

# **INTERNATIONAL FELDENKRAIS FEDERATION**

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**Fourth Annual General Assembly 25 - 28 May 1995  
Heidelberg, Germany**

## **Minutes**

**Thursday, 25 May 95**

President François Combeau opened the Assembly with thanks to all the persons who had helped prepare for the Assembly. Everybody introduced him or herself to try out the microphone. The absence of the missing board members was explained. Work will be done in small groups. We will begin a process for discussing issues. Representatives are encouraged to tell the truth about the troubles they experience in this work. We want representatives to feel support from being at this Assembly. François wishes for the representatives to leave Heidelberg with new ideas and new confidence. The representatives are to think about something to say which has been a success. How have the members in your Guild succeeded this past year? The individual Guilds, then, reported on their successes for the past year.

**Friday, 26 May 1995**

### **1. Welcome**

Apologies received from several members. Use of voting cards explained.

### **2. Minutes of Last Assembly**

Tel Aviv - 27-29 May, 1994- approved, unanimously, with one change: on page 4 in brackets the "Mia and Yochanan" needs to be changed to FPTP. It is also noted that these minutes did not specify which elected candidate and substitute to the Mediation Board is to serve the 3-year term, 94-97, (Edward Dwelle; substitute Barbara Piepper) and which the 2-year term, 94-96 (Kari Brøtmet; substitute Oliva Cheever), so this is clarified here.

### 3. Membership applications

3.1 New Zealand Guild - approved

3.2 Michél Silice-Feldenkrais' request for membership - because of our business relationship the BOD recommends an honorary membership for the Feldenkrais Family to involve them at another level; Michél can send letters to the Feldenkrais community, and can attend and give input during IFF sessions. Michél says he wants to be involved regarding use of materials and to be consulted in deciding the use of materials. He does not want to be involved with politics. He would like to be invited to all IFF events.

It is approved that Michél and the Feldenkrais Family be an honorary member of the IFF, invited to attend meetings and events, give comments. No objections, two abstentions.

### 4. Reports

Resources - the BOD wants feedback about how practitioners use this material.

**Alexander Yanai ATM lessons** continue to be transcribed and printed; Volume 1 was completed in Feb.95; Volume 2 is expected to be completed by June 95, and Volume 3 by the end of the year. Pre-subscription sales of Volumes 4,5 and 6 will begin by Sept., we anticipate. SF material contract - Arrangements are in process for a project transcribing the first two years of the San Francisco Training materials.

**Amherst videos** - Arrangements are now being completed for the transfer of all the Amherst Training Videotape materials to the IFF by the Feldenkrais Foundation. Copies are being made for the three continental libraries (Australia, North America, and Europe - in Germany). A special series of lectures and H lessons will also be available. The Feldenkrais Family owns the intellectual property and the Foundation the material (physical) property; we both must work together; no one can do something alone with these materials. We will continue to rent videos as before; when we complete the contractual arrangements with Michél - will hope to have videos for sale, as well; first a series of FI lessons with one person; also a set of lectures; eventually we hope 1r a transcript and also translations; complete sets will be for sale to trainers and assistant trainers.

Israel has requested that copies of the original Alexander Yanai lessons on tape in Hebrew be available for distribution in Israel.

Australia asks to discuss IFF Archives and Libraries.

**Mediation Committee** - no requests for mediation have been received as yet. Each full member Guild/Association should nominate two of their members to serve in the Mediation Pool for two year terms. These should be presented to the IFF Election/Nomination Committee. The Mediation Board members are Patrice Auquier (BOD appointee), Edward Dwelle, 94-97, and Kari Brøtmet, 94-96; substitutes are Barbara Piepper and Oliva Cheever).

**Communications** - IFF Communications Coordinator - Lea Wolgensinger has been appointed by the Board to facilitate communications between members and the IFF Board; she is to have regular contact with Guilds/Associations; clarify the roles of representatives, the process of communication within a guild/association, who to contact, what information do they need, etc. What problems have there been in communications to the members? What information do representatives take back to their Guilds/Associations? Are the newsletters getting distributed?

**IFF Newsletter** - Lesley Balinsky, Australia, has done a marvelous job producing two Newsletters since the last Assembly. She will continue to be Editor and July 31 is the deadline for reports from this Assembly, and other news Guilds/Associations wish to include. It is recommended this year that instead of each Guild/Association writing about the same issues from the assembly each group write a on different topic. Two questions have arisen regarding the production of the newsletter: one is type size - last fall's NL was done in 14 point, big and bold for easier reading; the preassembly issue is in 12 point, to conserve space; please express your opinion about readability of each of these. The other question is whether we should accept advertising in the NL, and what kind of advertising, by whom, what limits, guides, etc. should be placed on this.

**IFF Journal** - no one has yet come forward to be Editor of the Journal. Lesley Balinsky has volunteered to do the typing and laying up of the Journal if an editor solicits and organises the content. It has been requested that, among other things, we print case studies of the work.

**Training and Member Database** - Cliff Smyth continues to solicit data to update the database.

**Nominations - Chair** is Glenice Hall; give nominations to her.

**Training survey** - EuroTAB has developed a questionnaire; feedback will be received here and it will be reworked to be more efficient; we want distributed to members by Sep.

## 5. Activity - Developing a Vision for our Method

Discussion in pairs - Imagine it is the year 2000; what has the guild achieved in the past five years; what are your successes? The following Visions of the Future were reported:

- The Feldenkrais Method is a recognized profession
- Major promotion of the Feldenkrais Method to the public and other professions
- Money donated by the public
- Public membership in Guilds
- Many Articles written and published in magazines
- Videos of the work on television
- Integrated network of Somatic Education
- Research validating the effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method
- National/local Guild offices
- Resource centers for practitioners run by the Guild
- Forums for the development of the Feldenkrais Method
- Forums to address Research
- Network of work and study groups
- Recognition by the European Parliament
- Quality of practitioners has increased
- Most practitioners have successful Feldenkrais practices
- Many of Moshe's materials are available
- More continuing education
- No separateness with Guilds and groups of Mia and Yochanan
- Networking in and among Guilds
- Many people are working together for the future of the method in Guilds/Associations, and the IFF "The Assistant Trainer Academy"

## 6. Feldenkrais as a Profession

Discussion and small group work on "Feldenkrais as a Profession" - this is becoming a major issue all over the world; how does the Feldenkrais work become accepted and recognized as a profession? what does it mean to be a profession, individually and organizationally? how do we preserve the work's focus on learning?

Reports from small groups:

- What is a profession - some are well defined with clear boundaries and requirements determining what it is; we don't have the same boundaries. How do we define ourselves as a profession?
- What do we all have in common in our practice of Feldenkrais?
- We need to look at different ways of defining ourselves.
- We need to decide amongst ourselves what the work is.
- We need to put the method and our profession into language.
- We need to develop the ability to negotiate how to work as professionals in different domains without undermining the principles of our profession.
- Why do we want Feldenkrais to be called a profession? do we want some external regulation?
- What difference does it make to be a profession?
- Are there needs of society that our work satisfies?
- Look at being a profession as a device for reaching a market (people) - a strategy.
- Specialism may be a way to develop our profession.
- Create our own discipline?

- Become part of the Somatic Education discipline?
- Identify the criteria for becoming a profession.
- Certifications: we should show to the professionals that the Feldenkrais teachers fulfill the criteria needed to be acknowledged by the public. A model like that should be discussed.
- Developing a common language is important.

**Saturday, 27 May 1995**

## **Working Groups and Reports**

### **Developing Our Profession**

This group recommends that Guilds/Associations look at the following steps to assist the professional status of our Method:

- developing a formal description of the Feldenkrais Method
- to consider developing a job description for our profession
- to have a certification policy
- to consider networking with other somatic methods

A number of Guilds/Associations are currently working on projects to develop descriptions of our professional work and to develop competencies for our Method, etc. We recommend Guilds/Associations co-ordinate with each other on these initiatives.

#### **Creative Roundtables Working Group** - see attached report

This working group recommends the planning of creative roundtables the aim of which is to bring together practitioners/teachers pooling of ideas, information, resources, research, and experience in specific thematic areas related to the Feldenkrais Method. This creative, experiential team sharing will benefit the growth and confidence of all participants. Possible themes include voice, dance, working in the classroom, infants, the blind, etc. The IFF is not just administration but also for exploring professional topics and special fields of interest through discussion and sharing of experiences. Discussion of how the IFF can help the community to develop itself, to move to a more simple, clear, and creative way of functioning through the creation of "roundtable" sessions is different countries.

#### **Research Working Group** - see attached report

Research working group will continue during this next year to develop a proposal for a Research Commission and the election process for it for the next assembly.

**Feldenkrais** short courses taught to other professionals - This group considered what to do about nontrained people doing/using the Feldenkrais Method in their other professional work without being fully trained in the Method. They recommend the following be adopted:

## **Proposal - Feldenkrais courses for other professionals**

Advertising should:

1. be geared to the whole person, not to body parts
2. be geared towards self development and self experience rather than teaching the tools of the Feldenkrais Method
3. avoid giving the impression of being a professional training program or a training like situation
4. state clearly that completion does not qualify participants to offer ATM classes or FI sessions nor give them the right to use the terms associated with the Feldenkrais Method (ATM, FI, Feldenkrais Method, etc.,)

Practitioners of the Feldenkrais Method should not offer to teach Functional Integration or supervise hands on work.

**Recognition for the Experience of Practitioners Working Group** - see attached recommended draft This group discussed having an advanced practitioner status that should be based on a profile of experience with demonstrations made in front of a special group.

## **Business Meeting**

**1. Date and Location of 1996 IFF Annual Assembly** - Gregor Risi proposes to host the meeting in Basel, Switzerland - agreed.

### **2. Fees**

2.1. Exchange rates for coming year are the same as last year.

2.2 The following proposal is submitted for approval by the Board of Directors. We have a limit on the number of votes and representatives for each Guild but some are paying much more in dues; this is an imbalance.

#### **Proposal - Limiting the Guild/Association Fees (dues)**

As set forth in the Internal regulations, 13.4, each year the Assembly approves the fee to be paid by the Guilds/Associations for the next year.

The current yearly fees are as follows:

IFF full member Guilds/Associations - 1 25ff per full practitioner member

IFF associate member Guilds/Associations - 75ff per full practitioner member

Trainees - 50 ff

It is recommended that this be modified as follows:

IFF full member Guilds/Associations - 125ff per full practitioner member for up to 400 full members.

Over 400 full members, the fee per additional full member is 50 ff. IFF associate member Guilds/Associations - 75ff per full practitioner member. Over 400 full members, the fee per additional full member is 50 ff. Trainees - 50 ff

Discussion - concern is expressed that some of the small Guilds have expenses they can't pay for coming to IFF and that perhaps we shouldn't make this a permanent policy. It is noted that the BOD makes exceptions for these kinds of situations and gives assistance to small Guilds. The BOD strongly recommends adopting this proposal.

Lea Wolgensinger proposes, and Gregor Risi seconds, that the North American Guild pay only US\$10,000 for 1996 and that's all.

The two proposals are considered by the assembly. 32 in favor of board proposal; 6 in favor of Lea's; 5 abstaining.

The Board proposal for Limiting the Guild/Association Fees is adopted.

### **3. Nominations/Elections - Glenice Hall, Nominating Committee Chair**

Nominees for Officers:

President - François Combeau

Vice President - Lea Wolgensinger

Nominees for Directors - Cliff Smyth, Patrice Auquier, Susan Pinto, Chris Lambert, Philippe Leblond for positions of 3 years; for 1 year, those not elected for three years plus Gregor Risi.

#### **Election Results:**

President - 95-98 - François Combeau

Vice President - 95 - 97 - Lea Wolgensinger

Director -95-98 Cliff Smyth

Director - 95 - 98 Patrice Auquier

Director -95-96 Gregor Risi

**4. Continuing Education Guidelines** - it is proposed to adopt these guidelines as published in the preassembly IFF Newsletter. Discussion. It is agreed to change 4 years experience as a practitioner/teacher for presenting workshops to 5 years experience. It is moved and seconded to adopt these guidelines with the agreed upon change.

Continuing Education Guidelines are adopted as amended unanimously.

**5. Training Proposals by Israeli Guild** - referred to the TABs for consideration.

(These include issues related to acceptance into a training, ratios of teachers to trainees, weight of local guilds in approving new courses, increased percentage of teaching by the educational director, teaching of FI, include more theoretical subjects, and apprenticeships.)

**Sunday - 28 May 95**

## **Working Groups and Reports - Continued**

### **Ethics Working Group Report**

This group proposes that the IFF adopted the Australian Feldenkrais Guild Code of Ethics as the IFF Code of Ethics for one year. Some modifications need to be added concerning the description of what is taught in short courses to other professionals. There was some discussion on the difference between a "Code of Ethics" and a "Code of Professional Conduct" and which the IFF should adopt.

During the year the IFF Ethics Working Group will compare ethics documents from a number of Guilds/Associations and make recommendations about international guidelines and whether it is a "Code of Ethics" or a "Code of Professional Conduct".

It is moved and seconded to adopt the Australian Feldenkrais Guild Code of Ethics as the IFF Code of Ethics for one year and to include the proposal for what is taught in Feldenkrais short courses for other professionals. AFG Code of Ethics is Adopted for one year (with 2 abstentions).

### **Common Training Standards Working Group Report**

Many questions were raised in this group. What are we setting standards for? We are in the middle of a dynamic process which is closely related to whether the Feldenkrais Method is a profession. Is what we do a "professional" training program? Sometimes the training program is called a "practitioner" training program instead of a "professional" training program. What are we setting standards for? What are the qualities of good Feldenkrais Practitioners? There are not solid guidelines; we are in the middle of a process; maybe it is too early to put up standards; we keep on struggling with the contradictions.

Do we want to have the method as a profession? How do you recognize Feldenkrais as Feldenkrais? We are not just looking for standards for basic training alone. What are we doing during a training? how are the trainers used? the assistants? do trainees need to see series of lessons with a client? Some trainers and assistants are "professional" teachers and are not regularly practicing the work for the public; maybe we have to look at some of these things before finding standards. We need to see what is now working in training as there are some with good learning; evolution is happening.

## **Further Discussion and Action of Proposals from Reports:**

### **Recognition of Practitioner Experience Working Group Proposal for Recognition of Advanced Work**

Discussion of Draft proposal for Advanced Practitioner status - much concern is expressed about creating a new level of hierarchy in the community; one does not have to identified with such a title to be a good practitioner; this could be a disservice to practitioners who do not have this distinction; it is the quality of the practitioner that is important, not the title; one should not have advantage over other practitioners in their advertising and marketing of themselves. New practitioners are seeking out more experienced practitioners already; why do we need this?

It is pointed out that this is not to just make a new title; this give recognition; many practitioners have asked for such a recognition instead of going the way of becoming an assistant trainer or trainer; there should be recognition for experience in regular practice just as there is in the trainings. This is viewed more like as in Martial Arts - attainment of a level of skill and experience. The German Gilde representatives indicate this meets the need they have.

It is moved and seconded to adopt the Advanced Practitioner Guidelines. Motion fails, 4 years, 15 nays.

This working group will continue to meet to make recommendations next year. Guilds/Associations are encouraged to discuss this topic and the issues involved and submit concerns, ideas, needs, etc. to the coordinator of the group.

### **Feldenkrais Courses for Other Professionals Proposal**

Discussion - We would like to find a place to put these guidelines into activity; this seems to relate to how we conduct of our profession, our professional practice of the Method; it is recommended to put this in the IFF Code of Ethics.

It is moved and seconded to incorporate the proposed guidelines for Feldenkrais Courses for Other Professionals into the IFF Ethical guidelines. Adopted, 22 yeas , 2 nays, 4 abstentions.

## **Closing**

**Heidelberg European Conference: 1 - 5 June.** We want to have a strong presence there; talk with attendees about the IFF, etc.; they have invited us to have a table for IFF Materials and Information. François Combeau and Bonnie Humiston will be there.

**Comments to the Assembly by Michél Silice** - he spoke on two levels, in his name and that of his family. For the family: the concern of the family is more to protect the method and to increase the means to enlarge the method. For Michél: He thanks the German Gilde as hosts. He encourages ALL materials to be given to the IFF. He will not join the assembly for another three or four years because as an Honorary Member he is released from being involved in political problems.

Michél is appreciated by the Assembly for attending and for giving everyone the Ben-Gurion letter.

**Participants report what they will take home with them from this assembly:**

- reporting to the organisations' members
- show that the organisation responds to communication
- take initiative by themselves
- tell the others what been said here during the assembly
- excited about the work of the working groups
- arrived and departed with a lot of work
- go home with a feeling of enthusiasm
- have the feeling that there is a very deep feeling of togetherness and awareness of the problems
- working groups were much appreciated
- became more aware of the problems of other organisations
- impression that the work is functioning
- was very worth while
- a peaceful feeling; time to have communication, this has also to do in the way the congress was organized
- atmosphere and patience
- will write a report and give it to members
- a meeting on Thursday
- a nice, warm atmosphere, felt well in this atmosphere
- go home with a feeling of a strong enthusiasm

**1995 formal Assembly Meeting Adjourned at 6:00 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Bonnie Rich Humiston, Secretary