

REPORT OF THE FIAF DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION

May, 1976

The commission met in Sofia in March 1976 as guests of the Bulgarska Nacionalna Kinoteka, and the subcommissions working on special projects held meetings during 1975. Two new members were added: Frances Thorpe, Editor of the International Index to Film Periodicals, and Aura Püran of the Arhiva Nationale de Filme. Work progressed on the following projects:

1. List of unpublished script holdings in FIAF archives. The commission established standards for the script list, and a letter has been sent out to all archives asking for cooperation. We have asked contributors to send in their information by April 1977.
2. FIAF Directory of Film and Television Documentation Sources. This project is in the final stages of editing and printing, and we expect to have copies in hand for distribution at the Congress.
3. International Directory of Set Designers. The subcommission has produced a draft of the first volume, covering the set designers of Belgium, Deutsche Demokratische Republik, The Netherlands, Poland and Romania. A correct version will be submitted for the consideration of the FIAF Executive Committee in May. It is planned to print 200 copies, 100 to be reserved for FIAF members and 100 to be available for sale to others. The second volume, on the set designers of France and Finland, is expected to be completed next year, and subsequent volumes will cover Italy, and Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.
4. Guidelines for collecting, cataloguing, filing and preserving film posters. A draft revision and expansion of the publication on film posters by the Nederlands Filmmuseum will be prepared for the consideration of the commission at its next meeting.
5. FIAF summer school on film documentation. The proposal for the summer school to be held in Copenhagen in August 1977 will be presented at the Congress. The commission discussed in detail the subjects and the methodology of the school. As there are not enough documentation experts at the Danske Filmmuseum to provide all the teaching staff, it was decided that the commission members would participate in the school. To facilitate this plan, it was decided to hold the next commission meeting in Copenhagen in the days immediately preceeding the summer school.
6. The classification of film literature. The subcommission for this project has produced two schemes, both of which the commission had planned to send out for comments and comparison before deciding on a recommendation. However, as only one of the schemes has been completed, we decided to send it out to FIAF documentation departments and libraries, not as a recommendation, but merely to ask for comments. When the second scheme has been completed, it will also be sent out for comments, and then the commission will again consider whether it can make an official recommendation.
7. The International Index to Film Periodicals. The 1974 volume was published in September 1975 by St. James Press. A reported sale of about 900 copies in the first five months was achieved, but we hope to have more up-to-date figures by the time of the Congress. The staff situation in the London office is fairly stable at the present time, and new equipment was purchased this year: a guillotine for cutting the

cards and a new typewriter. Frances Thorpe has recommended a renewal of the lease for the office in 1976. The project received a grant of BF 576.771,- from the United States National Endowment for the Arts, administered by the Museum of Modern Art. A separate financial report will be presented by the Treasurer, but his report is linked with the following problem: St. James Press has declared that it is unwilling to continue publishing the volume unless (1) the sales for the 1974 volume substantially increase in the next few months, and/or (2) we agree to add the nonfilm periodicals to those now being indexed, which the publisher feels would greatly increase the sales potential of the volume to general libraries. The commission believes that, while it is desirable to add the nonfilm periodicals (an expansion envisioned since the beginning of the project), it is not possible with the present overworked staff. After careful study, the subcommission for the project determined that the costs of adding the non-film periodicals, including free-lance indexer, typist, and supplies, would add BF 98.500,- to the cost of the project. St. James Press feels that FIAF should assume these costs in the expectation of receiving a higher return from the annual volume. However, the commission is not convinced that sufficiently increased sales would result. At the present time, St. James Press is not proceeding with the publication of the 1975 volume, even though the materials have been delivered by our Editor. It is extremely late for FIAF to seek a new publisher, and should St. James break the contract, it will mean a grave setback for the project. Once again, the commission appeals to all FIAF members who believe in the value of the project to do whatever they can to increase the subscriptions to the card service as well as the sales of the annual volumes in their own countries. We estimate that only about 15 additional subscriptions to the card service would finance the project sufficiently that it could operate independently of the annual volume.

- Eileen Bowser

Members of the Documentation Commission:

Eileen Bowser, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art
Brenda Davies, National Film Archives (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
Frances Thorpe, Editor, International Index to Film Periodicals