

Montevideo, November 14, 1962

Dear Miss Michelle:

Thank you for your last kind letter asking me to send a report on the Latin American Section. I would be very glad to do it, but I'm afraid it would be very brief: we are dying of starvation, and there is nothing much to say beside that. Of course something has to be done about it, and I appreciate very much the interest FIAF is showing on our activities (or should I say inactivities?).

So rather than a formal report, I really prefer to write you a personal letter. If I can explain clearly what is the situation here, and if you think you can understand it and explain it to the Committee, please don't hesitate to use this letter freely.

To make a little bit of history, I must explain that the Latin American Section was founded in order to protect the interests of FIAF in this hemisphere, to watch closely the activities of its members and to stimulate the creation of new film libraries. We also wanted to increase the exchange of film programs in Latin America and to solve some local problems which seem to be so difficult to understand in Europe. I'm telling you that, because the Latin American Section is suspected among other members of FIAF, to be a sort of "Langlois's daughter", and looked upon with undeserved little sympathy. The only truth is that when Langlois asked our support during the crisis, we decided to join the legal forces which resulted to be a great majority. We keep the same spirit up to now.

Unfortunately, we had more good wishes than the possibility to carry them through. We organized three Congresses (Punta del Este, Mar del Plata, Sao Paulo) and few meetings; decided lots of things, but most of them were not accomplished.

One of our problems is the lack of funds. You remember it was decided that the 50% of the fees of the members of the Latin American Section would be paid to the Cinemateca Uruguaya, who is still handling the job of being the Secretary of the Section. In all these years we received practically nothing, and even had no funds to pay our own fees to FIAF, with the results you already know. As you can imagine, it's very difficult to do anything without money (and we have no paid staff, so it's not really bureaucracy).

In our last Congress, for example, we decided that the fees paid by the members would be used mainly to finance countertypes and copies for circulating programs. Besides, we decided to pay an extra fee, in order to raise money for making negatives of many of the members films, which have nothing more than a positive copy. Results: fees are not paid, the lack of funds is total and we never could manage to circulate one single program. Other results: the film libraries ~~are~~ of the Latin American Section are using films which have no negative, and the obvious danger is that these films - unique in some cases - will disappear. This is the worse possible way to run a film library, but we don't seem to have a choice.

This is practically the situation of all the actual members of the Latin American Section, with the exception of Sao Paulo probably, which seems to get enough money from the government to do a good work.

Since the last meeting we had "a propos" of FIAF's crisis, we haven't met, and although Sao Paulo had to organize the next Congress, I feel there's a prevailing spirit of pessimism about the practical results of these meetings, because of the difficulty to carry out the resolutions. I have resigned as Secretary of the Latin American Section because of lack of time to do an honorary job which is pretty heavy at times, and if I'm writing you this letter is because I feel morally compelled to do so, and understand that something must be done with our Latin American section.

Although this letter may not be considered as official due to the mentioned circumstances, I think that the Latin American Section needs the following things to accomplish its task:

1) Bigger support by FIAF from amoral and a practical point of view. If FIAF could send us each year just a few ~~prog~~ film programs to circulate among the members, it would revitalise the Section and the work would have some meaning.

2) More economical support by it's own members in order to carry out the resolutions approved in Latin American meetings.

3) A yearly congress, as a minimum, with the presence of a delegate of FIAF from Europe.

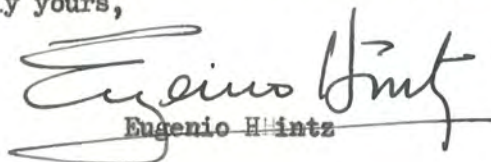
We all feel we have to keep more direct ties with FIAF, but for economical reasons we can't attend FIAF's congresses, with few exceptions. The only way out of this situation is to send a delegate for the whole of the Latin American Section (and again we have the famous economical difficulties) or else ask a member of FIAF to come here (which seems to be a little easier).

I think the first point could be arranged with a small effort. Let us say the truth: the only film labary who has been helping us a little was the Cinematheque Francaise. And now we know why: just to get our votes. Now if FIAF shows some interest in helping us by the way of circulating programs, I'm sure that the whole Latin American Sections will have a meaning, and once we start to do a positive job, it's very probable that the members will feel more inclined to extend a helping hand and pay the fees. This would solve the second point, and with some money in our hands, we could start to carry on our plans.

Personally I feel that a great deal of our future depends on FIAF. Without support we will desintegrate very soon. Believe me, I'm not pessimistic but realistic. This doesn't mean that film libraries will close their doors, but they will continue to work in a small vicious circle, feeling they pay a relatively high fee to FIAF for nothing. I have heard many personal opinions of that kind.

I'm sorry this letter turned out to be a little too personal perhaps, but I insist that under the circumstances I'm not entitled to send a report which wouldn't add much to all the official communications send to FIAF. Perhaps this letter will. Please take it as an honest opinion and as a personal opinion too, but if you think you can use it to explain our situation, please do so.

Very cordially yours,


Eugenio Hintz