

Distribtuion: limited

SHC.75/CONF.619/4
Berlin, 26. Sept. 1975
Original : English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PRESERVATION OF
MOVING IMAGES

F I N A L R E P O R T

(draft)

Document produced by
the UNESCO-Commission
of the GDR

The meeting in Berlin was attended by experts from 14 countries and by representatives of 10 non-governmental organizations having an interest in the preservation of moving images (list of participants in annex 1). The discussions held were based on the working documents of UNESCO entitled, "Memorandum on the preservation of the cultural heritage of moving images" and "Background and objectives of the meeting" as well as the following papers: "Proposals of the FIAF", and "Theses on the Preservation and Restoration of Audio-visual Material", prepared by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) and "Draft recommendation of the Protection, Preservation and Heritage Retention of Moving Images", prepared by the State Film Archive of the GDR.

As might be expected because of the relative newness of the concept of a film archive, the group was a diverse one with many specialized interests being represented. Film archivists sat face to face with representatives of producers, museum and library personnel exchanged viewpoints with television representatives, experts from countries just starting national film and television production exchanged views with experts from countries with more than seventy years of film production.

From such a diversity of individuals and backgrounds it would be surprising if a diversity of opinion did not arise and the participants were not disappointed in this regard. However, what was most surprising and reassuring was the amount of common understanding that was reached. This was particularly true in the acceptance by the participants of the underlying basic cultural importance of moving images, of the urgent need to ensure what they are safeguarded and preserved, and the acceptance of the fact that UNESCO's interest is a welcome one, especially if it helps create other forums on both the national and international level for the discussion of the many areas of tension and perplexity which still exist. It was anticipated that the drafting of an international instrument by UNESCO would promote discussion in all the member state and act to strengthen assistance and the exchange of views about film archive activities in the developing countries.

The participants also agreed that there was an appalling lack of information available in widely disseminated form on important economic, technical, and administrative matters that must eventually affect any future decisions by governments, individuals or non-governmental organizations. They quickly intited to suggest that clearing house for information be supported, perhaps in cooperation with the International Copyright Information Centre, that training centres and/or courses be funded to spread the requisite knowledge of this special archive field and to begin to share and exchange ideas with developing countries. It was agreed that a certain opaqueness in terminology affected the area and that studies ought to be concluded to being light into this area of semantic confusion.

Although the areas of agreement were many, it would be a poor reporter who did not note that there was also a strong undercurrent of tension and perplexity in some of the deliberations. Three areas were especially subject to this tension:

- 1) the legal steps to achieve the necessary level of archival acquisition and preservation of moving images,
- 2) administrative procedures to affect these ends, and
- 3) the eventual use of the preservation copies generated or stored in archives.

The discussion of legal steps centered about two concepts, statutory deposit by the creators or distributors and the usefulness, or lack of it, of international and national copyright laws. The experts already engaged in archive or legal work tended to favor a rigorous form of statutory deposit and the introduction of national laws controlling the eventual disposition, before destruction, of moving images. The producers, on the other hand, stressed the realism of compromise and the possible economic, legal, and political difficulties which inevitably lie ahead of such a rigorous course. There was a great deal of discussion about the relative effectiveness and usefulness of various form of copyright procedures and about what sole could or could not be served by national legislation or international agreements. Whether new laws should be directed solely

toward national production and only toward original materials was also discussed but not resolved. Again, archivists tended to call for total deposit while producers and distributors preferred to recommend the limits that would build a viable commercial alternative. In the end, it was clear that although a positive recommendation for some form of statutory deposit was probably desirable, there was much ground left uncovered and many hours of investigation remain before appropriate legal measures can be successfully implemented.

Administrative procedures for safeguarding, acquiring, and saving moving image were also discussed and provided a second area of perplexity for the conference participants. Again, two central concepts emerged and served to focus the discussion:

- 1) the desirability of selection of moving images for retention and preservation, and
- 2) the extent of the budgets needed to support adequate preservation programmes.

On the issue of selection, the experts from smaller countries and those with strong central archives tended to reject the concept of selection in favour of total acquisition and preservation, while those from countries with extremely large productions and a decentralized archival structure tended to favour selective retention and preservation.

Budgetary matters figured into the discussion of selection, even if they were not expressed in great detail. Again the large archives seemed to stress the likelihood that large budgets would follow a demonstrated need while the less centralized archives were not as certain about this prediction. Also some participants pointed out the difficulty of proposing realistic budgets when adequate technology does not exist to make predictions accurate.

Questions about the use of the preserved moving images were not faced very directly, probably because most of the participants seemed convinced that acquisition and preservation are the most critical problems of the present moment, but also because user groups were not widely represented and, more importantly, because

any discussion of use immediately brings up a host of commercial and cultural problems beyond the ken of the participants. Nonetheless, it was clear that discussions of use, including the remuneration to copyright holders or owners, the question of permissions, and the extent and nature of the use involved, can not be long postponed. To do so would prejudice the progress made thus far.

Although the discussion were for the most part quite far-ranging, two topics received incomplete treatment. These were technical matters of preservation including new methods of preservation and the economic factors involved in archive work of this part. The first omission is less surprising when it is remembered that the meeting was furnished with an excellent technical summary and that the group visited the State Film Archives of the GDR to inspect their excellent physical plant and to see examples of early film work. The second omission may also be related to the first because the nature of the technical workes employed has a great deal to do with the economic aspects of any archival enterprise. However, economic conditions and factors, cost analyses and budget planing will eventually be important concerns of every archive and governmental and non-governmental sponsors and ought not to be omitted from future discussions.

It is to be hoped that the directions recommended by the meeting will be followed and that the cultural heritage so richly documented in moving images will eventually be preserved for world audiences, both present and future.

Meeting of Experts on the Preservation of Moving Images

R e c o m m e n d a t i o n s

The chief participants of the meeting have reached the following conclusions:

1. Definitions

To avoid repetitive circumlocutions the experts agreed on the following meaning of terms for the present purpose:

- a) moving images: all original visual or sound and visual recordings irrespective of their physical base and of the initial recording ^{or} (later restitution process used (film or all other videographic recordings).
- b) archive: an institution which gives priority to systematic acquisition and permanent preservation of moving images whatever it is called.

2. Currently the most significant and complicated problems in regard to the preservation of the cultural heritage of moving images, which in their entirety require a solution are:

the fact that in many countries moving images are not regarded as an integral part of the national and international cultural heritage, and are destroyed in whole or in part,

the fact that public opinion in the widest sense has been insufficiently informed in respect of the significance necessity and problems in conjunction with the preservation of moving images,

the fact that hitherto there has not existed an international recommendation or convention concerned with regulating the preservation of moving images as a part of the cultural heritage of humanity,

the fact that amongst interested experts there is not sufficient information concerning the present situation and new approaches for the preservation of moving images,

the fact that the results of the International Preservation Commission of the FIAF which has undertaken valuable activity in examining the technical conditions for a permanent preservation of moving images have not been widely publiced,

the fact that it is necessary to study newly developing technical procedures for the preservation of moving images,

the fact that a number of basic juridical problems such as the legal position of archives, their field of competence for the preservation of moving images, ^{the} legal basis for obtaining moving images, the utilization of their collections remain unsolved in many countries,

the fact that the reasons for the destruction of moving images have not been sufficiently investigated,

the fact that confusions exist on the use of the terms filmarchive, cinematheque, filmmuseum etc., and ^{that} there is a lack of coordination between these various institutions even at the national level,

the fact that the necessary administrative and financial requirements for the establishment of archives for moving images have not been sufficiently considered,

the fact that the efforts of the various non-governmental organization are not sufficiently coordinated,

the fact that in the developing countries conditions for the preservation of moving images (specialists, scientific and technical experiences and installations) are often inadequate,

the fact that the enormous amount of moving images produced raises technical difficulties of preservation may imply the need for selection and that in this respect guidelines do not exist.

8. For the solution of these problems priority should be given to:
 - a) the creation of an international recommendation or convention on the protection and preservation of moving images.
 - b) For the further preparation of such a recommendation or convention the following subjects should be carefully studied:
 - Status and tasks of national archives for moving images within different administrative structures,
 - Legal measures to permit systematic acquisition of moving images, such as the system of legal deposit, or agreements at a national level, regulations to prevent the unauthorized destruction, etc.
 - Financial aspects of preservation.
 - c) The complexity and scope of this task implies that the necessary personnel and budget should be made available. It is therefore highly desirable to establish a special unit responsible for the preservation of moving images within UNESCO.

4. The following further recommendations are submitted:
 - 4.1 Collection and dissemination of information on preservation of moving images
 - a) An experienced international centre in the field of documentation on problems of cultural heritage should

be made responsible for documentation on the preservation of moving images.

The scope of such documentation activity could be the subject of an expert's meeting.

- b) By means of a contract with non-governmental organizations (IVTC, FIAF) ~~the~~ UNESCO should support the preparation of a guide concerned with the necessity and possibility of preserving moving images.
- c) UNESCO should provide financial support for the publications of the International Federation of Film Archives ("Manual of Film Archives" - publication envisaged for 1977/78; ^{and the} results of work by ^{the} Preservation Commission - publication envisaged 1978/79).
- d) UNESCO as well as the interested non-governmental organizations (ICOM, IFLA, ICA, IFTC etc.) should publish information on the tasks and problems of preserving moving images.
- e) The possibility should be examined of providing assistance for the production of a film dealing with the preservation of moving images. Such a film will then become part of ~~the~~ UNESCO's public information service.

4.2 Technical Problems

- a) UNESCO should encourage its Member States to promote technical research on preservation of moving images, and provide support and coordination for these efforts.
- b) The meetings of experts, proposed by the International Federation of Film Archives to take place every 4th Year, at which information will be exchanged on technical innovations in the field of moving images and its consequences for the archives, are to be supported by UNESCO.

- c) Special technical studies should be encouraged on such topics as:

conditions for the construction of vaults for the storage of moving images;

variations in climatic conditions in different regions and their impact on the preservation of moving images;

necessary technical equipment for an archive;

preservation of different bases for moving images.

4.3 Legal and Administrative Problems

Discussion of legal problems regarding the preservation of moving images should be the subject of an expert meeting dealing with such questions as legal deposit of moving images, copyright and other rights in moving images, destruction of moving images, obligations of archives, producers and other holders of moving images for preservation.

4.4 Support for Developing Countries

Special attention is to be paid to the support of developing countries for the preservation of moving images.

- a) One of the next expert meetings is to deal with the divergent regional conditions, prerequisites and needs in developing countries for preservation of moving images.
- b) UNESCO should provide technical assistance for the preservation of moving images in developing countries (specialists, fellowships, equipment, experts services, training of personnel, exchange of personnel between developing countries).
- c) The dissemination of information on the preservation of moving images should be included in the training programmes of the regional centres of UNESCO and non-governmental organizations.

- d) UNESCO is to support, in its long-term programme, the coordination of efforts at the regional level for the creation of common archives for the preservation of moving images in subregions where no archive exists and stimulate Member States to contribute towards the development of these archives.
- e) UNESCO should support the creation of a pilot archive for the preservation of moving images in developing countries.

4.5 Training

- a) Possibilities are to be examined of holding a special advanced training course for the preservation of moving images.
- b) UNESCO should invite Member States with experienced and advanced institutions for the preservation of moving images to provide training in their archives for personnel from developing countries.
- c) UNESCO should grant scholarships for advanced training.

4.6 Specialized Studies

- a) The proposal made by the International Federation of Film Archives to make the problem of selection the theme of an expert's meeting, is to be supported by UNESCO, just as the publication of the results of such a meeting (1980/82).
- b) A number of other studies which are closely related to preservation such as cataloguing of moving images, usage of archives, international standard for credits on moving images, an international year of film, dissemination of film culture etc. should be undertaken or supported by UNESCO.