

FIAF DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting held August 12-14, 1977, Copenhagen.

Participants:

Members: Eileen Bowser, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art
Brenda Davies, 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, International Index to Film Periodicals

Observers: Michael Moulds, London
Anne Schlosser, American Film Institute

I. Opening: The commission met at Schaeffergarden, outside Copenhagen, where the FIAF summer school was to take place in the following days. Staying costs were provided by FIAF, and the arrangements were made by Karen Jones and Det Danske Filmmuseum. Eileen welcomed the members, all of whom were present except Eberhard, who arrived at noon of the same day. She welcomed also the two observers, both former commission members, noting that Anne would arrive only on the second day.

II. Agenda: The prepared agenda had to be disregarded, in order to give first priority of the matters of the summer school, and to accommodate the late arrival of Eberhard, and Anne. The subjects were discussed more or less in the following order.

III. Minutes of the previous meeting: Eileen found it necessary to correct a number of typographical errors in the minutes, and then the minutes were accepted.

IV. Points of the agenda:

1. Summer school: Karen requested the discussion of the teaching plan and the program, and asked that certain points be left to be taken up on the following day, when Anne should have arrived. She reported on the plans and the latest developments concerning the summer school participants. Revisions were made on the teaching plan and the program, but since the details of these revisions may be found among the papers of the summer school, they will not be recorded in these minutes. The commission members agreed to assist Karen in the evening following the commission meeting, carrying and distributing the papers and books for the summer school and arranging the seating plan.

2. Guidelines for collecting, cataloguing, filing and preserving film posters: John reported little progress on his project. However, the material he had prepared for the summer school on this topic could be considered as a beginning to an outline of the subject. He promised to continue the work.

3. The International Index to Film Periodicals: The subcommission had met in Amsterdam at the end of October 1976. France reported sales for the 1975 volume to be at 1001 (643 in the USA and 358 elsewhere) and for the 1974 volume at 815 (500 in the USA and 315 elsewhere). George Walsh was said to be more optimistic about the future and had gone ahead with the 1976 volume with little delay. This volume is now in proof stage. Frances explained some changes in the relationship of St. James Press with the parent company, Macmillan, which she hoped would be of help. Eileen said that

while the years 1976 and 1977 had cost FIAF very little, thanks to the grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the FIAF Treasurer had foreseen a deficit of BF 500.000 for 1978. FIAF accepted this possibility, but said that the commission must consider alternate plans for the project, since FIAF could not continue to subsidize the indexing project at this rate. The commission members objected to the word "deficit" and said that it should appear as a subsidy in the FIAF budget. Eileen asked Brenda about the possibilities of the P.I.P. sharing space with the new documentation department of the BFI, at a saving in rent for the P.I.P., but Brenda said it was not a likely prospect, since the terms of the lease on the new premises precluded them from housing anyone other than BFI staff. Frances said that the project could not continue to bear the costs of subscriptions for the eight FIAF archives in eastern Europe, and that the cost should be made part of the FIAF dues. This would be only fair to the archives in the west which could not afford the subscription and did not receive it. Eileen reported on a budget proposal she had prepared but not yet used, in which the subscription would be part of the FIAF dues, as a service provided as part of the membership. Archives now subscribing would pay less than they now do to FIAF, those not subscribing would pay more, and a smaller subsidy would still come from FIAF as a whole. NonFIAF subscribers would then be paying at a higher rate than FIAF members, without any change in the subscription price. The commission asked Eileen to submit this proposal to FIAF. She agreed, but as she anticipated great difficulty in getting it accepted, she asked only to be permitted to submit the proposal when the time seemed best for it. The commission agreed. No other proposals for saving the P.I.P. could be found.

Frances submitted a proposal for cumulative volumes, to be divided into subjects, film titles, and personalities, and to be typeset. She proposed a format similar to International Film Guide, and suggested that advertisements might help to offset the costs. Eileen said a detailed budget was needed. Everyone was enthusiastic about the idea, and Frances agreed to talk to George Walsh. Walsh had also proposed typesetting the annual volumes, agreeing to provide the necessary proofreading at no cost to FIAF. Frances expressed doubts that such proofreading would be good enough, and said that there would not be time for her to do the extra proofing. However, she agreed to consider the matter carefully, as both Eileen and Karen saw benefits in it for sales, in the professional appearance of the volume.

Frances presented the accounts for January-June 1977, and distributed the new Guidelines for Indexing, updated lists of subscribers and indexers. She proposed that only three years of backsets of cards should be kept in the NFA vaults, and the rest should be offered at a very cheap rate, through the FIAF Bulletin; any not sold would then be junked. The commission agreed. Frances asked for proposals for new periodicals to be added, and also for ideas for promoting the index. Further discussion was postponed until the subject should come up in the summer school. Eileen thanked Frances for her work.

4. Draft glossary of filmographic terms: Eileen reported on the work of the Cataloguing Commission, and noted that the commission's work on a glossary of filmographic terms in many languages was a project of equal interest to the Documentation Commission. She recommended that every member should study the draft and give their observations on specific definitions to the Cataloguing Commission. However, as there would not be time for detailed discussion during the meeting, the group would limit itself to the principles involved in compiling such a glossary. The commission agreed that the following points could be usefully given to the Cataloguing Commission: 1) the title and scope of the glossary needed definition (who would be the users, only cataloguers, or also others?); 2) the production activity should not be confused with the production role; 3) the historical use of certain terms should be explained, since

FIAF deals with films from all time periods; 4) production roles should be logically arranged in groups which linked related terms, with an alphabetical index, which would avoid some of the inconsistencies, overlapping, and confusion of the present alphabetical arrangement; 5) it was suggested that the craft unions be asked for the contractual definitions of various functions, and that the British standards "Glossary of terms used in the motion picture industry" B.S. 5196.1975, might be consulted. Eileen agreed to write the Cataloguing Commission to express the views of the Documentation Commission.

5. Draft chapter on documentation for the basic manual: This topic was not on the original agenda, but it was added when Brenda noted that in reviewing the chapter for use in the summer school, she had noted a number of details which should like to see changed or amended. Eileen explained that the basic manual was in its final stages during this year, and that all such suggestions should be made at this time. A detailed discussion followed, and Eileen made note of all proposals. It was further decided to ask the summer school participants to study the chapter with a view to what was not clear and what might be more useful.

6. (continuation of 1., Summer School): With the arrival of Anne Schlosser, the commission returned to agenda item one. Anne reported on the results of the film and TV documentation workshop she had just held in Los Angeles, which gave the commission several useful ideas for the summer school. It was decided to adapt her idea of using a questionnaire to evaluate the summer school, rather than devote the last session of the school to do this. Such a change would leave more time for general discussion on the topics of the summer school, and might lead to a more active and frank participation in the evaluation, if they were not required to sign the questionnaire. Eileen agreed to work on a draft for the questionnaire.

7. The Classification of Film Literature: Michael Moulds submitted his completed scheme, and the commission decided to adopt it as a recommendation. Michael still had to write the introduction, integrate the television scheme, and prepare an alternate simplified version for small libraries, and then retype it all. Karen offered to help, and they decided it would be ready to send out to FIAF in about six months. It was decided that the accompanying letter would refer to Gillian's scheme, already sent out, as a possible alternative, but that Michael's scheme would be the official FIAF recommendation. The possibilities for a publication that could be used in library schools were discussed, and it was agreed there might be a wide interest. Eileen agreed to discuss this with the Executive Committee, and to talk to publishers. Michael was congratulated on the completion of this very ambitious project. The scheme would be presented at the summer school as a FIAF recommendation.

8. International index to books on cinema: Eileen reported there had been a discussion at the last FIAF Congress, and a request that the commission consider adding books to the P.I.P. cards. The first problem considered by the commission was whether the archives could be persuaded to send in the indexing information on books in addition to that on periodicals. The experience of the Romanian archive showed that few archives were willing to contribute, or gave insufficient information, to their project for an international bibliography. Should the office in London attempt to do the indexing centrally, there would be an enormous delay of time, since the editor would have to depend on the publication of the various national bibliographies, which appear very late. Frances thought that the project could be considered as a kind of pilot project for one year, to determine whether or not it would work. That year would take substantial financing from FIAF. She thought there would first have to be a questionnaire, to ask 1) how many archives would pay the additional subscription, and 2) how many would be willing to add book indexing to the periodical indexing. She estimated that it would require the services of one editor half-time, a typist quarter-time; subscriptions to national bibliographies for the editor's use in checking information; supplies, printing costs and postage. However, the commission decided not to pursue this project further, unless there should be shown a wider interest in FIAF and a willingness to

finance it. The probable lack of cooperation from archives to do the indexing was thought to be an insuperable obstacle, since no one present was willing to undertake the work in their own archive.

(Karen, Frances, Michael and Anne withdrew from the remainder of the commission meeting, to work on the subject of classification in the summer school, since it needed a great deal of preparation. The rest of the commission continued with the following topics:)

9. Coordinated list of unpublished script holdings: Eberhard reported that although he had only very recently sent out his questionnaire, he already had 14 replies from archives agreeing to participate, and hoped to receive more replies from some summer school participants. A surprising number had said they could conform to the FIAF Guidelines. Two archives said they could not meet the deadline. Bucarest said they would need to have the permission of the authors before contributing. However, the majority of the commission members said that even though they did not hold scripts with the permission of authors or production companies, they saw little danger in publishing such a list. It was agreed that Eberhard would have to write those archives which had replied, specifying the information that was needed, including screenplay authors which did not appear on the script, since this provision is not in the Guidelines. As no early meeting of the commission was foreseen, Eberhard agreed to inform the members by mail of his progress, once the deadline had been reached.

10. The International Directory of Set and Costume Designers: Alfred reported on the work of the subcommission, which met in Rome in October 1976. Volume I had been delayed in publication due to the illness of Nico Diemer. Now it was ready, and Alfred showed a copy to the commission. For help in its preparation, he thanked the archives of Brussels, Warsaw and Bucarest, and especially the Amsterdam archive, and Nico Diemer and John Luijckx. Alfred proposed to send it to all FIAF archives, and asked whether it could be made available for limited sale (100 copies) outside of FIAF. He proposed that 30 copies be sold in the DDR, at a price of 9 marks, the rest to be sold from the Secretariat. Eileen said that since this was an official publication of FIAF, it would need the approval of the Executive Committee to do this, and she promised to discuss it at the next meeting in January.

Alfred said that the delays and difficulties of publishing the Directory in other countries had convinced him that it would be more practical for him to undertake the manufacture and dispatch himself, using a stencilled format. When a sufficient number of the volumes had appeared, FIAF could decide whether a selected and cumulated volume should be printed. Alfred said the subcommission would be willing to prepare such a volume when the time came. He then presented the manuscript for Volume II, covering France and Finland. He said it should be ready to send out by the end of this year. He read the draft preface, which was approved by the commission. Alfred thanked the archives of Toulouse and Helsinki for their collaboration, and especially Raymond Borde and Mr. Chirat of Brussels. He acknowledged many gaps still existing in the information for the French silent film. The research for the designers of Italy is under way, with the help of Dr. Bernardini of the Film Lexicon Degli Autori e Delle Opere and students working under the guidance of Dr. Micheli of the University of Perugia, but as a long delay is expected, Alfred proposed to complete Volume 3 with Germany until 1945 and Austria up to the present. Dr. Walter Fritz has invited the subcommission to meet in Vienna to work on the Austrian information and Gero Gandert of the Deutsche Kinemathek would work together with Eberhard on the German material. The next task would be the Soviet designers, with the help of Gosfilmofond. The methods for handling the USA have not yet been found.

Eileen thanked Alfred for the work of the subcommission.

11. International directory to dissertations on cinema: Eileen reported that a proposal was made during the FIAF Congress in Mexico that the commission consider this project. The members agreed that it would first be necessary to find a definition that would cover such work on an international level, and each member promised to work on a definition that would cover his or her country and other countries they were familiar with. Discussions centered on the present existence of published information; whether the directory should be current or retrospective, or both; what kind of arrangement and index would be desirable. Although the commission did not feel prepared to take on such a project at once, it was agreed that further consideration should be given to it at the next meeting. Meanwhile it was proposed that the FIAF Bulletin should carry information about ongoing research projects in the film archives, and Eileen agreed to insert a notice requesting contributions.
12. FIAF Directory of Film and TV Documentation Sources: This topic was added to the agenda, when John reported that no more copies were available. The first printing was 100 copies. The commission agreed that a new, revised edition was desirable, and Brenda and John agreed to work on it. It was felt that libraries specializing in film and television outside of FIAF ought to be included, and that it would be desirable to make the publication available for sale outside FIAF. Everyone had found the first edition to be useful. Eileen will ask the Executive Committee if the expansion outside of FIAF can be approved, and if so, she will inform Brenda and John, and they will send out a new questionnaire.
13. Compilation of libraries' special subject bibliographies: Eileen suggested this as a way to share the work going on in individual documentation departments, and a project which would not greatly increase the work of the commission. Further discussion was postponed until the summer school.
14. Time and place of the next meeting: The commission agreed to leave this question open, and that no meeting in 1978 would be anticipated. It was decided that a final session of the current meeting would be held at the end of the summer school, to discuss the conclusions reached about the school, but since several members left before the final day, and the others were exhausted, no additional session was held.
15. Closing: On behalf of the commission, Eileen thanked Karen Jones and Louise Roos and the Danish Filmmuseum for the work of arranging the meeting, and the generous warmth of the evening party held at Luise Roos's home.