

Sarah



Martin Lugg/Executive
London Filmmakers' Co-operative
42 Gloucester Avenue
London NW1 9JD

29 August 1991

Dear Martin,

I am writing after Tuesday's very disappointing meeting to put on record the concerns that I mentioned at the start of the meeting. Without going into detail here about the sequence of events which led to the Co-op's de facto rejection of the Dunn & Co building, it is obvious to me (and no doubt to many others) that there are serious 'constitutional' problems in the way the organisation is currently managed.

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Let me be clear that this is not to suggest the BFI has only one acceptable model in view for its revenue grant clients. What might be appropriate for a Regional Film Theatre would almost certainly not suit a membership-based organisation like the Co-op. Nor do I think it appropriate for the BFI to stipulate how the Co-op should run its affairs. But I also believe we need to be clear about our 'minimum requirements' for the Co-op to continue as a major revenue client.

The most urgent problems I detect are:

1. Lack of effective continuity and stability in Executive membership.
2. Inadequate provision for election of a Chair of Executive for a sufficient period to ensure continuity of policy.
3. Lack of clarity about relationship between Executive and its sub-committees (e.g. Building).
4. Inadequate consideration of relationship between the Administrator and Executive and the wider relationship of Executive to the staff posts.

What I have observed in recent months makes me think that these issues are serious and urgent; and if they are not speedily resolved, I am afraid the Co-op may be in no position to receive assistance for its eventual relocation.

There are also more fundamental issues about the relationship of different categories of member - and indeed non-member 'users' - to the Executive. Can the present directly-elected Executive adequately represent the broad coalition of interests which the Co-op represents (and is funded to serve)?

(MARCH-90 - 91 MEETING HALL NOT QUANT)

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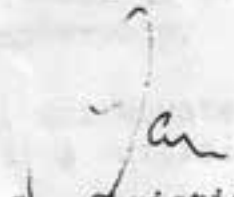


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Finally, the actual running of the Executive gives me great cause for concern. Bluntly, there appear to be too many meetings called at too short notice and lasting too long. I am not at all sure if this pattern is constitutional, even in LFMC terms - but I know it is certainly not sensible or practical. The fact that by holding any Executive meetings without giving the BFI prior notice you are contravening our conditions of grant aid is not the most important consideration: the real issue is, does this truly make the Co-op a democratic and responsible organisation?

I have asked a number of people who they believe is currently chair of the Executive, and the consensus seems to be that there is no chair - it 'rotates' - but that you have been fulfilling that role of late (hence my sending this letter to you). This is not acceptable to the Institute for a major client, and I must ask the Executive to meet as soon as possible, giving due notice of the meeting, to elect at least an acting chair and secretary, both for a minimum period of three months, so that discussion of the issues I have raised can start between the BFI and the Executive. I also want to see at the earliest opportunity a full set of Executive minutes covering the last six months.

Yours sincerely,


Ian Christie
Head of Exhibition and Distribution

cc Sandy Wieland, Administrator

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