

Report on the 4th FIAF Summer-School, organized by

the Staatliche Filmarchiv der DDR (Aug. 12 - Sept. 1. 1979)

Already for the fourth time the Staatliche Filmarchiv der DDR held a FIAF Summer-School. Just as for 1973 and 1976, it can be stated for the training-course of 1979 that it was attended by the participants with success, interest and gain for their own activities, an evaluation shared by each and everyone.

The 4th Summer-School manifested, compared with its predecessors, a few peculiarities which led to new experiences and cognitions for the continuation of such events:

- For the first time it was, thanks to the financial support granted by UNESCO, possible to invite a wide circle of participants from developing countries in most of which no film archives have yet been established. This resulted in an extremely heterogeneous composition of the circle of participants.
- For the first time the Summer-School took place at a greater geographical distance (1 hour by car) from the seat of the archive. The organizers preferred to enable the participants to be accommodated in a hotel with all modern conveniences in single rooms instead of having to live in bungalows with several beds in each room, without some sanitary installations, while being close to the archive.

Both these peculiarities had an effect on the course and the evaluation of the 4th FIAF Summer-School.

1. Participants

The 4th FIAF Summer-School was attended by 23 participants from 18 countries, the so-far largest number of participants in such a FIAF-course for further education (cf. Appendix 1).

Due to limited finance for the costs of travelling and the limitation regarding accommodation it was not possible to admit a large number of applicants from India, Singapore, Thana, Algeria, Cameroon, USA and Great Britain.

The technical prerequisites and practical experiences of the participants were most differentiated, just as their expectations concerning the 4th FIAF Summer-School. They came from countries in which no archives have yet been set up or where archives are just under way. They came from smaller institutions or from large, experienced film archive. Some of them had already for many years been working in film archives, whereas others had never before seen a film archive. Some were familiar with the tasks and problems, whereas others had to enter virgin soil. During the summer-school, some experienced for the first time the screening of a silent film, whereas others had comprehensive knowledge of the history of cinematography.

The heterogeneous composition of the participants offered, on the one hand, the opportunity of mutual enrichment, while on the other hand the risk of disharmony arose. As far as the organizers can judge, no conflicts arose as a result of the most heterogeneous composition.

The knowledge of the English language of some participants was insufficient so that it must be doubted whether their participation in the 4th FIAF Summer-School actually conveyed to them the desired specialized knowledge.

2. Course of Studies

Survey of the programme as to lectures and practical exercises cf. Appendix 2.

The envisaged programme of teaching events comprised 47 hours, while 7 hours were provided for visits to archive institutions and practical exercises and 6 hours for discussions. As the programme was felt by the participants as altogether to be too exacting, the envisaged teaching events were shortened by 12 hours in favour of leisure time and additional excursions so that the rapporteurs were obliged to improvise and to condense their lectures. The omission of practical exercises was later on regretted and criticized.

The extent of the themes was welcomed by everyone. There were no suggestions to do without certain topics offered by the programme. It was suggested to add, in future, possibly two themes to the programme, namely

- suggestions for a minimum technical equipment of a film archive;
- cataloguing of non-feature films.

It was also proposed to form, within a FIAF Summer-School, separate groups according to interests and prerequisites.

The declared aim of the organizers not to give rise to a teacher-and-pupil relationship, was not achieved. Most of the events took the form of lectures and too little use was made by the participants of the opportunities to ask questions and to express views or experiences made by them.

There were differing views on the most advantageous course of a summer-school. Some participants uttered the desire for a concentrated mediation of the materials within an 8-hour rhythm, interspersed by free days for excursions, while others gave preference to a daily rhythm with the lectures mainly held in the mornings while the afternoons and evenings would be reserved for excursions and leisure.

3. Teaching Materials

As to a summary of the teaching materials handed to the participants cf. Appendix 3.

Each participant received 283 pages of teaching and information materials, mainly for the purpose of supplementing the reports given.

The participants would have been pleased to have obtained those materials already prior to the opening of the summer-school.

4. Additional Events

The participants were given the opportunity to take part in the following excursions and additional events:

Sight-seeing in Frankfurt/Oder

Excursion to the Seelow Heights, the site of one of the major battles toward the end of World War Two.

Sight-seeing (including museum) in Berlin

Excursion to Potsdam including Cecilienhof and Sanssouci palaces

Visit to a cooperative farm

Excursion to Dresden and Meißen

Visit to the Information and Documentation Department of the GDR College for Film and Television

Visit to an amateur film-studio in Frankfurt/Oder.

To meet participants' wishes the following events took place:

- Excursion to the former Sachsenhausen concentration-camp
- Attending a concert in the medi-eval Chorin Monastery
- Visit to the microfilm section of the GDR State Archives.

The film programme, part of which was composed by the participants themselves, comprised a total of 18 titles, 12 classical German films and 6 films from GDR production. The films were screened at 8 evening and night events.

The participants assessed as particularly valuable a forum with the acting director of the Main Department Film of the GDR Ministry of Culture who answered, for many hours, questions put to him on GDR film production.

5. The Organization of the Summer-School

See also Appendix 4.

The participants were accommodated in a hotel in Frankfurt/Oder in single rooms with a shower.

Most of the training events took place in Frankfurt/Oder. On 6 days the participants were taken by bus to Berlin for visits to archival institutions.

All excursions were carried out by bus.

Meals were taken in common by all participants and organizers. Food and drinks were available in ample quantities. Wishes expressed by participants for special food were taken into consideration.

Although the organization was, because of the geographical distance of the summer-school from Berlin, more cumbersome than at previous events of this kind, it functioned essentially without any complaints. The participants of the summer-school travelled by bus over 3.336 km.

The overall programme offered was after the first days regarded by the participants as too acting, so that some parts of the programme had to be cancelled so it became possible to meet wishes for more screenings, more leisure-time and more excursions.

6. Participation Fees

The participants had to pay an amount of 300 US-Dollars each.

UNESCO provided for paying travelling costs of participants from developing countries an amount of 8.500 US-Dollars. Together with a grant from the budget of FIAF, the travelling expenses for the participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Guatemala, Pakistan and partly also from Kenya were financed.

A detailed statement of the costs of the 4th FIAF Summer-School will be sent to the treasurer.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Participants

According to the experiences of the 1st, 2nd and 4th FIAF Summer-School a maximum number of participants of 15 - 20 is recommended.

The selection of participants, above all if their costs for travelling or staying have to be shouldered, must be made with greater care. It would be advisable to have a questionnaire filled in by the candidates or the delegating institutions containing data on educational standard, linguistic proficiency, professional development and present activity.

The Staatliche Filmarchiv would deem it advisable to accept a certain amount of heterogeneity in the composition of the circle of participants. Diverse experiences and preconditions may lead to useful mutual enrichment.

2. Continuation of the Summer-School

The increasing interest in this type of basic and advanced education of the personnel of archives for moving images and the fact that a number of applicants had to be rejected, should be an encouragement to continue the series of FIAF Summer-Schools.

The Staatliche Filmarchiv der DDR repeats its principled preparedness to organize such events in intervals of 3 or 4 years.

It should also be considered and examined whether the conditions for a regional summer-school in Asia or Africa could be established.

3. Duration, Theme and Character of a Summer-School

A period of 3 weeks was assessed by the participants as being optimal.

As far as the theme of a summer-school is concerned, it is problematic to mediate the continually growing volume of tasks and functions of a film-archive, connected with as many practical exercises as possible. Although the desire for "allround" education is, now as before, great and it was particularly welcomed by many participants that the 4th FIAF Summer-School provided a comprehensive survey of tasks and functions of a film-archive, there exists, on the other hand, a contradiction to the likewise expressed wish for deepening knowledge and for more extensive practical exercises. It does not seem possible to meet all these demands in the course of a summer-school. A limitation of the theme and an orientation on quite definite groups of participants would be recommendable.

Practical exercises should definitely be granted wider scope.

The forming of groups with different interests for a diversified programme of education and exercise within a summer-school is, for practical reasons, regarded as difficult to realize, but should nevertheless not be forgotten as a possible variant and be examined when planning a new summer-school.

The wish expressed by the organizers and participants to hold summer-school in a relaxed, seminar-like manner is likewise worthy of being given continual consideration. The aim must be that suitable events help overcome the psychological barriers which, particularly at the beginning, render difficult the developing of a casual exchange of opinions.

When deciding on the daily programme of a summer-school consideration should be given to the ways of life in the countries when the participants come. The same applies to the choosing of accomodation (in single or double rooms) and the offer of food and drinks.

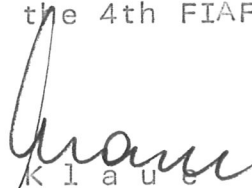
4. Overall Programme

In spite of the good intention to offer as much subject matter as possible and an interesting range of excursions and film screenings, the overall programme should not be too cumbersome for the participants. Too great demands were made in this regard on the participants in the 4th Summer-School.

Those taking part in the 4th FIAF Summer-School fulfilled the prepared programme with admirable discipline, open-mindedness and great factual interest. At the end everybody agreed that the participation benefited everybody for the sake of extending his or her technical knowledge and experiences, of meeting colleagues from other countries and of gathering impressions from the host country.

The participants in the 4th FIAF Summer-School followed a tradition founded by their predecessors: in memory of that event a tree was planted in the garden of the Staatliche Filmarchiv in Berlin and another tree in the Botanical Garden of Frankfurt/Oder.

At the end of the course each participant received a certificate on his or her successful attendance of the 4th FIAF Summer-School.


Klaus
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