

Meeting Minutes

July 3/4, 1992 - Munich

Commission Meetings hosted by Enno Patalas

In Attendance:

Gabrielle Claes
João Benard da Costa
Catherine Gautier
Enno Patalas
Steven Ricci
Paolo Cherchi Usai

1. Adoption of the Agenda; approval of the minutes

After initial discussion, the modified meeting agenda was approved. The order was changed to: 1 through 5, 8, Open Forum, 6, 7 (see agenda).

Explained and affirmed internal principles as outlined in Montevideo. Further discussion concentrated on following points:

- detailed minutes will be continued
- discussion of difficulties in finding meeting times and places which could work out for everyone, reaffirmation of the need to meet under optimal working conditions (i.e., during festivals, conferences, etc.)
- Manuel Carril was unable to make the Munich meeting but submitted a series of written suggestions
- given the Federation's serious budgetary conditions, JBC reached consensus to propose that the EC make a recommendation to all commissions that individual archives support the travel expenses of commission members to their meetings.

- we agreed to circulate our minutes to other commissions

Paolo Cherchi Usai asked for corrections on page three:

- Section "b" of the "Manual of Technical Standards and Guidelines for Projection" should be integrated into section "c"
 - move one sentence ("parameters acceptable within the realm of film archives") into paragraph "c"
 - delete the word "compromise" from the title of section "a" (see revised minutes)
2. Manual for Technical Standards: Discussion of Jean Kiere Verschueren's letter

Gabriel Claes talked to JPV and felt it was very important to clarify some points:

- what is distinction between a, b, and c of outline?
- what precisely will JPV do?
- what precisely will Clyde Jeavons do?
- should identification of sound tracks, gauges be in of manual?
- how can clear distinctions be drawn between a historical description of formats and the recommended standards for proper projection?

PCU suggests a solution for the difference between the first part of the Manual and the rest. JPV should be as analytical as possible in order to best describe differences between various systems. He should write a "dictionary" of systems and formats. The second part should not repeat JPV's descriptions. It should only suggest that, wherever possible, projection should refer to the historical practices described by JPV in part one.

The principal issue to be resolved is whether JPV's section of the manual will also make recommendations of practical solutions on how to best project films when the original format no longer exists or whether these recommendations will be a part of Clyde Jeavons' contribution.

There was general agreement that we should communicate to Verschueren our appreciation of the valuable contribution he was making and that we would be in contact with him about any eventual editing which it might require. The need to coordinate

the various components of the manual and in a timely way was stressed. It was agreed that GC would discuss the technical manual with Clyde Jeavons in order to clarify some of the differences between its various sections.

Once again we discussed whether or not the two Manuals (technical and access) should be unified in some way. No decision on this question was made. After much discussion, we reaffirmed the basic function of the first volume as technical in nature, that it should have a very practical use in determining how best to present films in our collections and films which we borrow. While it is clear that there remain a number of very important "philosophical" questions (such as dubbing vs. subtitling), these need to be addressed in a different forum. Since some of these questions had been raised by CJ, we felt it was important to reiterate to him our basic conception of the technical manual's overriding purpose.

3. Manual for Research and Access to the Collections

PCU: In Montevideo, Ann Flemming brought up two questions for discussion about the access manual. In the section of the book which deals with "outside" users, would it be useful to talk about procedures for requests for copyright clearance and should the manual also make some recommendations about how to deal with shipping costs. PCU originally felt that the manual should not deal with these problems insofar as the answers to each would depend a great deal on the particular situations and legal constraints of each archive.

SR asked whether or not there had been some useful lessons learned on the shipping issues which could be shared in the manual.

GC felt that some of the copyright issues should be explained and described. She reminded us that Robert Daudelin had asked the Commission to address legal questions in general (e.g. the question of restoration in relationship to legal rights owners).

SR agreed with GC that we need to address these and other copyright questions, that the increasing demands for access to archival collections was presenting new kinds of legal issues which we as yet have no good guidelines.

GC raised an example which should be dealt with: why do some archives ask for permission to project films from their own collections on their own premises?

PCU felt very strongly that these issues (legal, copyright) should have been brought up at an earlier stage, that six months of work had already gone into the preparation of the access

manual without mention of these issues.

The discussion which followed concentrated on whether the presentation at the FIAF symposium in Montevideo was only a point of departure for discussion of the Access Manual or a proposal for the actual contents, ie. on the extent to which we should modify what PCU proposed in Montevideo and include more material on legal questions for example.

GC ultimately asked: irrespective of the Montevideo presentation and various outlines and suggestions which have been made, what is the question in front of us now? Should the legal issues be discussed or not?

PCU felt that we should not break with the proposal made at Montevideo and that it was impractical to engage the entire range of legal issues in the manual, that this would not only differ from what the Commission has said to the membership but that it would significantly retard delivery of the book itself.

Enno Patakas felt that it was unreasonable to ask Paolo to address all of these issues in the access manual, that the complexities of the differences in legal situations from country to country would make it difficult to deal with clearly in the Access Manual. He felt that they were very important but that these questions should be addressed but in a separate discussion.

JBC proposed that we table the discussion of the appropriate place, format for these points until our next meeting in New York.

PCU agreed to incorporate into the next draft the principle recommendations made in SR's letter. PCU said he will try to rewrite the draft index by the end of the summer if at all possible. In spirit of SR's recommendations was that it is important to offer a pluralistic view of what constitutes the object of access; recognizing that some archives draw on the museum model others on the cinematheque, library or school models. PCU said that he will continue to make as much progress as possible but that it may be difficult to finish the Manual by the end of 1993.

4. Working Group on Archives and Film Education

SR is writing a report for the FIAF Bulletin on the Workshop in Montevideo and will distribute it to the Commission members for their comments prior to final submission to the Bulletin's editorial board.

After discussion, SR proposed names for membership in the Working Group based on two basic criteria: individuals with a specific ongoing relationship to film education and some

logistical likelihood of being able to meet on an occasional basis. SR expressed concern that the working group not be perceived as an insider group and recommended that its makeup reflect a wide diversity of opinions. SR agreed with the principle of diversity and said he would report on the progress of forming the group at the New York meeting.

5. Survey of Programming and Access

a) Catherine Gautier reported on the progress with the survey. Most (approximately 75) archives have responded. CG said that she would make one last round of calls/faxes in order to solicit final responses.

JBC proposed that a first draft of the survey results (collation and interpretation of the responses) should be presented to the Commission in New York. The final paper would be presented in Milan.

SR noted that some of the questions were interpreted differently and asked if we had the time to get clarifications from the archives. JBC felt that this was very important to do. He also discussed methodological concerns i.e., above and beyond the statistical compilation, and after a comparison to the results of the Toulouse survey, it is important to point out general tendencies and to describe different patterns and models.

General agreement to begin collating and interpreting the information right away. The final deadline for accepting outstanding surveys would be early October.

b) JBC proposed development of a logo for the Commission (no decision was taken on how to proceed).

8. Proposed Joint Projects

a) Harriet Harrison's query: would we be interested in working with the Cataloging Commission on set of guidelines for selection criteria? SR asked if these were criteria for selecting of programming or selecting of acquisitions. Since the proposal seemed to mainly address questions of collection development, there was a general consensus that this project was not part of the Commission's central mandate and that we should not yet decide to accept the Cataloging Commission's invitation to participate.

While SR agreed with this, she also felt it was very important for the Commission to address issues having to do with the relationship between preservation, acquisition and programming.

CG felt it was important for us to consider the proposal a little

further since quite often archives can acquire multiple prints of given titles but decide not to hold all of them. It seems a waste that these extra prints not be redistributed in some way to the other archives.

JBC said that especially since no other Commission exists to deal with these issues, we should find out more specifically what the Cataloging Commission has in mind before making a decision.

- b) Brief discussion of the Federation's current publishing contract.
- c) Klaue's invitation to the Commission to participate in the Mo i rana symposium on the programming of newsreels.

After much discussion, PCU formally proposed to give CG a mandate to put together a paper or presentation for the Mo i rana symposium. No formal decision on this proposal was made.

EP proposed we thank Klaue for his invitation and that we tell him the Commission had not yet dealt with this topic and therefore we could not make a formal presentation. If, however, one of us were to develop a presentation over the next few months, we should let him know about it and find out if there would still be a place for it during the upcoming congress.

Open Forum

Presentation and discussion of GC's letter. GC felt it was important that we concentrate not only on technical issues but also philosophical issues, such as:

- programming from archival collections; the programming profile of most archives does not reflect their acquisition policy, why?
- selection criteria; preservation policy is often not related to programming activities; this is a major problem because it implies that a major portion of what we are collecting and preserving will never be shown
- what is the function of the programmer, upon what criteria does he/she make selections?

There is a striking commonality to the programming which takes place in archives. This implies that there is no specificity

between programming and collection identity. GC also discussed the status of film as art compared to other art forms and the consequent specific challenges to programming films.

EP seconded the desire to address philosophical issues in film programming. He spoke about the differences between programming which seeks to develop a culture of film history and programming which develops appreciation for film as art. He had hoped that with a new theater he would be able to dedicate one theater to changing exhibitions (special topics, new films, etc.) and one theater to fill in gaps in film history (one year on the thirties, one on the forties, both classical and non-classical titles, etc.).

EP suggested that one activity of the Commission could be to distribute new ideas about programming and retrospectives: to create a forum for exchanging information about interesting programming initiatives.

GC asked how we can revitalize the cinema for new (and especially young) audiences-- and not just by a technical renovation of proper projection. How can we bring them back to the original emotional experience of cinema?

EP: While it is true that young audiences do not feel the same about film as previous audiences, it is equally important that they develop a critical/historical distance between themselves and the cinema. This sense of film history would give them additional pleasure when watching old films. It is this pleasure which could fill the gap between the cinema experience of yesterday and today.

PCU: GC's paper is very timely. The core issue is that cinephilia is dying. Cinephiles are being replaced by film rapists. The new species is going to grow rapidly especially with the development of access through alternative media like tape and laser disc. In America this phenomena has already reached wide proportions; the majority of people interested in movies today learn about film history through non-film media.

PCU: We should look at film archives in relationship to the experience of museums. Fine Arts museums have large collections of materials which will probably never be seen. Yet it is the duty of the museum to collect everything which needs to be preserved even if it will never be shown. The duty of the film archive is the same. And yet programming is also a partial reason for collecting. [this tension/contradiction needs to be addressed explicitly.]

PCU: If cinephilia is dead, if the film rapists are becoming numerous, what can we do to resolve this problem? Access and programming are not an artificial part of the Commission's

mandate. Access means doing something to help the viewer go beyond the standard classics, beyond the standardization of the use of tape; telling people that beyond what is being shown there exist thousands of objects in the basement and we would like to show them too. In a word, programming is a form of access.

SR welcomed CG's paper and said that it spoke to a fundamental goal which is shared by all archivists i.e. the continued validation of film as art, the definition of what is special to the art form. Obtaining this goal is made difficult by two very real factors. First, many archives do not have collections which represent the widest range of international film classics to show their audiences. Second, the nature of the film-going experience is very much influenced by the realities of contemporary media culture. In order to encourage a new appreciation of film culture, therefore, we have to address these realities. It is crucial to develop innovative programming which both demonstrates the unique pleasures of cinema and which resonate with the actual experience of the audiences.

SR: Is there a practical way to exchange information about successful new programming initiatives? Can the Commission create an institutional forum for the continual discussion of these new challenges?

CG felt that we should share information about programming and was encouraged by the increased number of circulating programs. She was not as concerned as others about the dangers of television and said that we should find ways of using television to the benefit of the archive. Circulating tapes is an aid to programmers in discovering unknown or undervalued filmmakers.

General discussion of the audience in relationship to video markets, television, available film programming, cinephilia, etc.

JBC: Agree with PCU that programming is a form of access and that the two terms could complement one another within the work of the Commission. However, we have become more concerned with questions of access and have forgotten about programming. We are too much concerned only with technical questions and have avoided key philosophical questions. These technical discussions often focus on concrete and practical issues in order to avoid major differences of opinion (this is true not only within the Commission but also tends to be true within FIAF as a whole). Need to become trouble-makers by raising difficult and polemic questions.

JBC: Begin with analysis of all FIAF programming after the Montevideo Congress. While it is still too early to make definitive statements about it, most programming within the Federation is the same; no big surprises; same titles are

continually programmed. Why, for example, is Citizen Kane always at the top of everyone's best films list? JBC reemphasized the need to look at the relationship between collection, development and programming. Collection policies inform and lead to programming policies. Also, we must not accept the artificial distinction between preservation and programming; the two are basically interrelated. No film is completely preserved unless it is shown to a public.

JBC proposed that members of the Commission who have particular interests should engage in work projects around them, if the group is concerned about their importance. He has the impression that we have concentrated exclusively on projects dealing with access and (with the exception of the survey) nothing has been done about programming.

SR disagreed with some of JBC's premises: We have not worked only on access questions especially since (agreeing with PCU), programming ought to be seen as a form of access. Even though the first part of the Commission's manual was on technical issues, these have a very important impact on how audiences perceive films and therefore the manual will have a big contribution to make to the larger issues about programming. He felt that all of the projects currently underway (the manual, the Montevideo programming symposium) were useful and interesting. SR did agree however, that the Commission could and should address some of the key philosophical questions about programming.

GC felt that it was important strategically for the Commission to have been with a series of concrete projects. Her paper and JBC's discourse were not a revolt against what had been done, but a reminder about the other important questions which we should deal with.

PCU strongly disagreed with the idea that the first part of the Manual was more about access than programming. He also felt that the technical aspects of Verscheure's work were actually interconnected to basic principles of programming. Finally, it was important that we discuss at length the methodological criteria (and purpose) of each of the Commission's projects, including the 364 list, and the survey.

JBC felt that, since both individual archives and the EC have asked the Commission for programming suggestions, we should respond and provide lists of film titles.

PCU: Many different answers can be given to the archives requests. Not all of the answers need to be to provide lists. We can also suggest methods of programming. PCU also cautioned about the creation of two mini-commissions working in different areas (programming vs. access).

Brief discussion of whether or not we should create lists of films to recommend for programming within FIAF archives.

SR seconded JBC's proposal that new initiatives for the Commission be placed on the agenda for full discussion at our meeting in New York.

6. Centenary Project: Discussion of 364 Classic Film List

GC reiterated opposition to the making of such lists. She recognized, however, that the Commission should respond in some way to the requests for programming suggestions for the Centenary. Emphasis should be placed on showing films (from an archive's collection) which it has never shown before.

PCU proposed that we make a short series of methodological suggestions about how archives can celebrate the Centenary in ways which fulfil FIAF's mandate.

EP agreed with PCU's proposal.

CG described the intent of the 364 list; following from Clyde Jeavon's proposal that we work off of David Meeke's list; that each archive try to show such films; that the Commission could assist in exchanging information about print availability and copyright and clearance questions.

JBC outlined the request from the Filмотека de Lima.

PCU felt that putting together such a list, however large, would mean an impossible compromise between archives who have never shown Citizen Kane and archives for which every suggestion of this kind falls below their basic level of programming philosophy.

SR proposed a compromise. The Commission could provide some logistical information (print availability, information on how to get clearances) to archives who need assistance in organizing retrospectives around the centenary. On the other hand, we could develop a series of short recommendations/provocations about new programming ideas.

General discussion followed on two central questions: how can we suggest specific titles without creating a narrowly defined (and sometimes ethnocentric) canon? how can we encourage archives to show more from their own collections -- titles which go beyond the very small percentage of the films which they normally show?

GC expressed strong reservations about working on such lists if they also included asking for copyright clearance for showing the

films on archival premises.

GC proposed that instead of the list of titles, the Commission could recommend a list of types of films to program in celebration of the Centenary e.g., classic titles, most popular films, best of the national production, silent cinema, experimental cinema, etc. Such categories could eventually lead to lists of specific titles.

Each archive will be asked to fill in the categories with specific titles. EP: One of the categories should be left up to the individual archive.

JBC said that we should prepare our categories for discussion in New York.

7. List of Missing Films: Organization of the research;
circular letter to FIAF colleagues.

PCU expressed strong opposition to the idea of this research project, *especially because every missing film is important.*

JBC: Each time such a list is published, it leads to some films being found.

EP/GC: It would be more useful if FIAF improved/updated previous list of existing films in FIAF archives.