

**The Association Typographique
Internationale and the
International Protection of
Type Designs**

**The Association Typographique
Internationale and the
International Protection of
Type Designs**

**A report by John Dreyfus for the
Wynkyn de Worde Society**

Like the Wynkyn de Worde Society, the Association Typographique Internationale exists to maintain and improve standards in the typographic arts.

The typographic arts cannot advance without new type designs. It is now a matter of fundamental importance and urgency to create conditions in which new types will be designed to suit the new techniques of typographical composition and reproduction, which are being increasingly used for both book work and advertising.

These international problems have been the particular concern of the Association Typographique Internationale since its foundation in 1957. It has attempted to obtain effective international legislation for new type designs for two main reasons. First, because types designed in the past for hot metal composition are not ideally suited to the new techniques used for filmsetting texts, or for preparing display work by means of letter transfer sheets. Second, because new techniques in common use make it dangerously easy, quick and cheap to make unauthorized copies of new type designs, so depriving artists, manufacturers, printers and publishers of their rights—as well as reducing the incentive to create.

Copying type designs has not been unknown in the past, but hitherto a typefounder who decided to copy another typefounder's design was put to considerable expense in equipping himself with the required founts of type and could not complete them without months of work. At present, a new type design can be copied cheaply by photography and can be ready for sale within a matter of days in the form of film negatives or letter transfer sheets, both of which are so light in form that they can be flown across the world to every country which does not exclude them by tariff restrictions.

If those concerned with the progress of the typographic arts do not today give thought to the full implications of the dwindling use of type-metal and the increasing use of film, future generations may condemn them for failing to face up to their responsibilities, and especially for failing to obtain effective international protection for new type designs. It is as if those concerned with the protection of musical works had failed to obtain adequate protection before the widespread use of gramophone records, radio, talking pictures, television and tape recording.

The aims of the Association Typographique Internationale were set out in its statutes in 1957. It was then made clear that the Association exists to bring together, co-ordinate the ideas and give effect to the wishes of all those whose profession or interests have to do with the art of typography. Members were required to make a united effort to promote good typography, to extend a critical knowledge of the subject, and to uphold principles in respect of legal rights.

In the matter of protecting new type designs, the Association aims 'to fight by all means in its power, especially by those provided by international agreements, against unauthorized copying, and to set up a moral code among its members' and 'to promote an international separate agreement concerning the protection of type faces and graphic designs'.

No time was lost by the Association in bringing its problems to the notice of international legal experts. As a result of representations made to the Lisbon Diplomatic Conference (held in 1958 to revise the Union Convention of Paris for the Protection of Industrial Property), a resolution was passed by the Conference asking that consideration be given to creating a Special Arrangement for the International Protection of Type Faces, within the framework of article 15 of the Union Convention of Paris.

In 1959 the Association made contact with the Geneva Office of the International Bureau for the Protection of Industrial, Literary and Artistic Property in order to study how to intervene effectively in preparations for the conference to revise the Arrangement of the Hague. As a result, members of the Association were invited as observers to the preparatory conference of experts at the Hague in October 1959, when they made known their wish to prepare a draft for a Special Arrangement for the International Protection of Type Faces.

In 1960 the Association requested the office in Geneva to convene a first Meeting of Experts with representatives from eight countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the USA). This meeting took place in July 1960 and was followed by two other meetings of experts in 1962 and by a fourth meeting in 1963. A Special Arrangement for the International Protection of Type Faces has now been drafted, and the Geneva office has worked out rules of procedure for its operation. It is hoped that a Diplomatic Conference may be held in 1966 to ratify the Special Arrangement.

If the Special Arrangement is ratified, the design of a new type face could be deposited at the Geneva office of the International Bureau for the Protection of Industrial Property, and could enjoy protection for a maximum period of thirty-five years, after its first appearance on the market.

In the meantime, the Association has adopted a Moral Code to which all members subscribe, and which ensures that rights are respected between its members. Membership already includes nearly all the leading typefoundries of the world, as well as many makers of typesetting and filmsetting equipment. In recent years several manufacturers of letter transfer sheets have also joined the Association.

The aims of the Association go beyond matters of type face protection ; it intends to organize various activities such as exhibitions, publications, films, conferences, etc., all of which might develop a critical and appreciative knowledge of typography among the public.

An International Week of Typography has been organized by the Association for 1966. This will take place at Mainz from 17 to 21 May so coinciding with the Association's Annual General Meeting, and with the meetings of its various committees (at which the special interests of type designers, typographers, and typefounders will be debated).

During the International Week of Typography, there will be a series of exhibitions, lectures and discussions. A special section of the exhibition will be devoted to work by master-printers who have earned a reputation for fine typographical design. Future plans include the production of a new animated film on the evolution of type design—a subject which will be handled by the same team who made such a success of *La Lettre*, a classic of its kind which is still exhibited thirty years after its first showing.

Until the ratification of the Special Arrangement for the International Protection of Type Faces, the Association will continue to devote a great deal of its energies to the urgent problems of ensuring adequate international legal measures not only to *protect* new type designs but to *encourage* new type designs. Publishers, advertisers, television companies and manufacturers can now afford to commission new type designs and to obtain them quickly and inexpensively in the full range of sizes and weights in which they are required. But any such enterprise will inevitably be thwarted and discouraged by the present difficulties of preventing unauthorized copying of new

type designs. At the same time, the introduction of new techniques such as filmsetting and letter transfer sheets demand a wider critical appreciation of the typographic arts.

The Association Typographique Internationale therefore looks forward to a period of great activity. It deserves the support of a wide range of the literate public, to whom letters are matters of real importance : for letters are vital factors in our ability to communicate, and to advance our civilisation.

The Association Typographique owes its existence to the vision and energy of Charles Peignot. He convened its inaugural meeting in 1957 and has ever since been President of the Association. The need for such an organisation became obvious to him when, as Managing Director of the Fonderie Derberny Peignot, he began to construct Lumitype (Photon) filmsetting machines for the European market. Charles Peignot combines the talents of typefounder, machine manufacturer, artist, editor, film-maker and businessman. His conduct as President has gained universal respect for the Association. Its affairs are controlled by an international Board of Directors. No payments are made to any of the Association's officers, except to its part-time secretary and to its legal adviser.