

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the  
International Association of Theatre Critics,  
Held in Vallabh Vidyanagar, India, on the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 regrets: 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 meeting began, discussion took place about the operations of the Indian Section of IATC which will be present at the seminar but which is not actually acting as our hosts. Ravi Chaturvedi, the Indian organizer of these meetings, wants to see the Indian section more visible and active in the country. He feels that at the moment it tends to be Mumbai-based and rather exclusive. Ravi would like to see it with more members and more active. It was pointed out that in Canada and in Bulgaria there are more than one section. The same could happen in India if Ravi – or anyone else – wanted to set up another regional centre. Yun-Cheol will speak to Ravi and Deepa about this possibility.

**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 UK complaints 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 suggests 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. It was agreed to discuss this proposal with the Armenian hosts.

## **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 resources 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. It would appear from the correspondence that it was mostly the London-based reviewers who were disinterested in international collaboration. Positive reactions to the Code were coming from other parts of the country. It was agreed that who actually represents the UK at excom is an internal matter for the UK section to decide. 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. It was asked if 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 urged us to think of a new formulation for the Dues Notices: 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**

Nominations from Poland, Japan, France, Bulgaria, Canada and Serbia were announced by Michel. Margareta asked if the rules were being followed. She was under the impression that each nomination needed a seconder. It was explained that nominations with seconders would be given priority but that having a seconder was not a requirement. In fact, two of the nominees – Richard Schechner and Eugenio Barba – both were nominated by more than one country. It was agreed that those two nominations should be given priority in the final decision.

Margareta also asked if choosing either of these worthy candidates would not indicate a bias toward western countries. An enthusiastic discussion ensued about regional representation for the award as well as gender balance. It was agreed that neither of these things should be determinants for the award but excom needed to be aware of these things long term.

The nomination remarks for Schechner and Barba were read in full. It was agreed that both had made significant contributions internationally to theatre. After further discussion and a formal vote, it was agreed that the Thalia Award for 2010 should go to Richard Schechner. His fare to Yerevan and hotel costs will be paid. If he cannot come, it was suggested that perhaps a video link could be set up for his acceptance speech.

### **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. In the discussion that followed it was pointed out that the source of the problem might lie in the fact that the Code as it is drafted seems weighted more toward academic criticism than toward journalistic criticism. Some suggestions were made about ways to balance it just a tiny bit more. Two sentences were identified as possible places for small changes. Don and Randy agreed to work on the two sentences which excom could approve by e-mail.

### **11. Theme of the colloquium at the Congress in Yerevan**

Five proposals were made for possible themes in Yerevan.

- 1) Refugees on and off the stage
- 2) The Code of Practice
- 3) Criticism in smaller theatrical centres

- 4) Criticism as the transmission of memory
- 5) Femininity and theatre

Yun-Cheol urged us not to open the Code of Practice issue again in Yerevan and urged us to consider one of the others. A discussion followed. It was noted that proposal number one had already been discussed with the Armenian organizers and they were not comfortable with it. Of the remaining three proposals (numbers 3, 4 and 5) there was most agreement on “Femininity and Theatre” and next most support for “Criticism and Memory.” It was agreed that Femininity would be proposed to the organizers and hopefully they would support it. If not, Memory would be proposed. The formal title would be “Redefining Femininity in Today’s Theatre.”

A discussion ensued about the quality of the papers at the Sofia congress. Some were very good and others lacked depth. It was agreed that a chairperson was needed who would make preliminary decisions on which papers would be accepted. Yun-Cheol offered to be chair for English proposals; Margareta would chair for French-language proposals. They would work closely together. Papers should be 15-20 minutes. A deadline for proposals was set for March 30<sup>th</sup> with receipt of papers set for May 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **12. Book project**

No report.

## **13. Any other business**

The general subject of Critical Stages came up once more for discussion.

It was suggested that it still seems more like a print journal than a web journal. It was suggested that video clips and possibly even interactive elements be added. Other suggestions had to do with consistency in the summaries. Some articles had them while others didn’t. Photographs all need identifications and the journal’s various sections should be separated more clearly. Reviews should only be in a Review Section. Theme articles in a Theme section. Books in a book section. It was a bit difficult to follow the subjects in the present form.

It was suggested that Maria ask various people to assume responsibility for different sections to take some of the huge workload off her. Another suggestion was to let excom see the journal online a month before the publication date. That would enable people to make final suggestions and corrections.

Yun-Cheol thanked excom for its comments and pointed out that without Maria’s enormous commitment of time we would not have anything to improve.

All these ideas can be – and should be -- taken into account in future issues.

## **14. Date and place of next meeting**

Yerevan, 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2010.

Vallabh Vidyanagar, 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2010

Michel Vaïs, Secretary General

Ivan Medenica, Adjunct Secretary General