



FILM-MAKERS' COOPERATIVE
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FILM-MAKERS' COOPERATIVE REPORT
 Volume One: #7 January, 1971
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 -prepared by Leslie Trumbull, secretary-

JANUARY 20, 1971: Board meeting, 5-7:30PM, at Cooperative. Directors present: Bob Breer, Ed Emshwiller, Ken Jacobs, Jonas Mekas, Jud Yalkut.

FORMAL BUSINESS: (1) Next meeting set for 5PM, Monday, February 22nd at the Cooperative.
 (2) Catalogue should be off the press and at the bindery by the time this reaches its readers. Approximately two weeks required for delivery from bindery and beginning mass mailing.
 (3) Jonas reports progress in settling FDC's debts (see Report #6: June), for which he personally took full responsibility to avoid in any manner endangering the Cooperative.
 (4) Report on financial history and condition of Cooperative made by Leslie and print-inspection-and-maintenance invoice surcharge recommended--revised and approved by vote.

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DISCUSSIONS: (1) Catalogue #5 is on line for large press within the week: this particular press will save approximately one-third of printing on a smaller press. Total cost for 20,000 ready-to-mail is \$19,500: 357 pages, plus covers. Despite photo-reduction and tight spacing, increased number of new listings and new works nearly doubled both estimated size and cost. The only (and anonymous) grant will not cover. Directors therefore recommended that each catalogue mailed out carry an announcement that the Cooperative's per-copy mailed cost is about \$1.50 and voluntary contribution would be helpful. Jonas suggested everyone be asked for ideas to offset mailing expenses, most effective being local or national organizations which could be asked to underwrite the mailing of the preaddressed catalogues from our 6,800-plus list or parts of it.

(2) Financially, the Cooperative has experienced a reversal from a high point in 1968 to under \$61,000 in 1970 (approximating 1966-67 levels). As a result, costs of operating exceed 25% of rentals, giving a net loss in both 1969 and 1970. In addition, the costs of catalogue #4 (not aided by any grant) left us with a deficit in 1968.

Various methods of increasing the Cooperative's real income to the level of its operating expenses were discussed. Recommending film-makers to increase rental rates across-the-board was Breer's suggestion: idea was dropped as (a) impractical, since some rentals are "high" and some are "low" and (b) unfair, since it hides the Co-op's crisis by imputing increase to film-makers and (c) it is contrary to the long-stated tenet of the Cooperative that makers set their own rates.

Increasing the Co-op's percentage (as Canyon Cinema has, to Center Cinema's 33-1/3) would unfairly penalize film-makers for the Co-op's increased costs; cut film-makers' incomes at a time when rentals are fewer and living and working expenses are on the rise; and, most important to the Co-op, violate the good faith of film-makers whether they might agree or not. And, in the last analysis, being tied to dollar-value of rentals, this would be insufficient at current rental levels.

Charging film-makers for shelf-space on unrented prints is bad faith, of little income value and misses its own point: such prints do not require time, records, handling, inspection, repair, accounting, etc.

Back-charging postage costs and making a minimal invoicing-charge produce less income than added accounting and recording would cost, and don't meet the real costs we're facing.

What does represent the real source of the Co-op's costs over 25% of rentals is the careful and costly each-print-per-use hand inspection, recording of condition and maintenance. And this is a service to the benefit of the film-user (from whom we hear of "other distributors" commonly providing uninspected and incomplete prints). Leslie reported that a separate invoiced charge for "inspection and print maintenance" for each print booked--clearly shown as a service fee in addition to each film's stated rental--has been found in the past months to be generally accepted with little comment. This has the virtues of being unhidden (not masquerading as rental increases), of maintaining the integrity of film-makers' 75%-of-income, and of representing honest value actually received by all bookers. (Few, very few prints require less than 15-20 minutes of attention in hand inspection, cleaning, repairing and splice-by-splice recording of actual print condition--resulting in very few complaints on print condition.) A trial charge of \$4 for 20-minute plus films and \$3 for under 20-minutes has been billed. The Board accepted that some version of this method seemed to be necessary, rebuked Leslie for having put it into practice without the directors' approval and came to the following conclusion (majority vote with Breer dissenting)(Brakhage concurring when he called in by telephone a few days later): a per-print inspection and maintenance charge to be clearly shown as a separate item on each invoice, and clearly set out in the catalogue (last-minute change was made). To modify the impact on rentals of shorter films and to encourage the programming of several titles at one time, the following sliding-charge was set: \$4 for one title, plus \$2 for each additional title on one showing date. (Generally, Leslie estimated this will markedly defray our operating deficit.)

(3) Tabled until next meeting: Ken's concern that the Co-op's staff is bearing a large chunk of Co-op's deficit by not having received regular pay-increases; and the question as to what film-makers should expect in print inspection and maintenance. (Prepared: 2/3/71.)