

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the
International Association of Theatre Critics,
Held in Vallabh Vidyanagar, India, on the 6th of January 2010**

1. Attendance

Those present: Yun-Cheol Kim (President), Michel Vaïs (General Secretary), Margareta Sörenson (Vice-president, Sweden), Ivan Medenica (Adjunct General Secretary, Serbia), Don Rubin (Canada), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland), Randy Gender (USA).

There is a quorum of five voting members.

Absences and excuses: Jean-Pierre Han (Vice-President, France), Irène Sadowska-Guillon (Treasurer), Kalina Stefanova (Director of colloquia), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Director of seminars for new critics, Portugal), Akiko Tachiki (Japan), Katayoun Hosseinzadeh Salmasi (Iran), Mark Brown (Great Britain).

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted unanimously.

Before the official part of the meeting, Don has given us some information about the national section of IATC in India. It is Mumbai-based; critics from other parts of the country are not acquainted with its activities. Don thinks that Ravi would like to use this opportunity to make the Indian section visible and to attract more critics to join it. Michel says that Indian colleagues that are interested in IATC should contact Deepa: this is what he is answering whenever he gets a demand for a membership from India. Michel adds that, upon our statute, there is a possibility to create another group within the Indian section if some colleagues don't feel comfortable to be a part of the existing one. Yun-Cheol proposes the ExCom to organise a meeting with Deepa and Indian colleagues in order to clarify the situation. He adds that he will use the fact that focus of this year annual meeting of Indian section of FIRT (the framework of our ExCom meeting) is put on theatre criticism to invite its members to join us as associated members.

3. Approval of Minutes of the ExCom meeting in Pilsen, September 2009

The minutes are adopted with no changes.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

5. Reports:

5.1. President

Yun-Cheol has already sent his written report to all ExCom members. He doesn't have anything to add. (See in annexes.)

5.2. General Secretary

Michel has sent his written report too. At the fair of congress tourism in Barcelona, he has been discussing with people from Avignon about a possible collaboration – to organize an ExCom meeting, a seminar or something similar, not necessarily during the festival; it could be organized during the year and in collaboration with another city from

the region, like Nice. A similar, “intercity event” could be done with Lille and Brussels. He informs us that Jean-Pierre is working on organizing an IATC meeting in France.

5.3. Treasurer

Irene has also sent a report, Michel presents it. We are in a healthy financial situation: our income is 900 euros smaller than last year, but we have fewer expenses as well. The reason for the smaller income is that 2009 was a year without a Congress and, in general, people wait for the Congress to pay the fee. We have less travel expenses covered from our budget. We have again the problem of a bad communication with Ireland. Don informs us that Nigeria is organizing a section, they hope they will be present in Yerevan. Yun-Cheol thinks that the reminders for the payment should be sent individually (to each national section), because it obliges more.

5.4 Other ExCom members

Margareta, Irene, Kalina, Jean-Pierre, Tomasz, Paulo, Mark and Ivan have sent their reports. (See annexes.) Margareta thinks that the ExCom should give an official support to Yun-Cheol’s reaction to the English complains about the Code of Practice. Unanimously accepted. Jean-Pierre published a short overview of our activities in French; Michel translated it orally in English. We are informed about the interest that exists in Algeria and Caen (France) to organize some project of IATC (Jean-Pierre is the editor of a theatre publication in Caen). Jean-Pierre has suggested to some directors of European theatre festivals to host IATC events. In Naples, there is still a possibility.

5.5 Critical Stages

Yun-Cheol informs us that *Critical Stages* have had some 7000 visitors for three months, which is a bigger success than he expected. They have already started to work on the second issue. There were some ideas for the improvement of the design of the journal. Yun-Cheol’s team is already working on these items. It was said that the members of the ExCom should animate and motivate members of their national sections to take part in the project, that is to write for *Critical Stages*. Michel underlines that the call for papers should include the fact that the texts should be new original material (only when a new issue appears you can publish elsewhere your article from the previous one). Ivan asks whether this is a rule: a text written for *Critical Stages* should not be published in another journal before the appearance of a new issue. Yun-Cheol says he will discuss and clarify this point with the members of the Editorial board.

6. Programme

6.1. Congresses in 2010 and 2012

The preparations for both Congresses are running just fine (Yerevan and Warsaw). The USA are still interested for the organisation of the Congress in 2012 or 2014, but not in Chicago. Yun-Cheol reminds us that if something goes wrong with Warsaw, China could always replace it. Don insists that the USA should think about a Congress in 2014, because Warsaw is in very serious preparations. Organisers from Yerevan asked for the number of participants expected; Michel thinks that there will be fewer delegates than in Bulgaria, approximately 70. We can’t have the final number before we receive the registration forms. They will not host for free individual members (this doesn’t include the two “Auditors”). If there are more than two participants per national section (countries which have a seat on the ExCom can send 2 delegates +1), the “extra ones” should pay for their expenses: \$100 per day for the room (or \$50 for a shared room), plus

\$30 a day for meals, but there will be no Congress fee. It will be free for honorary members and special guests (Thalia Prize laureate, Sofia Congress organizer Krasimira Filipova). All delegates, except the ExCom members, will be in shared rooms. Don informs us about the well known Armenian theatre scholar, Arby Ovanessian, who has been working with Brook and now lives in Paris. Don thinks Ovanessian could be invited to give a keynote speech. Yun-Cheol asks Michel to check about Ovanessian's reputation in Armenia before we decide to invite him.

6.2. Executive Committee Meetings

The last meeting of this ExCom will be in Yerevan (we are arriving one day before the others). In November, we should have a meeting in Tokyo. Yun-Cheol observes that it is a problem that we have such a weak quorum for the second time (same thing happened in Pilsen). Margareta thinks we have to stress that ExCom members should have sources to finance their trips. Michel asks who intends to be a candidate for a position as officer, or for a seat on the ExCom in the next Congress. Both Yun-Cheol and Michel intend to run again for their present positions; same with Tomasz, Ivan, Don (although if Canada is re-elected, the seat will go to Quebec this time). The USA will run for a seat on the ExCom with Jeffrey Jenkins as a delegate, although Randy would still be very active and replacing him whenever needed. Margareta says she still doesn't know who will represent Scandinavia in the ExCom. There is a plan to organise an ExCom meeting in Sweden in May 2011 and maybe a seminar for new critics at the same time (Paulo is already working on this seminar). The question of Iran as a member of ExCom has been raised: Kathy has problems with getting visas for different countries. There is a dilemma with the IATC's jury in Teheran as well, because Kathy told us that nobody could guarantee us a security. Margareta insists that we shouldn't go if there could be any security problems – it's a serious thing. The question of England was raised as well. Yun-Cheol asks if Mark could represent England when his position wasn't taken into consideration by the other English critics in the case of the Code of Practice. Don explains the situation in Great Britain: critics from London are not interested in international collaboration; the negative reactions to our activities are coming from them and positive reactions, from other parts of the country. We'll see who will represent Great Britain in Yerevan. It is stressed that this is an internal problem of the English section which has never been very active in IATC. Other national sections could be invited as well to be candidates for the ExCom. Ivan thinks that possible new members of ExCom should come from the group of countries which are already active in our projects, like Greece, Romania or China. Ivan explains the situation in Germany: our national section is part of a broader association of German art critics. He tried to contact the new president of this association, who had been elected at the beginning of 2009 and whose name is not on our list. Ivan will try to re-established communication with the Germans and to encourage Austrians to make their own national section. It would be good to have Russia back in the ExCom too: Nikolai proposes a new gathering in St. Petersburg, an ExCom meeting or something else.

6.3. New Critics' Seminars

In 2010 there will be more seminars than usually: May – Warsaw, June – Naples (not confirmed yet), September – Debrecen, October – Tbilisi, October – Seoul. Margareta asks if this is not a little bit too much; could we cover all these seminars with enough participants? Yun-Cheol stresses that the seminars for new critics are one of our most

important projects and that's why we should accept as many proposals as possible. Margareta says the problem is not who will moderate seminars but who will attend them – our profession is not big, there are not a lot of us. Don agrees with Margareta: there are 35 members in the English speaking section of IATC in Canada, but only 2 or 3 are possible candidates to travel to seminars of new critics around the world. Don asks whether we have any insight into the results of seminars – do we know what we want to achieve? Is this a training or an informal gathering of new critics, which is also not a bad option? Margareta asks whether we should change propositions and start inviting students as well: we could get more participants but the quality could decline. It was said that we should animate young critics to take part in the seminars. Randy thinks that detailed information about the festival which hosts the seminar could be a good incentive. Margareta thinks, from her big experience in organising these events, that the best animation is a concrete and elaborate theme of seminar. Michel adds that bilingual seminars have better chances to gather more people. Don asks what are the criteria for accepting proposals for seminars: we are not discussing working languages, themes, etc. Margareta and Yun-Cheol started a debate whether organisers of seminars should propose themes or it should stay our job. Yun-Cheol finishes this long debate on the new critics seminars by saying that he still thinks we should accept as many proposals as possible, that the choice of themes should be developed in collaboration with the organisers (the festival hosting a particular seminar) and that he will write to Paulo to ask him whether an adjunct will be of help to him. There are already proposals for 2011: May – Gävle (Sweden), June – Prague, September – Charleville-Mézières (France).

6. 4. Cultural Bridges/Established Critics' Meetings

There are a few invitations for 2010. First in April, in Craiova (Romania), with a focus on *Hamlet* (there are no fresh news from them; Yun-Cheol says he will write to Mr Boroghina). For October there are two invitations: Tbilisi and Maribor (Slovenia) – Maribor is ready to organise an ExCom at the same time, and Tbilisi a seminar for new critics. It was said that it wouldn't be realistic to have ExCom members on these two meetings, just a month before we are all supposed to go to Japan for the ExCom meeting. Don asks whether we are helping Tbilisi if we are organising two events at the same time. Ivan adds that our Slovenian national section deserves a strong support as well because it was recently formed and is already proposing a few events. Michel asks whether it would be the best solution to check with the organisers of these events whether one of them could be postponed for the next year.

6.5. Asian Forum

The Asian Forum will be held in Tokyo at the same time as the ExCom meeting.

6.6. Other proposals

None.

7. Relations with other organizations

Three important international theatre associations – ITI, ASSITEJ and FIRT – have supported our Code of Practice; Michel got a letter of support from the General Secretary of FIRT. Since we are already organizing a seminar for new critics in the context of a puppet festival in Charleville-Mézières, we could use this occasion to develop collaboration with UNIMA. Ivan informs us that the next World Congress of Pen centres will be in Belgrade, so we could organize some event in collaboration with them and use

this occasion to develop our relationships. Yun-Cheol thinks we should develop a further relationship with ASSITEJ: we could regularly organize seminars for new critics in the frame of their gatherings. Yun-Cheol informs us that the president of ITI would like to organize a meeting with presidents of all the international theatre associations.

8. Membership and Recruitment

Michel informs us that a colleague from Cameroon wants to become an individual member and Duška Radosavljević, from England, an associate member. Many countries have not paid their membership for the year 2009. He will send them reminders. Don insists on the formulation of the note about the payment: instead of a reminder warning that they won't get cards, we should send them a request, stating this is an "invoice" and the fee is "due". It is decided that a dues notice should be sent to each national section with the information about the dates of payment and their category (how much they should pay).

9. Thalia Prize

Michel presents the nominations. He received nominations from six countries: Poland, Japan, France, Bulgaria, Canada and Serbia. There are three nominations for Richard Schechner, two for Eugenio Barba and all others have got only one. Margareta complains that the procedure wasn't respected because there were no seconders. After a debate on this issue, it happens that in our regulations it isn't said that seconding is an obligatory procedure but a desirable one. Don argues that the procedure was respected and that we finished with good candidates. Margareta argues that there is another problem in the nominations: all nominees except one are from the western world, we don't have in mind the global context of the prize. Ivan develops two arguments: 1) the works of Schechner and Barba are the very essence of theatre multiculturalism, they gave an important contribution to our understanding of Asian theatre, 2) the national sections from Asia were not very active in the process of nominating candidates (only Japan did). Yun-Cheol explains that prof. Mori (a Japanese scholar, and their nominee) is an expert of Ibsen and Japanese theatre, and that he richly deserves the award if the Thalia Prize is an award for the theatre makers that contributed to the elaboration and promotion of Asian theatre traditions. Considering his influence over critical thinking, for which we give this prize, Yun-Cheol is not very assured whether he has really influenced critical thinking internationally. Don elaborates the nomination of Richard Schechner: he is both an artist and a scholar (critic), his international influence is enormous, he is deeply engaged in the multicultural approach to the art, and he has inaugurated a new science: performance studies. Don asks how it is possible to have Michel Vinaver on the list when he is a playwright. Michel reads Jean-Pierre's explanation in which it is stressed that Vinaver is writing on theatre as well. Tomasz elaborates the nomination of Eugenio Barba, stressing his big contribution in understanding the work of Grotowsky and we have been celebrating the jubilee of Grotowsky in 2009. After a debate, we have proceeded to voting: Barba got one vote and Schechner four. Schechner is thus the laureate of the Thalia prize in 2010. Randy proposes that if he can't come to the ceremony in Yerevan, we organize a video link.

10. Code of Practice

Yun-Cheol explains his own attitude in the “English case”, about a Code which ExCom has already approved (see 5.4). He thinks that all their remarks have already been included in the last draft of the Code and that is why he is against any further compromise. Yun-Cheol is not very happy with the way Ian Herbert responded because he was president of IATC when the discussions about the Code of practice had started. Don says he has read the whole correspondence on this issue and thinks there is only one problem with colleagues from England or, better said, London: they don’t think we, critics, are a part of the theatre profession and that is why we don’t have any obligations towards theatre. The source of the problem lays in the fact that the Code was based more on a practice of academic criticism than on a journalistic one. There were a few suggestions how to make a balance between those two approaches. At the end a decision was made that Don and Randy suggest a reformulation of just a few paragraphs based on a very specific conclusion that came out of our long and exhausting debate.

11. Theme of the colloquium at the Congress in Yerevan

There were five different proposals. Kalina’s initial proposal – about refugees and (on) the stage – wasn’t welcome by our Armenian hosts because they find it not very relevant for the local context. Other ideas: 1) criticism in small theatre communities (Michel), 2) the Code of practice (Margareta), 3) theatre and criticism as instruments of the transmission of memory (Irene), 4) femininity and theatre (Yun-Cheol). Yun-Cheol explains his proposal: we need a theme of a global interest and femininity is this kind of topic. He’s afraid that a theme connected to the Code of practice could make our misunderstandings even deeper. Concerning the Code of practice, Yun-Cheol adds he will write to the presidents of all national sections and ask for their preliminary support and then we’ll organize a voting at the Congress. Margareta withdraws her proposal. Ivan argues that Irene’s proposal is a very interesting and important one in the context of both contemporary society and history of theatre. Besides this, it is the closest one to Kalina’s initial theme and we should, Ivan argues, support Kalina’s proposal in some way, because the attitude of Armenian hosts to reject it is strange and annoying. Yun-Cheol explains that Kalina proposed her topic directly to the organisers before getting the approval from the ExCom, and that is procedurally problematic. Don supports Irene’s proposal as well. After the debate, we proceeded to voting: Irene’s proposal got two votes and Yun-Cheol’s three. The formulation of the theme for the Congress 2010 is: “Redefining Femininity in Today’s Theatre”. Ivan argues that on the last Congress there were pretty big differences in the quality of papers: that’s why we should have a chairman or chairwoman who will make a selection of abstracts. Ivan’s proposal was accepted and Margareta accepted to receive the abstracts for a first reading, then to send them to Yun-Cheol and Randy for advice. The abstracts should thus be sent to Margareta, the length of presentation is 15-20 minutes. Deadline for sending the abstracts is 30th of March. Deadline for answering the people sending abstracts: 15 April. Deadline for sending the final papers: 15th of May.

12. Book project

Don doesn’t have any news.

13. Any other business

Don comes back to the topic of *Critical stages*. After congratulating the whole Editorial board for the effort they made and results they achieved, Don gave a few critical remarks based on the evaluation made by his graduate students. The main remark is that it doesn't look like a real web journal, but more like a classical journal put on the web (it isn't appropriated to the web). Don's students think that interactive interviews and video clips should be added. Other remarks made by Don: there is no system in the summaries (some articles got a summary in the other language, other articles didn't); photos are not signed (we don't know what is on photos) and it's strange that photos of the Editorial board dominate; there are no subtitles; it's not clear how the texts are organised nor what the sections are, etc. Don complains that he hasn't been discussing any subject with Maria-Helena and that he has been receiving only e-mails with the deadlines. Randy argues that Maria-Helena had an enormous work and such a big responsibility; he proposes that each section has its own editor. Don asks why Randy's suggestion –the editorial board to get the whole journal a month before “publishing”– hasn't been realized: some details are requiring an insight into the whole issue. Don thinks that the first issue is a random collection of essays. Yun-Cheol finishes this discussion by saying that we have now a concrete issue and we can see what could be ameliorated. He asks the whole ExCom to help with advices, remarks and comments.

14. Date and place of next meeting

Yerevan, 15th of June 2010.

Vallabh Vidyanagar, 6th of January 2010

Michel Vaïs, Secretary General
Ivan Medenica, Adjunct Secretary General