



**Meyergården Hotel**  
**Mo i Rana - Norway**

**REPORT FROM THE CATALOGUING COMMISSION**  
**TO THE FIAF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MO I RANA, MAY 1993**

---

The Cataloguing Commission has instituted a new system of corresponding membership and begun issuing a new series, the Cataloguing Commission Occasional Papers.

**Corresponding Membership**

Last autumn, the Commission expanded its membership by requesting FIAF archives to nominate members of their staffs to affiliate with the Commission as corresponding members. Corresponding members receive Commission documents, are invited to contribute to Commission discussions and to work on projects approved for the Commission by FIAF's Executive Committee. Responses to our request have been quite positive. Our current corresponding membership numbers thirty-one colleagues from archives in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America. Corresponding members have volunteered to work on all our projects, some even volunteering to participate in several.

**Cataloguing Commission Occasional Papers**

This new series consists of short papers on specific topics which are of concern to catalogers. Papers are issued on letter-sized sheets in order that catalogers may keep them together in looseleaf binders. Since last year's Congress, we have issued three papers:

No. 1: Formats, Formats, Formats, by Carlos Roberto de Souza of the Cinemateca Brasileira explains the role of the computer format, distinguishing format from both cataloging rules and software configurations. Formats explain how to identify and locate information in computer records; catalog rules govern the nature and structure of the information so located, and computer software governs methods for such activities as input, searching, retrieval, sorting, display and output. It is in the interest of promoting the sharing of cataloging information that we seek to create a "FIAF Format" which can be used in common by all FIAF archives when exchanging cataloging data. Even though archives use the same rules and formats for the purposes of sharing information, they can still maintain flexibility of input, searching, display and output -- in response to local needs.

No. 2: On the Problem of Non-Alphabetic Characters in Film Titles, by Oskar von Törne of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, describes alternative methods of arranging titles which consist of or contain numbers, symbols and other non-alphabetic characters. Traditionally these characters have been alphabetized by transcribing them into their spoken form. This can cause confusion in cases where more than one spoken form exists for a given symbol or sequence of numbers. Since academic correctness also requires that any transcribed spoken form must be within the context of the original language of the title, additional problems arise when the cataloger is not familiar enough with that language to determine the correct spoken form. For these reasons, von Törne recommends sorting by means of an established table of number/symbol sequences which can also be readily programmed into a computer's sorting instructions.

No. 3: Dealing with the Unacceptable, by Roger Smither of the Imperial War Museum, focuses on the problems faced by archives and their staffs in preserving, cataloging, and programming materials whose themes may give offense to contemporary standards on religious, political, sexual, or other grounds. Smither explains the initial conclusions of the Cataloguing Commission on these issues: (1) that FIAF should support the rights of archives to acquire, hold, and preserve those items which it feels are necessary to its collections, (2) that description and cataloging should be candid and accurate, and (3) that extreme care should be taken to establish context in any programming activities. The Commission hopes this paper will stimulate further discussion on the issues of censorship as they relate to the activities and functions of archives.

### **Rules for Preparing Filmographies**

Representatives of both the Cataloguing and Documentation Commissions have reviewed draft specifications prepared for the European Filmography project by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and generously lent to us help in our work of creating rules for preparing filmographies. Nowell-Smith's specifications call for the inclusion of a limited number of obligatory data elements, e.g., title, country (or countries) of production, year, production company and/or director, and length. Additional optional data elements include: sponsor, silent/sound, original language, color, anamorphic, length (as specified in **more than one** of the following: meters, feet, minutes, reels), source, and notes. Based upon comments from our reviewers and from his European Filmography colleagues, Mr. Nowell-Smith is now preparing a revised draft which we plan to study at a joint Documentation-Cataloguing Commission session later during the Mo i Rana Congress.

### **Guidelines for Selection Criteria**

Günter Schulz has prepared a background paper which we will use to introduce discussion about guidelines for selection amongst the members of both the Cataloguing Commission and the Commission for Programming and Access to Collections. Vladimir Opěla has volunteered to act as liaison for the Cataloguing Commission on this project. In addition, he is preparing a study of selection practices in the Czech Film Archive which we will also use as a discussion paper during the Commissions meetings in September.

### **Computer Formats**

Commission liaison, Carlos Roberto de Souza, reports that he has now collected and reviewed the most relevant computer formats (CCF, CEPAL, MARC and UNIMARC). Following our request for information from FIAF archives, he has received and compared responses from nearly 20 archives, including Colombia, Finland, France, Great Britain (NFA & IWM), Ireland, Macedonia, Mexico (UNAM), Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Spain (Valencia), the United States (3 archives), and Venezuela. Mr. de Souza writes that the results of this comparison are not as promising as we had hoped, since the formats seem to have much less in common than we had anticipated. We would still like very much to receive information about formats in use within archives who have not yet responded to our earlier request. Please send your information directly to Mr. de Souza as soon as possible, so that he can still have time to incorporate and compare your data before preparing his report for our September meetings.

## Genres

Günter Schulz and Dorothea Gebauer have completed their study of film genres by preparing a list of genres for fiction films. This list will be presented at the Commission's next meetings. To complement this work, corresponding member, Claudia Di Giovanni, has agreed to prepare a companion list of form/genre terms for non-fiction films.

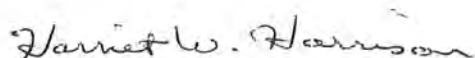
## Ideas for New Projects

- (1) To establish a "question and answer" cataloguing column in the FIAF Bulletin.
- (2) To conduct a study/survey on intellectual access to collections. The purpose of the study will be to define archive methods, practices, needs, and problems in the area of subject analysis, and to serve as a basis for establishing future Commission projects in this area.
- (3) To foster FIAF member interest groups, e.g., members of regional networks, software information exchange, MicroISIS users, etc.

## Meetings

The Commission met April 28 - May 1, 1992 in São Paulo, where we were ably hosted by the Cinemateca Brasileira. Expert guests at the meetings were Jaime Tello (Mexico-UNAM) and Hisashi Okajima (Tokyo).

The next Commission meetings will take place September 15 -18, 1993 at the Národní Filmový Archiv in Prague.



Harriet W. Harrison  
Chair of the Cataloguing Commission