested in completing his scheme, should the plans for the summer school be approved. Meanwhile, however, the Commission members agreed that it was unfair to keep Gillian waiting to have some comments on her scheme. It has been previously agreed that the two schemes would be sent out together for comment and comparison by FIAF and other experts, before either should be adopted as a recommendation of the Commission. However, that decision was now reversed, and instead, the scheme prepared by Gillian would be sent out, just for comments, not as a recommendation. A letter was partially drafted to accompany it, but it was left for Eileen to discuss with Gillian, to add some specific questions. As soon as this would be accomplished, Eileen would send it out on behalf of the Commission. As for the present comments of the members, both John and Milka having already had Gillian's scheme for study in advance, they agreed that it was not suitable for their libraries, as it was too complicated.



G. The International Index to Film Literature

Eileen reported that the subcommission working on this project had met in London in October 1975, that the new volume for 1974 had been published by St. James Press in September 1975, and that 900 copies had been sold in the first five months. A grant of \$15,000 had been given by the National Endowment for the Arts (United States) to The Museum of Modern Art for the project, which resulted in a good financial situation for the project for the year 1975, at no cost to FIAF, and should help to keep the costs to FIAF quite low in 1976. Eileen had brought copies of the accounts and the budgets, but these were not available due to her missing luggage. However, she forecast that 1977 might again be a difficult year for the project. Frances Thorpe had reported that the situation in the editorial office was now going well, the staff problems appeared to be solved for the moment, and a guillotine and a new typewriter had been purchased. Frances recommended that the lease on the office should be renewed, and that moving to a new office should be considered again in 1977. The rent was going up in the present office, but the sum was not yet certain, as it was to be negotiated with the owner. As neither Karen or Eileen had a precise list of the new periodicals to be added in 1976, it was agreed that Frances should send out an up-to-date list together with addresses to all subscribers. As soon as the work on the annual volume for 1975 should be completed, Frances will work on a new promotional brochure, which will be usable for more than one year, with inserts for each year it is sent out. It was hoped that during the summer of 1976, she and Karen could work on the postponed revised list of subject headings and guidelines to be used by indexers. It was agreed that if necessary the subscription price might be raised in 1977 by ten percent, but that the final decision would be made by the subcommission. It was also noted that Frances should be asked to make an effort not to delay the sending out of the entries for Variety and Monthly Film Bulletin, even if other dispatches were late, since these were particularly needed as soon as possible.

Eileen then said that although the situation was good at the moment for the project, it now faced a new and serious problem. St. James Press was quite unsatisfied with the sales of the annual volume, and Kevin Gough-Yates was quite insistent that they would be unable to continue publishing it unless the Commission agreed to include the nonfilm periodicals, which he felt would greatly increase the sales to general libraries. A long discussion and study of the problems of adding these periodicals had taken place at the London meeting. While the subcommission agreed that it would be desirable to include them, especially in the light of the fact that they appear in the Film Literature Index, our only competition, it could not resolve the practical problems. Analyzing the time it took to do the work, based on a sample prepared by Karen Jones, and counting entries in Film Literature Index, which were only English-language nonfilm periodicals, it was found that it would be two months work for a specialist to index them, spread through the year, and two weeks for a typist, plus the supplies. It had been estimated that the total cost at current London rates for such work would be £ 1,200. St. James was unwilling to pay any part of these costs, and the subcommission could not make any decision as to FIAF's paying them. It was felt that it was doubtful if increased sales would bring in enough income to FIAF to pay back these costs. Kevin Gough-Yates of St. James Press believes that 1) these costs are over-estimated; and 2) increased sales would easily pay back the costs.

No decision could be made until the problem was presented to the FIAF Executive Committee meeting at the end of May, but meanwhile a discussion was held by the Commission. It was agreed that the proposal of St. James Press could not

be recommended to FIAF for the following reasons: 1) St. James Press was unwilling to do any market surveys or show any statistics to back up their belief in the increased sales; 2) the increased price which would have to be asked for the annual volume might actually cut sales; 3) many of the nonfilm periodicals are already indexed in basic publications such as Reader's Guide, the Art Index, etc., available to the general libraries; 4) it would be a commitment to the future, as once begun, such indexing must be continued; 5) it would be hiding the actual costs if the Commission members tried to provide the indexing on a volunteer basis for the present moment; 6) Film Literature Index, which comes out a year later than we do, could easily copy our entries; 7) in addition to the already estimated costs, it is possible that the Editor might ask for increased payment to cover the additional editing work; 8) we have shown our willingness to do what is possible to increase sales, including adding director index and the filmographic periodicals; 9) we would like to ask St. James Press to carry out the present contract, and undertake to consider again when the three-year contract has come to an end. Eileen reported that she had another discussion with Kevin Gough-Yates on the topic before coming to Sofia and would be having another talk on her way back through London after the meeting. She said that although Kevin Gough-Yates had threatened to break the contract if the nonfilm periodicals were not added, she was not entirely convinced that he would do so. If he should, immediate efforts would be made to find another publisher, but to begin again with another publisher might prove a disastrous setback for the project. Nevertheless, unless FIAF should prove willing to make the additional investment, there appeared to be no choice. Meanwhile, the Commission members should do whatever they could to promote the card subscriptions as well as sales of the volume.

#### H. Other business

No one having new projects to propose, Eileen suggested that each member should talk to their own documentation department staff and try to think of small projects that would be useful but still could be accomplished without the great effort or costs that the larger projects we have discussed would entail. The present burden of the International Index to Film Periodicals made it impossible for the Commission to undertake such desirable projects as the international filmography, but there might be some smaller projects at hand. Karen suggested that the agenda for the next meeting should include a time for a discussion of specific problems and solutions we are finding in our own documentation departments. This was agreed to be a good idea, and it was taken up immediately, Brenda reporting on the installation of six Elektrievers in the stills archive of the National Film Archive, which had solved the space problems of stills storage, and John reporting that in his archive it had been possible to appoint two staff members to the board of governors.

#### I. Time and place of next meeting

As previously discussed, Karen proposed that the next meeting take place in the days immediately preceding the summer school in Copenhagen in August 1977, and said that she would ask Ib Monty's permission for this. However, she felt that because of the summer school it would not be possible for Det Danske Film-museum to pay the staying costs, and Eileen agreed to make the request for FIAF funds for the Commissions for this purpose. There was discussion as to whether any meeting would be necessary before this time, but the majority of the members thought it would not. However, there would undoubtedly be meetings of sub-commissions before then.



J. Closing

The program arranged by the Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmteka for the meetings included a dinner given by the Director of the Filmoteka, Mr. Georgui Stoyanov-Bigor; a visit to the documentation department in the Filmoteka's new building; sightseeing in Sofia and a day-long excursion to Plovdiv; and screening of Bulgarian films. On behalf of the Commission, Eileen extended thanks for the very generous hospitality and excellent arrangements, to the Bulgarska Nacionalna Filmoteka, to Mr. Bigor, and to Milka Staykova, as well as the other members of the Filmoteka staff. The meeting was then declared closed.