

Maria Rana
AG 1993

**REPORT FROM THE F.I.A.F.
COMMISSION FOR PROGRAMMING AND ACCESS TO
THE COLLECTIONS**

Since our last written Report, presented in Montevideo at the last Congress, the Commission held three meetings:

- 1) in Montevideo on 24 and 27 April, during the Congress
- 2) in Munich on 3 and 4 July, hosted by Enno Patalas
- 3) in New York, on 31 October and 1 November, hosted by the Museum of Modern Art, just before the last EC meeting

The meeting in Montevideo was attended by João Bénard da Costa (Chairman), Paolo Cherchi Usai, Catherine Gautier, Steven Ricci and (only on 24th) Manuel Martínez Carril. Unfortunately, Gabrielle Claes and Enno Patalas were unable to go to Montevideo. The meeting was also attended by our permanent consultant, Clyde Jeavons.

The meeting in Munich was attended by all the members, with the only exception of Manuel Martínez Carril, who was unable to travel to Europe.

All the members attended the meeting in New York, with the exception of Manuel Martínez Carril, who was, again, unable to leave Montevideo.

The main reason for meeting three times in six months was the urge to make significant progress in the projects under way, mainly the survey on programming and access, the centennial projects, the manual for technical standards and guidelines for projection, the manual for research and access to the collections and the final constitution of the Working Group on Archives and Film Education.

I - ACTIVITIES AND RELATED PROJECTS UNDER DISCUSSION

1- MONTEVIDEO SYMPOSIUM

While waiting for the publication of the minutes of the Montevideo Symposium held on 25 and 26 April after the last FIAF Congress, under the responsibility of the Commission, we consider the Symposium quite satisfying, as it was a very good opportunity to underline the following issues:

- the specificities of Programming in Film Archives and the dangers of a routine Programming leading to a fall of Archive attendance
- the close connection between Programming and Access, focused in João Bénard da Costa's paper
- the legal aspects related to programming activities, developed in Wolfgang Klaue's excellent and comprehensive paper
- the importance of technical standards for projection and presentation of moving images, brilliantly emphasized by Jean-Pierre Verscheure in a magnificent paper acclaimed by the audience
- the proposal on Access Guidelines for Cultural Uses, comprehensively and clearly drafted by Paolo Cherchi Usai.

The general interest raised by these papers and by other main interventions by Robert Daudelin, Robert Rosen, Peter Konlechner, Clyde Jeavons, Ann Fleming, Manuel Martínez Carril, Carlos Augusto Calil, David Francis, Henning Schou and Masatoshi Ohba, was confirmed by the audience response.

Also very successful was the Workshop, led by Steven Ricci, on the relationship between Film Archives and Film Schools, attended by a large group of participants. This meeting led to the creation of the above mentioned Working Group.

In other respects, the analysis of the Latin American situation on Programming conducted under Manuel Martínez Carril's expertise, was also a high point of the Symposium and gave all participants an excellent occasion to go more deeply into the specificity of Latin American archives and to explore new ways of mutual understanding rapprochements.

We regard this Symposium as the expression and the complement to the general concern raised during the 1989 former Symposium on Programmation in Lisbon. Less theoretical and more concerned with practical aspects, the Montevideo Symposium reflected the progress achieved in this field by FIAF since Lisbon and the creation of our Commission in 1991.

2 - THE NEW NAMING OF THE COMMISSION

In Montevideo, João Bénard da Costa proposed a change of the name of the Commission. Instead of the former designation of "Commission for Programming and Cultural Uses" (designation approved at the Havana Congress, in 1990) he proposed to rename into "Commission on Programming and Access to the Collections / Commission de Programmation et d'Accès aux Collections".

The proposal was unanimously accepted by the General Assembly.

3 - SURVEY ON PROGRAMMING AND ACCESS IN FILM ARCHIVES

In the letter mailed with the questionnaire prepared by the Commission to all FIAF Archives (in February 1992) we asked for a reply before the Montevideo Symposium. Nevertheless, as we had only received 30 replies then, we decided to wait a little longer and, at the Munich meeting, Catherine Gautier took charge of preparing a first draft of the Survey results to be presented to the Commission in New York.

We have received 68 answers by now, out of 92 questionnaires sent, which represents about 75% of the total. The Commission asked Catherine Gautier to prepare the Survey not only in

form of statistics but also with comments on the major issues raising from the analyses of these statistics. Moreover, the Survey must point out some problems and situations, like, for instance:

- a) Archives that have no programming activity and the reason for that;
- b) Archives programming out of his own collection;
- c) Archives with a very large collection, but showing only a minor percentage out of their collection;
- d) Archives complaining about the drastic fall of attendance during the last years. (Why it happens and what could be done in order to reverse this situation)
- e) The "unusual" activities instead of the "average" activities.

The results of this survey are distributed with this Report. All the Archives are kindly requested to study them and send to the Commission more specific information which could be highlighted and discussed in the future.

The fact that some Archives have no programming activities, at all, should become a main issue in FIAF.

4 - CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS

At our Montevideo meeting, Clyde Jeavons proposed that the Commission (following the example of the most successful N.F.A. project "360 CLASSIC FILMS") should prepare a similar list - based on the Commission's choice - for the Centennial and send it to all Archives, in order to mount a program out of it. Clyde Jeavons suggestion was unanimously accepted by the present members of the Commission, with a slight change: instead of 360 titles, 364, i.e. the days of a year but one. The one missing would represent the missing films and our looking for them.

Nevertheless, at our Munich meeting, Gabrielle Claes and Enno Patalas (who were not present in Montevideo) were strongly against such a proposition, arguing that it would reiterate narrowly and ethnocentric defined canons. After a long discussion, the Commission decided by majority to withdraw the Montevideo decision and accepted a proposal made by Gabrielle Claes: instead of a list of titles, the Commission could recommend a list of types of films to program in celebration of the Centenary. Such categories could eventually lead to lists of specific titles and to create new ideas about programming. Afterwards, all the members of the Commission sent to Gabrielle Claes a classification of films by categories to be discussed off during our New York meeting. Six main categories were retained and are the object of a document distributed with this Report. All the Archives are kindly requested to study that document and sent their suggestions to the Commission.

5 - MANUAL FOR TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTION

The general approach and aims of this reference manual were discussed and defined at Montevideo meeting, in presence of Jean-Pierre Verscheure entrusted with the writing of this Manual.

The manual will be divided in two main sections:

1) Historical and Technical Information

Summary of the history of ratios, formats and soundtracks into a digestive and selective form.

Evolution of systems and optimum practical applications to our collections and present day viewing facilities.

Index with cross references for families of systems.

2) Set of FIAF standards for Presentation and Projection and Practical Recommendations

Parameters acceptable within the reality of FIAF circumstances.

Flexible options and alternatives for minimum standards (the use of 16mm, b/w version of color films, tinting and toning, a.s.o.)
Separate chapter or appendix including access to film images on electronic or digital media.

Clyde Jeavons volunteered for working on the 2nd section of the manual, with the expertise of Dr. Henning Schou and Harold Brown.

During the year, the Commission was informed by Gabrielle Claes about Jean-Pierre Verscheure's working progress. Some chapters of the manual will be distributed among the members of the Commission at Mo i Rana.

The dealing for the presentation of the manuscript is the end of 1993, in order to present it at the 1994 Congress in Bologna.

6 - MANUAL FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

After his presentation of the Manual general approach at the Montevideo Symposium, Paolo Cherchi Usai - who will be the responsible for this manual - proposed to undertake the project with Anne Fleming as his joint editor. They would work together on a draft index which would be submitted to the Commission.

Paolo Cherchi Usai would have presented an updated report concerning the Manual in Mo i Rana, but his move from Rochester to Brussels at the beginning of 1993 affected his working schedule. By now, Paolo Cherchi Usai is unable to give a detailed timeline for the manual completion. But he is still very much committed to the project and he promises to give new details very shortly.

7 - WORKING GROUP ON ARCHIVES AND FILM EDUCATION

The fruitful results of the Workshop moderated by Steve Ricci in Montevideo proved to be a real starting point for the formation of a permanent Working Group.

Steve Ricci wrote a report for the FIAF Bulletin and, after a long discussion on this matter at our Munich meeting, invited Thomas Elsaesser, Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Robert Rosen, Yuri Tsvivan and Ivan Trujillo to join the group. They all accepted as well as Clyde Jeavons who will act as an external consultant.

In the interim, Steve Ricci is working on the main topics and on the specific issues to be developed within the Group. Steve Ricci proposes trying to establish a closer relationship between FIAF and CILECT.

II - INTERNAL PRINCIPLES AND INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF THE COMMISSION

1 - After Catherine Gautier's acceptance of the responsibility of being Secretary of the Commission during the year of 1992, communication among members was much improved as well as the Commission internal work.

The Commission agreed, in principle, to accept the proposition of Harriet Harrison to a common work with the Cataloguing Commission on a set of guidelines for selection criteria.

The Commission accepted an invitation made by Wolfgang Klaue to participate in the Mo i Rana Symposium on the programming of newsreels and mandated Enno Patalas to deal with this topic.

2 - After our last meeting, in New York, the Commission had to face two unexpected resignations.

On January 7th, Paolo Cherchi Usai announced the Chairman his decision of leaving our group. As Paolo Cherchi Usai joined the staff of the Cinémathèque Royale in Brussels, and

considering the fact that Gabrielle Claes is also a member of the Commission, his decision was taken according to FIAF recommendations in order to guarantee the necessary pluralism.

Considering the situation, the Chairman accepted Paolo Cherchi Usai resignation and informed all the other members and the EC.

On February 23rd, Enno Patalas also announced the Chairman his resignation. The financial situation of the Munchen Filmmuseum and the lack of staff, obliges him to concentrate all his working time and ability on the museum work, forcing him to leave any other occupations and to stop travelling completely.

Under the circumstances, the Chairman also accepted this resignation and informed the other members and the EC.

That means that the Commission is now reduced to five members (practically to four, since Manuel Martínez Carril only took part in one of the Commission's meetings and in the Montevideo Symposium).

That new - and unexpected - situation will be discussed by the remaining members in Mo i Rana in order to make replacements propositions to the EC. Until now, and considering that the Commission could not meet since these two resignations, no formal proposal could be made or voted.

III - TASKS FOR THE FUTURE

At the Munich Meeting, Gabrielle Claes presented a paper in which she raised a serie of important questions about the work of the Commission. She felt that is was important that we concentrate not only on technical issues but also philosophical ones such as:

- programming from archival collection (differences between the programming policy and the acquisition policy)
- selection criteria (the major portion of what Archives are collecting and preserving is never shown)
- criteria of programmer's selection

Gabrielle Claes was puzzled by the lack of specificity between programming and collection identity. She also pointed out the fact that the Commission had not, till now, discussed the statute of film as art compared to other art forms and the consequent specific challenges to programming films.

That very motivating intervention was followed by an interesting discussion where the majority of the Commission members joined Gabrielle Claes' preoccupations. The Chair made a proposition, seconded by Steven Ricci, that a full discussion about that questions will be placed on the agenda for our meeting in New York.

In New York, the Chairman read a paper around these issues and many others not yet discussed.

This document has just been distributed (in French) to all the members of the Commission and will be discussed in one of our next meetings.

The next meeting of the Commission will take place in Mo i Rana.

May 1993

THE CHAIRMAN



(João Bénard da Costa)