

## Police surveillance strategies at the Mar del Plata Film Festival between 1959 and 1960

*Estrategias de vigilancia policial en el Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata entre 1959 y 1960*

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### Abstract

The Cold War unleashed several radical changes, both socio-economic and political, affecting communities and individuals all over the world. The macro political upheavals triggered by this global phenomenon affected workers of the cultural and film industry in a very concrete, daily-based way, in Argentina. The surveillance deployed by the police against some individuals directly or indirectly linked to communism was one of them. Based upon a close reading of the archives of the Board of the Police Intelligence of the Province of Buenos Aires (DIPPBA), this article depicts the surveillance tactics deployed by the police during the Mar del Plata International Film Festival of 1959 and 1960. The DIPPBA identified and monitored individuals suspected of having a relationship with communism. The police strategies were articulated under the organization provided by the Mar del Plata Film Festival.

**Keywords:** Argentina, police surveillance, police records, film festival, Mar del Plata.

### Resumen

La Guerra Fría desencadenó numerosos cambios radicales, tanto socioeconómicos como políticos, afectando a comunidades y a individuos en todo el mundo. En ese marco, las convulsiones macropolíticas de esas décadas se manifestaron también de forma concreta en los actores de la cultura cinematográfica de la Argentina. La vigilancia policial desplegada contra algunos personajes vinculados directa o indirectamente con el comunismo fue una de ellas. A través del análisis exhaustivo de los archivos policiales de la Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (DIPPBA), este artículo reconstruye las políticas de vigilancia desplegadas en el marco del Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata de 1959 y 1960. La DIPPBA individualizó y monitoreó a los invitados sospechosos de mantener relación con el comunismo. Las estrategias policiales se articulaban gracias a los espacios que brindó el Festival de Cine de Mar del Plata.

**Palabras clave:** Argentina, vigilancia policial, archivo policial, festivales de cine, Mar del Plata.

## 1. Introduction

Five days before the start of the 1959 Mar del Plata Film Festival (Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata -FIMP), the Anti-democratic Information Office (Oficina de Información Antidemocrática), led by colonel Francisco Aintraz Galindes, sent a memorandum dated March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1959 to the Head of the Central Headquarters for Intelligence of Buenos Aires (Dirección Central de Inteligencia de Buenos Aires - DIPPBA), Antonio Piñeyro. The memo warned that, due to the holding of the film festival in the city of Mar del Plata, artistic delegations coming from countries found to be under the influence of Communist politics and ideologies would be arriving to Argentina<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, said memorandum requested “that necessary surveillance be provided” in order to supervise that attendees “carry out precisely and exclusively the purposes for which their visa was requested and granted” (Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires [DIPPBA], 1959).

The beginning of this surveillance coincides with the second year of President Arturo Frondizi’s administration of Argentina’s government. On the Argentine political map, 1959 was a year of growing discontent among the people. Austerity measures adopted by Frondizi’s government and the intention to privatize companies that had previously been nationalized by the government of Juan Domingo Perón (1946-1955) caused the discontent of Communists and Peronists. Said discontent manifested, for example, in what is known as the Battle of Petroleum that opposed the signing of oil drilling contracts with international companies to the detriment of state-owned industries, the 1959 bankers’ union strike and general strikes against the Stabilization and Development Plan, also known as the “Austerity and Sacrifice Plan”, created using the guidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These were some of the motives of the growing insurrection of Communist and Peronists groups that accused the government of supporting American politics (Ortega, 2010; Barreneche, 2011). In light of this growing insurrection, the State Internal Commotion Plan (Plan Comoción Interna del Estado - CONINTES) was implemented, consisting of a number of measures coming from the executive office that enabled the use of the military forces to suppress student, Communist and

Peronist protests. These military actions were outside the lawful limits defined by the constitution.

Latin America was no stranger to the influence of the powers that emerged as the winners of World War II in its desire to take over every possible aspect of human lives. The leading nations refuted said influence, attempting to decrease the power of their adversaries while at the same time trying to strengthen their own. At first, Latin America played a secondary role in the Cold War. However, “the region began to transform into a very particular scenario during the 50s, with the fall of the Guatemalan government in 1954 and with the victory of the Cuban revolution in the latter years of that same decade” (Agüero, 2016).

This article is framed within the topics developed by what is known as the “new history of the Cold War”. As shown in recent research, this theoretical perspective refers to the historiographic paradigms and innovations that propose alternative conceptualizations to that of a bipolar war. In fact, the new history of the Cold War highlights the role of the peripheral or third world nations as primary actors in the processes caused by the Cold War<sup>2</sup>. In this perspective, articles include *A Century of Revolution* (Grandin, Joseph, Rosenberg, Katz & Olcott, 2010) whose thesis states that the Cold War was not the main cause of the revolutionary increase that occurred in Latin America, but did cause an intensification of the processes from earlier decades.

The start of the 1959 FIMP also coincides with the hypothesis of *implicit censorship* proposed by Ramírez-Llorens (2016), who studied censorship in Argentina between 1955 and 1973. This hypothesis emerges from the analysis of how policies of promotion and prohibition were defined in those years. According to the author, “it was based on the ideas the different opposing actors believed regarding the social uses of film, expressing the struggles for the legitimatization of that social use to the actors” (p. 34). Main players like the State, Catholics and business owners, who implemented “the policies of formal and informal promotion and prohibition” to which the rest of the actors adhered to or rejected, in some cases, “reaching a consensus in regards to the social use of film as healthy recreation”. In this sense, Ramírez-Llorens sustains that the years 1955 to 1966 comprised a phase in which common interests were found between censorship

groups and the businessmen of film. During the Frondizi administration, Catholic groups had a large influence on educational policies. Therefore, in the early years of FIMP, censorship was of moral, educational and economic nature or *promotional*.

In this convulsive environment and time of *implicit censorship* in the film industry the second annual FIMP<sup>3</sup> was held, organized exclusively by the Journalists Association of Argentina (Asociación de Cronistas de la Argentina), comprised of a group of cinephiles and theorists with artistic motivations. As remembered by Héctor Grossi, the Chief of Press at the Mar del Plata Film Festival from 1960 to 1964:

... in 1959, the Mar del Plata Film Festival had no other purpose other than film itself. It was cinema as artistic and cultural expression... It was not a festival similar to the earlier Argentine festival in 1954, organized by the government of General Juan Domingo Perón, conceived with political astuteness and with agonistic propaganda (Grossi, 1995, p. 241).

Research addressing the FIMP during the 60s mainly coincides with the Grossi's perspective. In fact, various authors sustain that during those years passion for film reigned in the festival's organization and execution (Manetti & Valdez, 2005; Toribio, 2007). Said initial purposes of the FIMP are also highlighted for the event's official informative media, like the Festival's gazette Issue No. 5 of 1968 with a retrospective piece on the festival's first year under journalist management, according to the quote by Toribio (2007):

The Mar del Plata Film Festival, founded in 1959, had well-defined motives from the very beginning. In addition to the necessary presence of popular figures, mainly useful for creating a certain ambience of excitement, the emphasis was always placed on the cultural aspect and on the event's transcendence from the industrial plane. Famous directors, important theorists and influential critics enriched each year's event with their presence. Thanks to their attendance, Argentina and its film industry found their rightful place within international film journalism (p.36)

While being both a space focused on culture and the local and international film industry, the FIMP became one of the focuses and spaces of Argen-

tine government surveillance. Why was this surveillance ordered in the 1959 festival? Was said surveillance triggered by the country's convulsive social environment? These are some of the questions addressed in this article.

## 2. DIPPBA Police Files

The Buenos Aires Province Police Intelligence records (Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires – DIPPBA) were released to the Provincial Commission for Remembrance (Comisión Provincial por la Memoria - CPM) in 2001 after Congress approved Law 12.642. Said law authorizes and grants CPM the responsibility of safekeeping and providing the Justice Department access to these files, detailed records of political espionage and political persecution in the province of Buenos Aires. These files were made public in 2003. Given their importance to recovering and preserving the history and memory of an era, UNESCO declared these archives a world heritage in 2008.

The sensitive information in these files requires a thorough evaluation to find the most appropriate policies and strategies for making them available to the public, a need inherently understood by the CPM. Therefore, the article published by Jaschek, Lanteri, Sahade & Soler (2018), members of the CPM, describes a methodology that best adapts this material. They propose "three possible strategies to evaluate policies of access" to the DIPPBA archives: firstly, a "protocol that gives clear guidelines to different users; secondly, the importance of finding the archive tools that describe and facilitate full comprehension; and a third strategy that helps inform people of its existence" (p.11). The study of these archives, in a way, requires we consider the historic context in which they were made, the history of the institution and the purpose behind their creation of being "an 'official memory' of the time in the moment of their production". These are three points that help us to best understand their content (Jaschek *et al.*, 2018, p. 11).

The publications of the *dossiers* created for the magazine *Puentes* – a publication under the purview of the members of the Provincial Commission for Remembrance have been grouped in a docu-

mentary series and, as of the publication of this article, in 15 other publications. Said documentary series is based on facts, situations, historic events and themes like, for example, a soccer game, the censorship of certain popular music styles or different events referring to surveillance directed at young people, among many other factors<sup>4</sup>.

Since its creation in 1956, the DIPBA had to fulfill certain requirements in order to ensure correct operation. One of its objectives was to prevent and repress social protest. The implementation of the directive, as well as that of its operations, was entrusted to the military, led by General Carlos Tomaso Montore, who, with "a McCarthyian mentality" that "took over the military organizations", demanded to "replace civil authorities in the repression of terrorism and subversive activities" (Funes & Jaschek, 2005, p.3).

*File N° 25 Center for Intelligence. Department "C"*, states that the gathering of information and its timely submission to the pertinent organizations is intended to "invoke or counteract a possible public disturbance of order: whether union, cultural, economic, political etc." This plan of ideological censorship could not be made public in 1957, given that communist activities were not repressed. Using this logic, intelligence agencies were to take advantage of the freedom of communist party members, letting them express themselves publicly and, thus, record, register and list them in the index of Marxist ideology sympathizers. Sourced documentation mentions that communist tendencies and such were readily accepted in intellectual spheres. Therefore, the recommendation was to implement a heavy, yet discrete, surveillance in schools, colleges and similar institutions.

The Argentinian government security forces' perception of the relationship between communists and unions, which is reflected in the statutes for correct operation of DIPBA in *File No. 25 Center for Intelligence. Department "C". Information required for normal operation* (Funes y Jaschek, 2005), was, first, that communists respond to party interests over those of the union and, second, that they "try to generalize all conflicts, so as to capitalize on disturbances". Therefore, the recommendations for good operation of the Agency require they "exercise stricter control over communist activities ... in intellectual and artistic media".

### 3. Places under surveillance by FIMP

Film festivals have been conceptualized as *sites of passage*, a notion developed by Valck (2007). In fact, these *sites of passage* refer to the idea that they constitute places of gathering in a determined space and time, where people, prestige and power are found. Spaces that, for the rest, are inherently transnational due to their forming of a part of an international festival network, according to lordanova (2016).

Furthermore, in these spaces, there is a great variety of rituals like the red carpet, the opening and awards ceremonies and, in general, a set of symbolic acts that lead to films, filmmakers and producers in general positioning themselves in the cinematographic world. This ritualist performance in these festivals breeds a sense of time standing still; where independent rules are created for each film festival and the rules of the international cinematographic market are suspended<sup>5</sup>.

The FIMP, in those first years, went about defining its unique features, facilitating the right conditions to allow for gathering and exchange, whether commercially, culturally or ideologically. The event constituted a space in which all types of intellectual encounter took place. Since 1959, the FIMP became a stage for gathering in which censorship cases were revealed. For example, the first meeting between directors, actors and Dr. Emilio Zolezzi as director of the Instituto Nacional de Cine (INC), were instances which addressed the concerns and doubts as to the function said institution had. The next year, formally and for the first time, the international event would be held among filmmakers, theorists and icons of the film industry. As Alsina Thevenet states in articles of the era, sourced by Buela, Gandolfo & Peña (2012), said meetings were "the type of things that you can only do at a festival... because there are few similar occasions that could gather people of such a high level" (p. 649). The event referred to people like the theorists George Sadoul and George N. Fenin, the producer Kashiko Kawakita, screenwriters Derek Prouse and Beatriz Guido, the academic Narciso Pousa, the set designer Saulo Benavente, journalist Carlos Burone and film directors Walter Hugo Khouri, Fernando Ayala and Torre Nilson, among other key actors of the field.

The city of Mar del Plata had optimum infrastructure to host an international event. Ever since the 1954 film festival organized by Argentina's president Juan Domingo Perón, Mar del Plata became a privileged space for this type of events. The facilities provided by the FIMP were numerous and assigned depending on the events they would host. The main venue was the Hotel Provincial with its different banquet halls prepared exclusively for official events like the opening and closing ceremony parties. The cinema Ocean Rex and Ópera were the main theaters showing exhibitions of the official program.

Another important venue for the festival was the local office of the Argentine Automobile Club. Here delegation press conferences were held. This event was one of the most well-attended by journalists and general public trying to get an autograph. Among the available venues there were also the auditoriums and theater halls, including the Colón Theater and the Gran Casino Auditorium Theater, which were the venue for cultural acts such as retrospectives, expositions and gatherings. Also, in the streets of the city of Mar del Plata, open air events were held like itinerant cinema, film screenings, classic car and photography exhibitions, among other artistic and cultural expressions at the same time and/or as sideshows for the FIMP.

All these places equipped and made available for the organizers were designed to promote the highest interaction between guests during the 11 days the event lasted. Therefore, the venues needed to be as close as possible to one another, thus preventing guests, journalists, and the general public from missing a programmed activity. The logistics had to ensure that the festival was the place of gathering and socializing among the delegations of the different countries brought together in Mar del Plata.

Alsina Thevenet, days before the start of the festival, was optimistic about the presence of new cinema out of Poland and Hungary. In an article published March 2, 1959, Thevenet highlighted "how positive it will be for the countries to be present at the festival as it gives them the opportunity to be distributed more easily throughout the South American continent" (Buela *et al.*, 2010, p. 726). The international roster, an intrinsic characteristic of festivals such as that of Mar del Plata, allowed for the spies and/or agents in charge of the survei-

llance to have, in the same space and at a certain time, all together and interacting, the delegations coming from the countries belonging to what was known as the *iron curtain* (Iordanova, 2016).

The first memorandums specified the surveillance of members of delegations coming from countries with communist regimes and other sympathizers. The first reports made by the local police in Mar del Plata include a detailed list of the delegations of Hungary, Czechoslovakia (nowadays the Czech Republic), Poland, Soviet Union and Bulgaria. From Hungary, the police report specifies that the group was staying at the Provincial Hotel, their respective room numbers and the members of their party; on the Czechs, it reports that they were staying at the Nagaró Hotel; on the Polish delegation, the police report mentions that they stayed at the Hermitage Hotel, as well as indicating their respective room numbers and party members. As for the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, it reports that the parties had not arrived yet to the city of Mar del Plata. The spies also reported on delegations from countries with communist governments that had not arrived and where necessary clarified their inactivity. On the other hand, when there were movements, it was registered as "news".

The members of the secret police did not just conduct surveillance inside the facilities of the hotels in which the delegations stayed, but also, in the places where some of the party members of the delegations being watched decided to stay, outside of the official hotels. For example, journalists and cultural delegates decided to rent a chalet located 10 kilometers or 6 miles (20 minutes by car) from the event location. The documents of the Agency include the procurement order, "by all means necessary, their identification and location, for purposes of surveillance and tracking" (DIPPBA, 1959).

#### 4. Identification and localization of surveillance subjects

The archives also indicate, for example, that the members of the Hungarian delegation declined the salon services that the festival's organization provided for all participants and that instead preferred to use the services of the established stylist



of the business “Peinados Bernardo”. The report mentions and emphasizes the Soviet origin of the owner of said business and, therefore, there is an order to “inquire as to his identity, ideology and way of conduct, in order to inform on such” (DIPPBA, 1959).

Registering the festival participants’ identity, ideology and conduct, as well as that of all those associated with them and, in this case, with even greater urgency given their Soviet origin, provides at least three fields that cover a broad spectrum of information on the individual. Therefore, if we ask ourselves: Why were they being watched?, the answers might be: to learn the identity of the people associated with Communist ideas inside Argentine territory, know the names, origins and other personal data; learn about their ideology, that is to say, discover the ideas that they identify with or give them belonging within a collectivity, whether religious, cultural or political, and finally, to identify their behavior, which is to say, how they behave or react to certain circumstances<sup>6</sup>.

Police reports also include perceptions that exceed the data or characteristics of those being watched, evidence of the bias and subjectivity of their informants. Said informants, based on objective characteristics of those under surveillance, speculated on various imagined scenarios involving the individuals they were spying on. In folios 14 to 16 of the DIPPBA archives, there is a physical description that was particularly affected by the subjectivity of the spies. In the case of the film judges’ panel member Pousa Narciso, there is objective data and subjective information that the spies collected:

In regards to the inquires made on Mr. Pousa Narciso who stayed in apartment 571 of the Provincial Hotel starting on the 11th of the present month, he is a Spanish professor and representative of *Lenguas Vivas* currently serving as film judge commission member. His personal background is the following: Married; with two children, resides on 56th Street approximately between 12 and 13 of the city of de la Plata. His financial situation is seen to be considerably well off, being a person of elegant tastes, but with certain inclinations that reveal him as a passive pedophile, information which can be trusted, given the sources of information.

In this case, we can see the identity and make conjectures about certain private behaviors based on certain physical characteristics or conduct in people associated with the person under surveillance. However, identifying or speculating as to the ideology of the spies is no easy task. It requires the use of spy techniques that surpass speculations and that the surveillance up to this point cannot achieve. Therefore, there is a need for the spies to infiltrate the meetings and the spaces that the guest delegations are in.

This infiltration in various spaces and gatherings of the festival collects conversations between the delegations and their treatment of each other. This type of report helps us to understand just how close the spies had to be to their objectives. The most well-attended gathering points or those most used by the spies were the hotels *Hermitage* and *Provincial*, places where the majority of the delegations of the countries of the *iron curtain* lodged and where receptions and informal meetings were held among the festival participants. For example, Argentine actresses Nelly Kaplan and Lidia Elsa Vatrugno, according to intelligence reports, were often observed conversing with the delegations of Hungary and Poland. However, according to the agents, it was not possible to obtain information due to the language in which they communicated, as the spies did not speak it.

With this impasse, the spies searched the luggage of the mentioned actresses. In other words, surveillance was not only conducted in public spaces but also, as revealed in the reports, the agents had access to their luggage. It does not mention whether they entered their rooms, but the reports state that the spies infiltrated and moved about in both the public spaces of the festival, as well as the more private spaces of their targets, in this example, the actresses’ luggage. Reports state that they performed “a careful inspection of the baggage of all those mentioned but without finding anything of interest” (DIPPBA, 1959). This level of infiltration, which mentions a careful inspection, would suggest that the agents dedicated to tracking and surveillance of FIMP attendees had the means necessary to access and handle personal objects and spaces, as well as sufficient time and convenience to comply with the organization’s guidelines.

Table 1: Objective and subjective data in the memorandum

Name	Pousa Narciso	
Situation at the Festival	Objective Information	Subjective Information
Apartment No. 571 at hotel Provincial. Arrival date: March 11, 1959.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Spanish professor and film judges' panel member.</li> <li>-Married with two children.</li> <li>-Residing on 56<sup>th</sup> Street of the city of La Plata.</li> </ul>	Financial situation is seen to be considerably well off, being a person of elegant tastes, but with certain inclinations that reveal he is a passive pedophile.

Source: created by the author based on the information of the Files 14 and 15 of the DIPPBA Archive, "Festival Internacional Mar del Plata 1959".

#### 4.1 Surveillance strategies

For the 1960 festival, surveillance preparation began December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1959. On that date, the commissioner Horacio Pedro Ochando requested all sorts of background information that could be found recorded in the Federal Police on the confirmed FIMP attendees. The request is directed at the DIPPBA headquarters. At this time, the objective was to be prepared for any visitor that might require special surveillance.

Ochando justifies his request explaining that, in the previous year of the event, they had observed "an evident preponderance of communist elements" (DIPPBA, 1959) and the corresponding measures had not been taken for the timely implementation of surveillance mechanisms. In the previous year, certain events had occurred for which the espionage was not productive given that certain measures were not planned, nor were actions taken to address them. Afterwards, when the State Intelligence Secretary (Secretaría de Información del Estado), via the Anti-democratic Information Department, requested information on events in which Communists party members were observed, the events could not be tracked.

An example of such is found in the events occurring in and around the Hermitage Hotel and

Ocean Rex Cinema. There, some activities caught the attention of the spies. Two young males of apparent Argentine nationality, approximately twenty and twenty-five years old, young men that had previously been observed at Hermitage Hotel where they had met with the Polish delegation and were identified as friends of said delegation without giving their names, were seen once again in the proximity of the cine Ocean Rex, together with the same delegation, where they stayed until 3:15 a.m. They were "shown to be able to communicate without difficulty with the members of the delegation, finally leaving in a car with the capital federal license plate 520.603" (DIPPBA, 1959). Of all the memorandums sent by the spies, this one sent on March 19, 1959, the same day as the events, stood out to the State Intelligence Secretary. The Secretary requested more information on the events, in addition to requesting that the young men be identified, request which the DIPPBA delegation of Mar del Plata could not fulfill.

As a result, the information requested in advance was intended to prepare the spies in their surveillance operations and prevent the previously-described events from reoccurring. The Federal Police report by the La Plata delegation arrived after various attempts to get a response for the requested data. There is proof of the several calls made insisting the report be sent with background

information of confirmed FIMP guests. It was not until January 25, 1960, almost two months after the request was made and around a month and a half before the start of the festival, that the results of the inquiry were sent.

#### 4.1.1 The case of Saulo Benavente

In the information provided by the Federal Police, of the fourteen people mentioned, only one had a criminal record. On the list, only two people had relatives with any criminal activity. However, at the same time, there is information about all the people on the list. Folio 52 of January 25, 1960, belonging to File 12218 of the DIPPBA archive for example, describes the set designer Saulo Benavente, listing nationality, identification documents, residence, profession and close relatives, and later the activities in which he participated.

It is said that in 1953, he committed to participating as collaborator of the American Cultural Congress (Congreso Cultural Americano) to be held in Santiago Chile from April 26th to May 4th, a congress rumored to be "of communist nature". In addition, it also said that he participated in the Youth Congress (Congreso de la Juventud) held in Bucharest in June 1953, also appearing as vice president of the magazine *Cultura China* which highlights the work carried out by the Popular Republic of China, praising the communist regime.

In 1954, in a confidential report from September 28th, it was reported that Frantisek Hrabalek, employed by the delegation from Czechoslovakia, had contact with Saulo Benavente. The report also refers to an article that appeared in the newspaper *La Prensa* on April 4, 1955, that states that the Chinese Culture Association (Asociación de Cultura China), led by set designer Saulo Benavente, had begun work on their own theater.

On April 12th, 1957 he is arrested on charges of activity violating national security, but is released seven days later. On August 30th that same year he is mentioned in the magazine *Festival*, and named as a member of the national preparatory committee, constituted for the purpose of

sending a delegation to the VI World Festival of Youth and Students, to be held in Moscow. For this purpose, Benavente had supposedly traveled to communist China.

In 1958, according to a publication in the newspaper *La Hora*, Benavente is reported to have been present in the tribute to María Rosa Lucía Oliver, with the purpose of awarding her the Lenin Peace Prize on June 9th, 1958. According to the publication in the newspaper *Correo de la Tarde* on January 3rd, 1959, Benavente is the person in charge of set design for a piece by Bertold Brecht, *El Alma Buena de Se-Chuan*, where his name appears together with José Franyie, famous member of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba. In May of the same year, he appears in documentation confiscated in the Argentine League for the Rights of Man (Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre), a credentialed delegate representing Junta Capital at the Latin American meeting of July 10th, 1959, where he attends a cocktail party hosted at the Soviet Embassy in commemoration of the Russian Revolution (DIPPBA, 1960).

With detailed reports of some of the participants, the team of spies and/or employees, as they are referred to in the memorandums, was prepared to receive the 1960 festival guests. Unlike the first year, they now had more information on those who deserved special attention. On March 8th of the same year, the employee identified only by his last name, Ruiz, informed of the arrival of the first train to Mar del Plata transporting the delegations from Germany, Brazil and United States.

Barely a day after the arrival of the guests to the city, the secret police had the list with the identification and location of each one of the members of the delegations participating in the event. The list mentioned the guests' hotel, room numbers, and the country of origin. Attached to this report in the memorandum was the official FIMP program, the calendar for each film category, the schedule of cultural activities, outdoor screenings, events sponsored by the national charity lottery and casinos, the events organized by the Mar del Plata Commission and the various press conferences.



## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of the archives of the Board for Police Intelligence of the Province of Buenos Aires (DIPP-BA) allows for identification and reconstruction of police ideology and surveillance practices deployed during the Mar del Plata Film Festival in the midst of the Cold War (1959 and 1960). The surveillance, product of a historic political moment affecting Argentina specifically and Latin America in general, has in recent years been under the spotlight thanks to the declassification of national and international archives. The information obtained in that surveillance has allowed researchers to learn about and recognize new perspectives on Latin America in the context of the Cold War. These perspectives provide new insight with which to interpret that moment in history, the events, and are included in proposals like that of Joseph, Spenser and Rosenberg (2008) in *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, essential reading that calls for redirecting attention from a bipolar view of the Cold War towards one that, on the contrary, is centered on local conflicts and in the relations between Latin American countries.

As we have seen, the Communist paranoia that Argentina experienced, as a result of the American policies to expand its influence in Latin America, caused the surveillance to be focused not only on the delegations of artists coming from countries that comprised the so-called iron curtain but also on individuals or celebrities of the Argentine cultural scene, who were subjected to strategies of identification and location of FIMP attendees with the objective of listing them as communists. In addition, we can see the use of techniques, such as infiltration and the tracking of "persons of interest", with the objective of improving the quality of information provided in the memorandums. The objective was achieved and made possible thanks to the unique characteristics of the FIMP that gathered individuals deemed 'persons of interest' by the local secret police in the same time and space.

The potential, as well as the limits of DIPPBA archives are being widely studied to identify new perspectives and fields in which the repressive, Argentine government-controlled system was deployed.

This article is no more than a small contribution to the variety of topics that the content of these archives provides. Therefore, it forms a part of other research based on declassified archives, with the purpose of contributing to future investigations that seek to preserve the historical memory of Argentine and Latin American cinema and better understand its contexts of production and circulation.

## Notes

1. Also called Iron Curtain and was used in the discourse that Churchill gave in 1946 in Missouri. It refers to the political and ideological border separating Western countries from the Soviet Bloc (Applebaum, 2014).
2. For more information on the perspectives for the study of the Cold War on which this article is based, see Stonor (2001), Grandin et al. (2010), Gaddis (2012) and Iber (2015).
3. It is considered the second year of the international festival. However, it can be considered the third year according to Fernando Martín Peña. The author sustains that the first year of the Mar del Plata Film Festival was 1948, although it was not competitive or international (Peña, 2015, p. 43).
4. More information can be found on the advances of research on DIPPBA archives in Funes (2004), Castonuovo & Marengo (2015), la Comisión Provincial por la Memoria (2015) and Lanteri (2009).
5. In accordance with that stated by Valck (2007), a space is created in "liminal state, where the cinematographic bask in the attention they receive for their aesthetic achievements, cultural specificity or social relevance" (p. 39).
6. Based on the meanings of the concepts that the RAE gives for identity, ideology and conduct <https://dle.rae.es/identidad>.

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