

TC NEWS

BULLETIN OF THE FIP THEMATIC COMMISSION

N.7 - JANUARY 99

FOREWORD

The days in Milano were very busy for everybody and quite hectic for myself. The reward was the exhibition itself, the seventh world specialized thematic exhibition over 23 years. It cost my colleagues and me a great effort over the last three years; but I am glad that all delegates understood the fact that I gave priority to this commitment even if I had to delay some activities for the Commission. Now it is time to catch up, and this TCNews is appearing on time and I am preparing a special issue based on the thematic seminars at Pacific 97 and Israel 98. My only regret that I was so busy that I had no time to meet individually with most of you.

I announced my retirement from the Commission at the end of the current term: I started my activity as a delegate at Praga 68 and I took over as President from Frans de Troyer in January 1977, having so completed already 30 years of service to my Federation and the FIP. I will devote the time until the Congress in Madrid to ensuring a continuity of action, as I did with my predecessor, in spite of his sudden passing away. This requires a team effort and the Bureau has already covered the subject in the last meeting. On that occasion, Gunnar Dahlvig raised the subject of evaluation at international exhibitions, with special emphasis on the balance with the other classes. He is presenting his opinion in this issue and I wish those who want to contribute to send me their comments.

In Milano Knud Mohr was elected as FIP President. In wishing him the best success, I want to thank D.N. Jatia for its longstanding friendship and support that started well before his presidency. Manfred Bergman and I remember very well the discussion for preparing the current regulations at Argentina 85.

I wish to thank Hans-Walter Bosserhoff and Betty van Tenac for their activity as well as Charlie Peterson for the cooperation we had since I took over the Commission. To each of them I pass on the friendly greetings of the delegates, as we all benefit by their contributions.

I take this opportunity for wishing you and your families, your Federations and thematic collectors, a very happy and successful 1999.

Giancarlo Morolli

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BUREAU AND COMMISSION MEETINGS IN MILANO

Meeting of the F.I.P. Thematic Commission Milano, October 30th 1998

1. Roll call of delegates

Giancarlo Morolli welcomes all attendees (32 federations have been represented) and especially John Sinfield, new delegate for Australia, Damian Läge representing Hans-Walter Bosserhoff, who has announced his retirement from the Commission, as well as the new delegates present. The President expresses his best thanks and friendship to Betty Wan Tenac and Hans-Walter Bosserhoff for their long service in the Commission and in the Bureau. He also informs about the delegates excused, including Ruben Kley, absent for medical reasons, and thanks Ruben Eliseo Otero for being a very active ambassador of the FIP Board to the Commission.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meetings in Istanbul and London

The President comments these minutes and apologizes for the omission of Manfred Bergman among the attendees of the meeting in London. Both documents are approved by the delegates.

3. Report of the President

The President informs about the most recent communications from the FIP, with special emphasis on those discussed in the meeting of the Commission Presidents and the Board, which took place the day before.

Jurors. The Board decided to work more in the jury preparation. Currently 112 thematic jurors are in the FIP list (32% of the total): 65 are from Europe, 14 from Asia, 10 from North America and 23 from South America. Only 10 are younger than 49. Giancarlo Morolli already asked for a by far stronger control of cross accreditation (34% of the total) because some of these jurors have no direct experience of thematic exhibiting or never obtained a vermeil medal in our class.

Giancarlo Morolli points out that as of today Commission Presidents are not involved regularly in the selection of jurors for specific international exhibitions.

FIP Philatelic Commissions. The discussion on the future of the FIP Philatelic Commissions has been postponed to the 2000 Congress in Madrid. In the meeting with the Board the President reiterated his negative comment on the proposal of having only 4 commissions:

- Commission for Exhibitions (Traditional, Postal History, etc.),
- Commission for Thematic Philately, Maximaphily and Social Philately
- Commission for Youth Philately,
- Commission for Falsifications and Undesirable Issues.

Giancarlo Morolli also informed that he was supposed to work in the special commission set up by the FIP Board to discuss this matter, but he was never involved in the small meetings that were the main activity on the subject, up to now.

FIP WEB site. On 2.1.99 the FIP Secretariat will have its own WEB site on the Internet. The Thematic Commission intends to be present with information and news, educational material and regulations. About 35% of the delegates present at this meeting have an E-mail address and that will allow starting quicker communications.

SREV. The new SREV, as approved by the Bureau in London in a text closely consistent with the GREV, will be proposed to the Congress in Madrid. Delegates will receive the text and the proposal for the Guidelines three months before the special conference of the Thematic Commission to be held in Paris, during Philexfrance 99.

In the discussion, it is asked again to clarify the situation on Fiscal Stamps. The President points out that the approval of the Swedish motion at the Congress in Istanbul gives the Commission the authority to define in the SREV the position about the subject. The Bureau repeats that only fiscal used postally are acceptable.

Finally Giancarlo Morolli thanks the delegates for their cooperation and informs that, after 21 years as President of the Thematic Commission, he has decided that this will be his last term in the commission.

Meeting of the F.I.P. Thematic Bureau Milano, October 30th 1998

The Presidents greets the presents: Franceska Rapkin, Gunnar Dahlvig, Jose-Antonio Hernan, Bernard Jimenez, and FIP Director Eliseo Ruben Otero.

Continuity in the Commission. After Hans Walter Bosserhoff, at the next elections Giancarlo Morolli and Gunnar Dahlvig will leave the Commission, and it is necessary to ensure continuity of work by associating other delegates to the work of the Bureau in the period until Madrid. The Bureau discusses the subject in depth and decides to co-opt Damian Läge as joint member of the Bureau after the formal retirement of Hans-Walter, and to involve other delegates in the preparation of the meeting in Paris.

Improvement of Communications. It is agreed to have a more regular publication of TCNews and to make Commission's meetings more effective by devoting more time to the delegates. The agenda should be prepared in a more effective way.

Thematic Judging. It is discussed how to reach a more consistent evaluation through the exhibitions and how to have a positive approach rather than an analysis of faults and mistakes. It is also discussed how to keep the evaluation and the relevant awards of our class aligned with the other main classes of competition.

WELCOME TO...

We welcome the new delegates :

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SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO THE FIP CONGRESS 1998

This Report covers the current activities, after the report forwarded to the FIP Secretary for the Congress documentation and the information presented in TCNews N.6.

The FIP Thematic Commission and its Bureau met in Milano on October 30th. 30 Delegates were present at the Commission meeting where the President inform the delegates about the recent communications from the FIP Board concerning Jurors, FIP WEB site and SREV. The Commission

and the Bureau expressed their concerns for the selection of jurors already qualified in other classes who have no experience in thematic exhibiting and are looking forward

to a more strict implementation of cross accreditation. At present about 35% of delegates have an e-mail address and that will allow to start quicker communications as well to support the creation of thematic content for the FIP site.

As far as Regulations are concerned, in a Conference to be called at Philexfrance 99 the new SREV will be proposed in the text approved by the Bureau in London and the Guidelines will be prepared so that will reach the delegates three months before that meeting. The FIP Congress in Istanbul defined the subject of fiscals in thematic exhibits, as the Swedish motion was accepted. Hence the thematic SREV provisions are correctly applicable to this type of material.

The Bureau concentrated its discussion on how to evolve the cooperation of delegates in view of a rotation within the Bureau, ensuring the representation of all continents. Furthermore it was discuss how to improve the Commission's bulletin and make the Commissions meeting more productive.

The final part of the meeting was devoted to thematic judging, with the aim of reaching a more consistent evaluation through the juries and of having a positive assessment rather

that an analysis of what is wrong or missing in an exhibit. It was also discussed how to keep the evaluation (and the results) of the thematic class aligned with those of the other main classes.

Milano, 30 October 1998

Giancarlo Morolli,
Commission President

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Note : this list is probably not up-to-date. Please e-mail additions and corrections.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEMATIC EXHIBITS ?

When I look at the medal distribution of ITALIA 98, I see the same old pattern as I have seen the last 20 years :

Medals	Postal History	Aerophilately	Thematics
LG	20	3	3
G	50	12	19
LV	57	26	38
V	24	18	44
LS	17	6	32
S	7	2	18
SB	0	1	8
B	0	0	5
CP		0	2
Total	175	68	169

Statistics which looks even worse when we show it in percentage.

Medals	Postal History	Aerophilately	Thematics
LG	11,4	4,4	1,8
G	28,5	17,6	11,2
LV	32,6	38,2	22,5
V	13,7	26,5	26,0
LS	9,7	8,8	18,9
S	4,0	2,9	10,7
SB		1,4	4,7
B			3,0
CP			1,1

Looking only at the three highest levels (LG,G,LV), we find that totally 72.5% of the Postal History exhibits have got either of these medals, 60.2% of the Aerophilatelic and only 35.5% of the Thematic exhibits.

If I do the intellectual experiment to add 5 points to each of the thematic exhibits, the figure 35.5 raise to 61.5, still lower than for PH about equal to Aero.

To me, this is alarming and I wonder why are the jurors (myself included, even if not in Milano) so mean with the medals in our class? Are the exhibits of that low class in comparison?

In my opinion: NO!

I have already heard the objection: "But look at all that tremendous rare material in these high awarded Traditional and Postal History exhibits".

Well, maybe rare but mostly expensive. But all regulations tell us that expensive isn't equal to rarity.

The traditional and postal history exhibits are in 99% of the cases covering one single country. And 90% of the relevant material is to be found in that specific country or at the big, wellknown auction houses, when these dissolve and sell awarded collections.

The thematic collector, has to look for objects from many countries - as an exemple, my own collection "The Vikings", which is a geographically relatively limited theme, uses objects from more than 30 countries, including all continents except the Antarctic.

An Australian collector, collecting for instance Belgium traditional, knows where to find the material, but an Australian thematic collector first has to find out if there exists an object of his theme in Belgium (or Icelandic, Brazilian, Moroccan, etc...) and then he comes to the problem where to find this item. How do we evaluate the rarity of the Belgium Traditional item (of which it exists 500 copies) for 10.000 US\$ compared to the Belgium thematic cancellation (of which it also exists 500 copies) for 100 US\$? Only according to the price, or do we also consider the difficulty of acquisition?

Knowledge

As well traditional as postal history collectors get points for Research, even if most areas already are researched in depth and the results are published in books and articles. This means that the exhibitor only has to record in the exhibit what he easily can read in a handbook. As most exhibits cover only a limited time period, the number of handbooks to read also are limited. Again an exemple of my own: I

collect Bosnia-Herzegovina traditional and for that I have one handbook and one file with articles. And with them I state that I have knowledge enough for a gold medal. I only lack the money.

A traditional exhibit often is more or less an accumulation of expensive (and rare?) material. You often see 5 - 10 copies of the same stamp without any stated differences. Sometimes there are statements under the stamps saying for instance "yellow", "reddish orange", "brownish orange", "lemon yellow", "greenish yellow", "bright yellow", "dull olivish yellow" (the existing varieties of Sweden n°4 according to catalogue). Anyone can write this kind of information as nobody of the jury or expert panel has the perfect colour sense that they can object. Furthermore, often this information is coming from a specialist's certificate. Knowledge??

The postal history collectors normally show more knowledge by describing postal rates, routes, etc...

The thematic collector gives the same information when showing varieties and also describes rates and routes when relevant.

The difference is that the thematic collector has to "research" varieties and postal rates for many different countries, not for one single area.

To this we have to add the thematic knowledge. In most of the thematic exhibits, coming to FIP exhibitions, the shown thematic knowledge is very good and normally better than the equivalent philatelic knowledge in the traditional and postal history exhibits on the same medal level. All thematic collectors have a small library of books of their themes. For instance, my Viking literature occupies

1,5m. of my bookcase and I know that other collectors have more than that.

All thematic collectors have to read a large quantity of specialist literature and out of this extract the information needed for the collection.

If we compare the total knowledge shown in the exhibits of different classes, the thematic take the top position in my opinion.

Conclusion

I don't see any reason why we shall be so modest - I will even say parsimonious - in the judgement of the thematic exhibits, as we have been so far. It is not fair to our exhibitors.

In the long run it even may have a checking effect on the recruiting of thematic collectors.

Gunnar Dahlvig

I welcome your comments not necessarily on the Gunnar's detailed points but on any other aspects of the judging process that you believe are related to the subject raised in this article, from selection of jurors to rotation, from discrepancies between national and international evaluation to any other point. Please do not open a discussion on the SREV or any other Regulations, that is a different issue. Only if you believe that they influence the subject analyzed by Gunnar, please mention them. At this stage I intend to collect opinions and facts. Once that a clear picture is available I will prepare a summary report, to be discussed as a second step. It is always a mistake to mix analysis of the problem and search of the solution to the same (g.m.).

ERRATA

Due to a wrong "cut and paste" the Open Class Report presented on page 14 of TCNews # 6 has an error in the second column. Instead of "Nordia 95" you should read "Swiss Stamp Open 96".

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