

**DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION
REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CANCUN, NOVEMBER 1995**

COMMISSION MEMBERS

René Beauclair, Cinémathèque Québécoise
Susan Dalton, NCFV, Washington, D.C.
Nancy Goldman, Pacific Film Archive
Ronald S. Magliozzi, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Michael Moulds, FIAF, London
Teresa Toledo, Filmoteca Espanola

1. INTRODUCTION**1.1 The Commission problem**

I would like to begin this report with remarks concerning Commission work and several proposals based on my experience as a Documentation Commission member since 1985 and as Commission president for the past four years.

I believe that there is a great body of evidence to support the observation that FIAF's current Commission structure does not work. We have spent many hours during Executive Committee meetings and in the General Assembly discussing the problems of the commissions. Among these problems are

- ineffective leadership
- inactive commission members
- insignificant commission projects
- scarcity of qualified and available new members
- excessive time spent writing reports, and so forth.

In an effort to solve these problems the Commissions have "redefined" themselves in mission statements, circulated questionnaires, and come up with schemes such as the notion of "corresponding commission membership", etc. The Commission heads have been cross-examined endlessly during Executive Committee meetings and denounced publically during the General Assembly. FIAF continues to budget money for Commission work that too often in recent years has not produced results (with a few notable exceptions of course).

Among the solutions that have been repeatedly suggested is that we combine the Cataloguing and Documentation Commissions. I would like to see this idea put to rest permanently. FIAF could not make Cataloguing and Documentation perform together efficiently back in the late 1960's, and a combined cataloguing-documentation commission is not working for The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) at present. Combining cataloguing and documentation will only compound our present problems.

At a time when those of us working in archives are under pressure to produce more work with increasingly limited resources of time and money and when FIAF itself is facing a serious

Documentation Commission/Cancun 2.

financial situation, the current Commission structure and the Executive Committee's efforts to make it work appear most inefficient and wasteful.

I believe it is time to recognize that we cannot force accountability from commission members who are, in fact, unpaid volunteers, and that we should not be paying to support commission work that is not being performed. I believe we need to adopt a more realistic and cost-effective way of supporting the work of this organization.

1.2 First Proposal: A Project Structure

I propose that the present "Commission" structure for FIAF's educational work be replaced by a "Project" structure. Instead of paying to support Commissions, we should be paying to support specific projects. Under such a system, projects would require the review and approval of the EC. Projects would only be approved when they were judged to have a clear goal and usefulness, to be cost effective, and to have a qualified project leader, or project committee, who have the time, expertise and enthusiasm to bring the project to fruition. I would like to point out that we already have a model for this project-structured approach in the Periodical Indexing (PIP) and the CD-ROM projects.

1.3 Second Proposal: A Centralized Database

I propose that FIAF centralize its database and project activities at its Brussels office. Two pressing reasons to consider this proposal come immediately to mind:

First, when the Documentation Commission set about locating FIAF databases for its CD-ROM, we discovered that copies were not held in the Brussels office, but were instead left (in several cases irretrievably) in the hands of ex-commission members or guarded jealously by particular archives. If FIAF is paying to support this work, there should be a clear copyright agreement which assures that the FIAF office has a copy of all databases.

Second, it is time for FIAF to make decisions on the future of its PIP and CD-ROM projects. The future of both depends on making them cost-effective with adequate income and staff. The question of editorial succession also has to be considered. To be blunt: who will succeed Michael Moulds, current Editor-in-Chief (and mastermind!) of both projects when he decides to move on?

If we combine Michael's PIP and CD-ROM offices in London with the FIAF Secretariat in Brussels, we will immediately save the cost of rent and equipment in London, balance the budgets of both these projects and give our CD-ROM product a competitive edge. Michael and assistant editor Anthony Blampied are eager to discuss such a move and the question of a successor to the position of editor-in-chief. This discussion should follow as soon as possible your meeting in Cancun.

The other database which should be centralized is the TREASURES PROJECT DATABASE headed by Susan Dalton. This database began in its book form as a holdings catalog of silent, fiction shorts in FIAF archives, but has grown on our CD-ROM to include non-fiction and features. Susan's recent last minute move to the

Documentation Commission/Cancun 3.

Library of Congress and the uncertain future of the AFI point up our concern that a database as important as this should be in FIAF's direct care in Brussels. Susan has battled the odds brilliantly to date, but she is prepared to discuss a move to Brussels. This discussion should follow as soon as possible your meeting in Cancun. As a footnote to this, I will add that Clyde Jeavons' repeated proposal that we begin a "FIAF database of archival holdings" should logically be addressed by "centralizing" the TREASURES DATABASE.

I will now proceed with a traditional commission report.

2. MEETINGS

2.1 New York City: Michael Moulds, Susan Dalton and Ron Magliozzi met with Mary Lea Bandy in New York in early October to discuss budget matters relating to the Periodical Indexing and CD-ROM operation in London and the TREASURES DATABASE in Washington, D.C. The meeting focused on practical solutions to lowering costs and increasing profitability. A number of the ideas discussed are included both in my opening remarks and in the report on editorial matters below.

2.2 London: A full commission meeting was held in London, 4-8 October 1995 (see attached agenda). This was our second full commission meeting of the year and was scheduled to address pressing editorial matters. We met at the PIP offices which allowed us to observe the operation of the PIP and CD-ROM projects first-hand. We had a very valuable meeting with Mike Peterson of Open University who oversees the technical production of the CD-ROM. Our invited guests, Fortunée Sallam (BIFI, Paris), Martin Humphries (The Cinema Museum), Catherine Surowiec (Projecto Lumière) and Lira Fernandez, Janet Moat and Stephen Pearson (BFI) were active participants in our discussions.

2.3 Future meetings: We have no set plans for a future meeting. Our meeting in London was funded from our 1996 budget, and as a result we may not meet again as a full commission until 1997.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Despite our continuing efforts to increase our commission membership we have had little success. For the past four years we have targeted France and Germany in particular, as a means of addressing our english-language, North American bias. Please see my previous reports for details.

Fortunée Sallam from BIFI in Paris is a possible candidate.

3.2 I am eager to resign from the Documentation Commission sometime within the next two years. I would be pleased to continue my association with the CD-ROM project, but not as a member of the Documentation Commission.

4. PERIODICAL INDEXING PROJECT

4.1 Editorial matters:

4.1A We had detailed discussions regarding an increase in the number of periodicals we index. This has been a chronic problem due to the difficulty in finding indexers at FIAF archives.

The benefit of meeting face to face with potential indexers was demonstrated in London: Martin Humphries of The Cinema Museum volunteered to index two new periodicals for us; Lira Fernandez of the BFI agreed in principle to increasing the indexing the BFI shares with us; Fortunée Sallam agreed in principle to sharing indexing done at BIFI with us.

4.1B I proposed that we add references to periodicals despite the fact that we do not index them. For example, under the subject heading "Horror Films" would appear references to periodicals which cover this topic, but we would not endeavor to index the articles in each issue.

4.1C A number of new periodical titles were discussed for possible inclusion in the PIP, and a few will be added. These included:

- Creative Screenwriting (added)
- Delirium
- Eye Ball
- Film Threat
- Filmfax (added)
- Midnight Marquee
- Outré
- Psychotronic Video
- Scarlet Street (added)
- Scenario (added)
- Television Chronicles (added)
- Video Watchdog

4.1D We had further discussions on indexing special "cinema" issues of non-film periodicals, as we do with "Architectural Digest" for instance. We agreed to continue the practice on an issue by issue basis, and discussed specific issues of "American Photographer" (rejected) and "Interview" (accepted).

4.1E As subscriptions to the CD-ROM have increased, the sales of the Microfiche edition have fallen off. Michael will stop producing the microfiche edition in February 1996.

4.2 Funding:

The question of increasing the number of PIP supporters was raised at our meeting with Mary Lea in New York. These supporters pay 480 pounds annually. Mary Lea endorsed the idea that we should work to increase the number of archives supporting the PIP, and Michael has prepared a list of full members who are not PIP supporters for consideration by the Executive Committee.

5 CD-ROM

5.1 Editorial matters:

5.1A Rotating Databases. Whenever a database is updated for the CD-ROM it costs money. Therefore, as a cost-saving measure we will be rotating updates of CD-ROM databases in the future. For the Fall issue we will update TREASURES DATABASE, BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FIAF MEMBERS PUBLICATIONS, and LATIN AMERICAN BIBLIOGRAPHY. For the Spring we will update DIRECTORY OF DOCUMENTATION COLLECTIONS, and MEMBERSHIP ADDRESSES. We had been updating all the databases every six months. The FILM AND TV PERIODICAL INDEXING DATABASE will continue to be updated every six months.

5.1B Open University has been involved in processing data for the database updates. This is a cost we have been incurring for each database, every six months. Plans are underway to eliminate Open University's involvement in this stage of CD-ROM production by their supplying us with the programs necessary to process the databases before delivery. Open University will continue to be involved in the technical production of the CD-ROM master disc for each issue.

5.1C Please see my earlier reports for details regarding the editorial content and process involved in producing the TREASURES PROJECT, INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF FILM AND TV DOCUMENTATION COLLECTIONS and BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FIAF MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS databases. We have substantially increased the number of entries in these databases for the FALL 1995 edition which has just been issued.

5.1D The Fall 1995 edition will also include a new database, the first version of the LATIN AMERICAN BIBLIOGRAPHY edited by Teresa Toledo. This bibliography includes 900 books and periodical articles on the Latin American cinema by Latin American and foreign authors. We hope to have the full 2000 entries prepared for the next edition.

5.1E During our presentation of the CD-ROM in Los Angeles, there were calls for further technical development of the product from the floor of the General Assembly. We have prepared the following list of technical improvements to be costed for us by Open University:

- i full text searching on general subjects and titles for PIP and TREASURES
- ii first letter searching in BIBLIOGRAPHY and DIRECTORY
- iii move all databases to operate like PIP and TREASURES
- iv color highlights for DIRECTORY
- v boulian or adjacent word search
- vi Windows and MAC versions
- vii to add the AMERICAN SILENT COMEDY FILMOGRAPHY DATABASE using TREASURES program
- viii to add plot summaries to TREASURES with full text searching
- ix new menu and sub-menus
- x "fiction"/"non-fiction"/"feature"/"short" as searchable fields in TREASURES.

5.2 Publicity:

5.2A over the past several years we have mailed publicity to thousands of institutions and individuals including The Society for Cinema Studies, AFI Guide to College Course in Film, Peterson's Guide to College Courses, American Library Association Membership lists, and many others. The FIAF Secretariat is in the process of mailing to 1600 institutions in Europe and the USA based on addresses gathered from Wolfgang Klaue (WORLD DIRECTORY OF MOVING IMAGE AND SOUND ARCHIVES, Saur, 1995) and other archivists in Europe and Scandinavia. Additional addresses are welcome, especially if they come with an offer to assume the cost of postage; to this point the cost of publicity has been paid by Documentation Commission members' archives, the London office and the Secretariat.

5.2B We have approximately 1000 of our first brochures left in New York. The first brochure was designed, edited and paid for by the Film Department Museum of Modern Art. Who will assume the work and the cost of producing future advertising material?

5.2C We have designed a new advertisement for the CD-ROM to be published in the next FIAF JOURNAL OF PRESERVATION. It features a streamlined text, an intriguing picture of Alfred Hitchcock, the phone number for credit card purchase and a tear away order form. This advertisement might be used as the basis for the next brochure. We are currently collecting recommendations on the appropriate periodicals in which to place advertisements.

5.2D There are two sales strategies which we have not exploited fully: conferences and reviews. Frankly, there is only so much our small Commission can do. We have been reviewed favorably in England and the USA, and exhibited at conferences in the USA and Canada, but it is clear we need to do more in these areas of promotion. Again, we need individuals willing to take the matter into their own hands. For instance, on her own initiative, Eva Orbanz placed an advertisement for the CD-ROM in her archive's publication. We will be happy to provide the necessary materials and whenever possible to attend conferences. We are currently collecting information on conferences and recommendations on the appropriate publications in which to seek reviews.

5.3 Funding:

5.3A Michael has submitted a new budget which works within the parameters discussed with Mary Lea Bandy in New York City. We no longer expect to have the easy access to FIAF funding we have enjoyed in the past. It is still our belief that this project should show a profit based on sales alone, and we are still working toward that goal.

5.3B In order to qualify for funding from the European community, Michael has proposed the idea of developing a European Periodical Indexing database within the current structure of the PIP operation. However with his proposal came his own serious doubts that he could solve editorial problems such as translating data. Opinions on the idea are welcome.

5.3C Michael has long been considering an application to Getty for funding, but once again, with this proposal came his

Documentation Commission/Cancun 7.

analysis that Getty would most likely turn first to the BFI for advice and that the application would end there. Opinions on the idea are welcome.

5.4 Sales:

5.4A Michael's budget report gives CD-ROM sales figures. A number of FIAF archives are not subscribers. Michael has prepared a list of full member archives which have not subscribed to the CD-ROM.

5.4B After our discussions with Mary Lea it was decided that since we are very competitively priced, we will not be lowering the price of the CD-ROM. The issue of how much we should be charging for the CD-ROM is complicated: should FIAF members be paying more or less of the cost?

Michael has made some remarks on the matter in his current financial report. Discussion of this matter with him is imperative.

6. OTHER PROJECTS

6.1 FIAF Handbook on Film Documentation.

This is a project which we began in 1991. We have developed a detailed outline and drafts of several chapters with which you may be familiar as it has been circulated for comment. The development of the CD-ROM has caused us to put the "Handbook" project on hold, although there is some interest in reviving it both from within our Commission and from Janet Moat of the BFI.

This is a project which I developed, and one to which I would be pleased to return as "project leader" when I escape the Documentation Commission!

Ron Magliozzi
9 November 1995

**REVISED DRAFT AGENDA
FIAF DOCUMENTATION COMMISSION MEETING
LONDON, 4-8 OCTOBER 1995**

Commission Members expected to attend: René Beauclair, Susan Dalton, Nancy Goldman, Ron Magliozzi, Michael Moulds, Teresa Toledo.

- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4: 10AM-12:30PM / 2:30PM-5:30PM
Morning and afternoon (Commission members only): Tour of PIP facility, archive reports, membership issues, report on NYC budget meeting, and so forth.
Evening: Dinner for Commission Members at Michael Moulds' home
- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5: 9:30AM-12:30PM / 2:30PM-5:30PM
Morning: PIP indexing, subject headings, classification scheme, and so forth
Afternoon: PIP issues continued
Evening: reception for Commission Members at the BFI
NOTE: we expect invited guests from BFI, BIFI, The Cinema Museum, etc to attend.
- FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6: 9:30AM-12:30PM / 2:30PM-5:30PM
Morning: Mike Peterson of Open University will attend
Afternoon: CD-ROM discussion continues
Evening: dinner at "Joe Allens" Restaurant
NOTE: we expect invited guests from BFI, BIFI, The Cinema Museum, etc to attend.
- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7: 10:30AM-12:30PM / 2:30PM-5:30PM
Morning (Commission members only): summary discussion and future meetings
Afternoon: excursion to The Cinema Museum (tentative)
Evening: free
- SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8: Excursion to BFI Berkhamsted facility

Ron Magliozzi
26 September 1995