

REPORT
ON THE SITUATION OF FILM ARCHIVES IN LATIN AMERICA AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THEIR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

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* In this report, the term "latin american" will be used to cover both Latin America and the Caribbean ..

Introduction

Since the "Recommendation on the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images" was adopted by the 21st General Conference of Unesco, the amount of attention paid to the preservation of the moving image heritage as an integral part of national culture has been increasing in many countries. The third Latin American and Caribbean Seminar of Moving Image Archives which took place in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro from 22 to 28 October 1984 served on the one hand to promote the film archives in the region and offered on the other hand an opportunity to get to know the present state of implementation of the "Recommendation" and the problems and difficulties involved.

This report is primarily based on the information obtained during the Seminar in Brasil (annex 4.1. Participants of the Seminar). However, it also contains remarks taken from the activities report for the year 1983 submitted by those Latin American film archives which are affiliated to FIAF (annex 4.2. Annual reports for 1983).

We feel most grateful to UNESCO for having supported the Third Latin American and Caribbean Seminar of Moving Image Archives, and for having made this report possible.

1. The implementation of the Recommendation on the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images, and the situation of film archives in Latin America

In most Latin American countries, it has been realized that the preservation of moving images is a cultural task (annex 4.3. Survey on existing film archives in Latin America). The situation in that continent differs, much to our pleasure, from that of other regions in Asia and Africa where greater efforts still have to be made to make people aware of the necessity to preserve the moving image heritage and to create institutions which take up this challenge.

The film archives in Latin America developed in close connection with two tendencies :

- the promotion and spreading of film culture in contrast to the steady commercialization of the cinema and the negative effects of cinematographic subculture;
- the development of a national filmproduction to counteract foreign influences.

The film archives established in a time marked by these cultural tendencies understood themselves as centres for the spreading of film culture and as true alternatives to commercial cinemas. They consider the promotion and preservation of the national film production as one of their most important tasks.

The development of film archives in this cultural and political context is a very long process which began in the sixties and cannot be considered finished even today for the following two reasons :

- none of the Latin American film archives complies completely with the comprehensive demands of the Unesco Recommendation on the preservation of moving images;
- there are still some countries in Latin America with national film traditions and/or a present film production (Jamaica, El Salvador, Haïti, Guyana) where no activities towards the preservation of the moving image heritage can be noticed.

The majority of film archives in Latin America are legally independant bodies. Subsidies are maily granted by municipal administrations, universities, cultural foundations and organizations. A direct financial support by governments does only exist in a few countries (Mexico, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Uruguay).

It should be noted that the development of film archives in Latin America took place separately from television and that the integration of television production into the holdings of film archives does not play any role at present.

In collecting and preserving films, priority is given to the national production. In doing so, film is implicitly understood as a work of art and a historical document. The relatively small number of nationally

produced films and the losses which have already occurred make a selective approach to acquisition and preservation superfluous. A legal deposit for films, with the exception of Cuba and Bolivia, does not exist in any Latin American country.

According to their level of development, there are at present three groups of film archives in Latin America :

First group :

These archives have partly been existing for several decades, possess comprehensive experience and have been associated with FIAF for a long time. They have acquired recognition in the cultural circles of their country and with the competent authorities. They are subsidized -even if sometimes scarcely - by various sources. All the archives of this group have comprehensive holdings of films and documentation material at their disposal as well as a modest technical basis permitting them the physical examination of their holdings and also some restoration measures.

There is a stable structure of staff members who are specialized in various basic tasks and have accumulated a high level of archival and technical knowledge through experience.

The activities of these film archives serve to spread the film culture and to study national film history. There exists a balanced relationship between collection, preservation, cataloguing and cultural activities. The archives in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay can be classified in this group.

Second group :

This group comprises those film archives which have already been institutionalised, possess film collections and have legitimated their efficiency through some projects consisting primarily of cultural activities and publications. They all suffer great financial difficulties which make it hard for them to exist. They mostly found recognition in the cultural sphere but not with their competent authorities, consequently their activities are subsidized to a small extent only and is not sufficient to guarantee that the film archives can deal comprehensively with the tasks to be fulfilled i.e. collection, preservation, cataloguing and use of its holdings.

The number of staff members is in most cases so small that a specialization and division of labour are out of the question. Their enthusiasm towards the work is often greater than the necessary technical knowledge. As the existence of these archives is threatened by financial difficulties, staff fluctuations occur frequently and the experience already gained gets lost. The relationship between the four main tasks of a film archive, i.e. collection, preservation, cataloguing and use, cannot be considered as balanced. In order to rouse greater public attention, these film archives are forced to centre their activities on cultural projects such as film showings. The archives of Colombia and Venezuela belong to this group.

Third group :

The archives belonging to this group have just started their activities. In most cases, they have a clear concept regarding the functions and tasks of a film archive. However they lack the financial and material prerequisites to realize these objectives and they also miss the public recognition which is necessary to obtain a minimum of subsidies.

Some of these archives have not even been institutionalized and have no paid staff.

They give precedence to cultural activities, mostly to the screening of artistically valuable films. Collection, preservation and cataloguing of films rank second.

This group also includes some archives which have been in existence for quite a while but could not make any progress in their development. They lack elementary material prerequisites to fulfill the tasks of a film archive as well as qualified staff who could devote their attention to basic archival functions.

The archives in Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico and Republica Dominicana fall into this category.

2. The 3d Seminar of Latin-American Film Archives

Every film archives seminar organized so far in Latin America had been confronted with the different development levels of the archives in this region.

The programme of the 3d Seminar had to face this situation and it can now be said that the organizers succeeded to make all participants benefit from this event. Unexpectedly, the attendance to this Seminar (44 participants) far exceeded the previous rate of attendance which demonstrates the need for this kind of meeting and the high expectations put in it by the invited film archives.

In contrast with the two Seminars held in Mexico in 1980 and 1982, the 3d Seminar took the form of a down-to-earth workshop. If one considers the conditions under which film archives in Latin America have to develop, this method seems to be the most efficient variant as the participants want to acquire knowledge and exchange their experiences.

In the preparatory stage, the organizers attached great importance to the selection of the right people. This effort has been also been most successful as there was not a single participant of the Seminar who did not come either from an already existing film archive or from a place where he has committed himself to prepare the establishment of such an institution (Annex 4.1. Participants of the 3d Seminar of Latin American Film Archives).

The Seminar took place in São Paulo from 22 to 26 October 1984 under the direction of Cinemateca Brasileira. During five days, workshops were held simultaneously on problems of preservation and restoration, documentation activities and film-cataloguing. The groups were headed by staff members of Cinemateca Brasileira except for the Documentation group which was conducted by Jana Vosikovska, member of the FIAF Documentation Commission. The groups worked out suggestions for the cooperation between film archives in Latin America and submitted recommendations on the promotion of certain projects (Annex 4.5. Final recommendations of the working groups of the 3d Seminar of Latin American Film Archives).

The Seminar was continued in Rio de Janeiro at the Cinemateca do Museu de Arte Moderna on October 27 - 28 in plenary sessions on questions of general interest (problems of selection, alternative methods of preservation, distribution of films, administrative problems, regional printing laboratories, relations between film archives in Latin America, training of personnel) ending up in the formulation of a final recommendation.

The three seminars which have so far been organized had a positive impact on the development of film archives in the region. While the first two seminars centred on basic and conceptual questions of the activities of film archives, the seminar in Brasil was aimed at :

- handing down of technical knowledge and know-how in the field of some specific archival functions (restoration, documentation, cataloguing);
- stimulating and encouraging young archives through the example demonstrated by the development of Cinemateca Brasileira;
- promoting the cooperation between film archives in Latin America through mutually agreed concrete measures.

The Seminar can be considered successful as it has made an important contribution to the implementation of the "Unesco Recommendation on the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images" in this region.

3. Recommendations on further measures to preserve the moving image heritage in Latin America and the Caribbeans.

3.1. Recommendations on archival activities on the national level

3.1.1. Experiences made in advanced film archives in Latin America in the traditional film-making countries and in other regions show that the establishment of institutions to preserve the cinematographic heritage should be primarily organized on the national level and by help of the resources from the respective countries. The same conclusion is put forward in the Unesco Recommendation which calls upon the governments to take measures in the framework of their cultural policies to safeguard and preserve moving images.

The most urgent task for all film archives in the region remains to make the authorities aware of their activities and inclined to support a film archive, the latter being indispensable for their work. All kinds of publicity should be used for this task. The support of filmmakers, film organizations, related institutions, libraries, archives, museums or institutions devoting their efforts to the preservation of the cultural heritage should equally be sought for.

- 3.1.2. A special training course for staff members of film archives does not exist in the countries of this region. But educational paths such as librarianship, archive science, information science would be very useful to help candidates acquire basic knowledge applicable to certain activities in film archives. Experienced technical staff from printing laboratories, studios or other technical companies connected with film can equally be of great use for the technical functions of a film archive.
- 3.1.3. We know from experience that a stable structure of continuously working staff, not affected by major fluctuations, is absolutely necessary for the work of a film archive. Many objectives can only be attained over longer periods of time and require tenacity and continuity. Frequent staff changes are harmful to the development of a young archive. Every staff member leaving an archive takes his knowledge and experience away with him, which results in a loss for the archive.
- 3.1.4. The Unesco Recommendation on the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images should be used as an important instrument
 - to formulate the conception and policy of the film archives;
 - to suggest measures ensuring the national film production;
 - to meet the minimum requirements for the storage and preservation of films;
 - to grant the archives the possibility to exist and to advance, subject to the resources of every country;
 - to help archives organize cultural activities by exempting them from customs duties and general censorship regulations.

Though Unesco and the other NGOs do work efficiently, they can only support and promote the development of film archives up to a certain degree as this is a national process which cannot be steered or regulated from outside the country.

3.2. Recommendations on measures to be taken by NGOs, especially the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)

3.2.1. NGOs such as IFLA, ICA, IFTC, IASA, FIAT, FIAF should benevolently support the development of film archives in the various countries. The training facilities of these NGOs on the national or regional level should, if possible, be open also to staff members of film archives and be used by them.

At the Round Table meeting of the above-mentioned NGOs which will take place in April 1985, information should be given on the Seminar and the problems of film archives in Latin America.

3.2.2. A number of practical measures ensuing from the Seminar will be taken by FIAF to support the activities of film archives in Latin America such as to :

- place FIAF publications free of charge at the disposal of those film archives which do not yet hold them;
- keep the young archives informed about the development of member archives and activities of FIAF;
- circulate material which results from the cooperation of the archives in that region;
- contact filmstock manufacturers to induce them to provide black & white raw film for restoration work in the archives;
- contact the authorities of certain countries so that customs and import restrictions will become less severe or will even be removed for the benefit of the archives;
- support the archives in sensitizing the public;
- give advice to the archives, primarily through the FIAF Commissions of Preservation, Cataloguing and Documentation;

- spread the experience of more advanced archives and the outcome of the Commissions' work;
- support the bilateral exchange of staff;
- circulate film programmes in Latin American archives;
- send qualified experts for the training of personnel and for advice on certain projects.

3.2.3. FIAF will have to examine its structure and activities so as to integrate more representatives from Latin America, Asia and Africa into its executive level and into the work of its Commissions.

3.2.4. With the help of its members and observers, FIAF will take the following concrete measures in 1985 and 1986 to support film archives in Latin America :

- send FIAF publications to the participants of the 3d Seminar of Latin American film archives;
- circulate the following documents between the film archives of Latin America: a list of film periodicals of Latin American countries, a list of holdings of film periodicals of Latin American countries in the film archives for the purpose of exchange;
- study the possibility of making a Spanish edition of the Film Preservation Manual;
- contact some filmstock manufacturers (this has already been done successfully in the case of ORWO);
- facilitate the participation of representatives from Latin American film archives at the 1985 FIAF Congress in New York and the 1986 FIAF Congress in Canberra;
- advise Cinemateca Brasileira on the extension of its printing laboratory;
- integrate one staff member of Cinemateca Brasileira as member of the FIAF Preservation Commission;
- place several film programmes at the disposal of film archives for circulation in Latin America;
- make the participation of staff members of Latin American film archives in the 1985 and 1986 Havana Film Festival possible.

3.3. Recommendations on measures to be taken by Unesco

3.3.1. The participants of the 3d Seminar of Latin American Film Archives have unanimously expressed their wish to continue such meetings on the regional level. It would be most desirable to include such project in the programme of Unesco, the respective subsidy being approximately the same as the 1984 subsidy.

Cinemateca Argentina has promised to inquire as to whether their authorities would favour Buenos Aires as the venue for the 1986 Seminar and would support its organization.

3.3.2. There is a great demand to acquire technical knowledge which could perhaps be met through scholarships:

Nicaragua - The construction of a new archive complex has been decided upon. A representative from Nicaragua should be allowed to study the archival buildings of some developed archives in France, Great Britain, Sweden and the GDR (Period of stay: four weeks).

Peru - The Cinemateca de Lima is not yet institutionalized. There exists a comprehensive concept for the structure and work method of this archive. It would be desirable to support a study tour of a representative of Cinemateca de Lima to Cinemateca Uruguay in Montevideo, the only self-supporting film archive in Latin America (period of stay: two weeks).

Colombia - This country is lacking technical facilities and know-how for the restoration of films. It would be desirable to support a study tour of a staff member of Cinemateca Distrital de Bogotá to Cinemateca Brasileira in São Paulo in order to study film restoration and acquire technical knowledge. (Period of stay: four weeks).

3.3.3. In cooperation with an advanced archive in Latin America, ways should be sought for to organize low-cost regional training courses according to the model of FIAF Summer-schools or workshops. FIAF will examine this idea and submit a proposal at a later time.

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- 3.3.4. Consultants should be made available to give professional advice if a concrete demand is received and if the relevant preparations are sufficient, primarily to :
- initiate film archives in such Latin American countries where so far no activities towards the preservation of the moving image heritage can be noticed;
 - help those archives which have just started developing their efforts to win public recognition and to persuade their authorities to support them;
 - promote concrete projects in some archives through consultation or training.

In the course of the Seminar, no concrete proposals were received in this respect. However, we think it would be advisable to provide missions to :

- sensitize the authorities in Jamaica, El Salvador, Haïti, Guyana, regarding the establishment of a film archive;
- help the archives in Peru, Panama and Chile;
- advise the archives in São Paulo and Managua regarding new projects.

- 3.3.5. The extension of the technical facilities of Cinemateca Brasileira for the restoration of films should be supported to speed up the safeguarding of the cinematographic heritage of one of the traditional filmproducing countries in Latin America. To this purpose, a proposal will be submitted by Cinemateca Brasileira.
- It should also be examined whether or not this archive can develop into a regional centre for film restoration and for the training of film archivists. The preparation of a feasibility study in this respect would be necessary.

III ENCONTRO IATINO-AMERICANO E DO CARIBE DE ARQUIVOS DE IMAGENS EM MOVIMENTO - São Paulo, Brasil - Outubro, 22-28, 1984

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Survey on existing film archives in Latin America and the Caribbean

These are, to our knowledge, the names and addresses of film archives in L.A. and the Caribbean which exist and function (more or less) at the present time.

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FILMPRODUCING COUNTRIES WITHOUT FILM ARCHIVES IN LATIN AMERICA

CHILE : A project of Chilean Film Archive is slowly being developed in Chile under the responsibility of Mr Pedro Chaskel Benkö (Adress: ' Hermanos Cabot 8150 Santiago), but it has, as yet, no legal existence.

EL SALVADOR

GUYANA

HAITI

JAMAICA : In 1976, FIAF was approached by a Jamaican Film Archive Committee, emanating from the Prime Minister's office in Kingston. We did offer all the possible help at the time but never heard from them since then.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUPS OF THE THIRD SEMINAR
OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVES

El "III^{er} Encuentro Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Archivos de Imágenes en Movimiento" con la participación de representantes de países africanos, destaca el significado positivo de la labor realizada en San Pablo y Rio de Janeiro, en especial para el análisis de los problemas que afectan las actividades específicas de los archivos presentes, tanto en el marco de los trabajos internos como en lo referente a la concientización del rol que cumplen las Cinematecas en sus respectivos países.

Las recomendaciones referidas a la áreas de Documentación, Catalogación, preservación y Difusión, acordaron dar mayor énfasis a la constante comunicación y relación entre la cinematecas y destacar en particular la importancia que alcanzó el intercambio de conocimientos, realizados durante el Encuentro, que permitirá afrontar algunos de nuestros problemas con mejores posibilidades de éxito.

Se acompañan los acuerdos logrados por cada grupo, con la esperanza de su posterior cumplimiento.

Recomendaciones hechas por el Grupo de Preservación

- Que se haga un manual técnico práctico para las pequeñas cinematecas en el ambito de la realidad de la América Latina
- Que sea estimulada la realización de encuentros de técnicos y laboratoristas de nuestra América, incluso para que se empiece la formación de un vocabulario tecnico comun
- Que mismo en los encuentros que no sean estructurados como este III Encuentro - que tubo características esencialmente prácticas - sean realizadas oficinas técnicas practicas
- Que sea estimulado el intercambio de informaciones técnicas
- Que se haga un cuestionario que permita el conocimiento de los problemas que los técnicos tienen que enfrentar en sus archivos y cuales sean sus problemas técnicos básicos
- Que sean incentivadas las investigaciones técnicas y científicas relacionadas con la conservación y restauración de películas
- En el ambito de la realidad de la América Latina, que se hagan publicaciones que permitan desarrollar las condiciones de proyección de las películas
- Los participantes plantean la conveniencia de que un representante de las cinematecas latinoamericanas sea incorporado a la Comisión de Preservación de FIAF y sugieren para este efecto a João Sócrates de Oliveira, de Cinemateca Brasileira

Recomendaciones hechas por el Grupo de Documentación

Este Seminario destaca la importancia fundamental que reveste la recuperación, preservación y ordenamiento de la documentación cinematográfica nacional, por considerar esta labor de interés prioritario en el desarrollo de las Cinematecas y en su objetivo básico la defensa del patrimonio cultural

- Sistema de Clasificación de Documentación

El Seminario, a través de las exposiciones de las diversas Cinematecas, considera que se han facilitado los conocimientos y métodos básicos para iniciar o perfeccionar las actividades de las mismas en la clasificación de documentación

- Acrecentamiento de los Acervos Documentales

El intercambio de opiniones demuestra que es indispensable la interrelación de las Cinematecas latinoamericanas y africanas presentes en el Simposio como contribución imprescindible para el desarrollo de sus centros de documentación

- Material editado por FIAF

Se solicita que la FIAF considere la posibilidad de enviar todo el material editado relacionado con preservación, catalogación y documentación a los archivos no afiliados, que participaron de este Seminario

- UNESCO

Solicitar el apoyo de la UNESCO para que contribuya al desarrollo de los centros de documentación, facilitando el intercambio de personas entre las Cinematecas con afinidades lingüísticas y culturales, dentro del programa de formación profesional.

Sugerencias hechas por el Grupo de Catalogación

Verificamos la necesidad de una mayor, efectiva y permanente comunicación para que se tome conocimiento de la situación y desarrollo de todas las cinematecas, para un aprovechamiento recíproco.

Consideramos que dada la complejidad de los temas abordados, el tiempo no ha sido suficiente para un conocimiento en mayor profundidad, cumpliendo si una visión general y básica de la Catalogación POR LO TANTO CONSIDERAMOS : de la mayor importancia el intercambio de técnicos entre la Cinematecas participantes.

Ese intercambio configura aspectos "multilaterales" entre las Cinematecas; por lo cual resulta necesario tener en cuenta :

- a. el envío de técnicos para prestar asistencia, a una Cinemateca que lo solicite;
- b. que se posibilite recibir a un técnico, para períodos más prolongados para entrenamiento y profundización sobre los temas de interés.

Por lo expuesto suscitadamente, planteamos la urgente necesidad de apoyo económico de la FIAF y/o UNESCO, en el menor tiempo posible, para los fines antes mencionados.

Sugerencias para el próximo Seminario de Archivos de Imágenes en Movimiento de América Latina y el Caribe en 1986.

Un seminario eminentemente práctico, con la participación de técnicos de alta calificación, procedentes de nuestra región, para que orienten los "workshops" de restauración, catalogación y documentación. Los "workshops" tendrán dos niveles : uno elemental para que las Cinematecas de nueva creación ofrezcan y reciban las informaciones preliminares necesarias para la continuación de los trabajos, en el segundo, que será más complejo. El envío con suficiente anticipación a todos los participantes de las informaciones pertinentes a los asuntos y métodos a seguir en el encuentro.

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