

## REPORT ON NITRATE UNION CATALOG PROJECT

In 1983, at the suggestion of the Executive Committee, the Cataloguing Commission began work on a project to build a union catalog of FIAF archive holdings. The file is maintained at the Secretariat in Brussels for use by archives in the sharing of information about the preservation of nitrate films.

Working together with the Executive Committee, the Cataloguing Commission members designed a simplified catalog form on cards which could be sent out to those archives wishing to participate in the project. To accompany the cards, they prepared a set of instructions for filling them in. They also set the parameters of the project, i.e., participants are to complete cards for:

- 1) feature film holdings
- 2) which are sound (not silent)
- 3) dating from the nitrate era, but including both acetate and/or nitrate holdings
- 4) country of origin of the films from countries other than the country of the participating archive

Response to this project has been quite gratifying. So far, over 12,000 cards from approximately 30 archives have been received. Of these, approximately 6,000 have been entered onto FIAF's microcomputer by our Executive Secretary, Mrs Brigitte van der Elst. The software in use is CDS ISIS; both the microcomputer and the software were given by UNESCO. Searches on the file can be performed by title, by date, by numbers of titles from countries of origin, by numbers of titles from specific participating archives, etc.

In the course of her work on the project, Mrs van der Elst has noticed some problems and received certain questions from participating archives. In an effort to sort these out, we remind you:

- 1) Remember that the project is ongoing. More archives can join at any time simply by requesting cards and instructions from the Secretariat, filling out the cards, and returning them to Mrs van der Elst. Archives already participating in the project should remember to send in additional cards for newly received materials.
- 2) Remember that the project is intended to cover both acetate and nitrate holdings. Please send in cards for those titles falling within the scope of the project when any one of the following cases exists:
  - a) you have only acetate holdings for a title,
  - b) you have only nitrate holdings for a title, or
  - c) you have both acetate and nitrate holdings for a title.
- 3) Transliteration from the Cyrillic alphabet remains a problem. Mrs van der Elst will try to use the transliteration standard from the British Film Institute. When you transliterate, please also try to use that standard.
- 4) Please follow the instructions provided, and use the prescribed codes when filling out the cards. When Mrs van der Elst has a problem understanding your cards, she will be returning them to you for clarification.

5) Please remember that the file is now available for all participating archives to use. You may ask what archives have holdings for the particular titles you are planning to preserve. Then, by contacting those archives for more specific information, you should be able to improve your own preservation work and to avoid duplication of preservation costs and efforts.

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