

XXIVth Congress of the International Association of Theatre Critics
Minutes of the 23rd General Assembly
Sofia, 18 April 2008, 10 am

1. Delegates present, eligibility

The General Secretary informed the Assembly that, according to the Treasurer's report, the IATC had presently 44 sections, of which 36 had paid their dues for 2008, plus 9 individual members. The quorum at this assembly was thus 19 section delegates (50% + 1). It was reached since 28 sections were represented in Sofia: 27 national sections and one regional section (the Carribean regional section). Two sections were composed of two groups, those of Bulgaria and Canada.

The General Secretary asked that the voting procedure be clarified for these sections composed of two associations. According to Article II.2.a, the two groups constitute together a "de facto National Association".

Bulgaria : Kalina Stefanova announced that, after an agreement between the two groups of Bulgarian critics, the delegate of the "Society" group would vote on behalf of the "Guild" group.

Canada : Don Rubin announced that he would represent both CTCA and AQCT, according to an agreement with AQCT president. However, he was invited to discuss with the AQCT delegate Brigitte Purkhardt, who was also present, and who had not received any specific instructions about the vote.

The following 28 national or regional sections, all in good order, were therefore officially represented, with a right of vote: Bulgaria, Canada, Carribeans, China, Chinese Taipei, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Great-Britain, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, USA.

The following persons were also present at the assembly, without a right of vote. Five individual members: Halima Tahan (Argentina), Irina Gogoberidzé (Georgia), Louise Ghirlando (Malta), Alja Predan (Slovenia), and Brent Meersman (South Africa). Two honorary members were also participating: John Elsom and Andrzej Zurowski, as well as observers from the host country, Bulgaria.

2. Opening of the assembly

The outgoing president, Ian Herbert, made a speech in which he thanked our Bulgarian hosts, with a brief account of his seven years of presidency at the IATC. Then, he invited Martha Coigney, from the USA, who addressed the General Assembly on behalf of the International Theatre Institute.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted, and is as appears below.

4. Adoption of the minutes of the Assembly General of 10 March 2006, held in Turin

This was adopted unanimously without alteration, proposed by Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Portugal), seconded by Lis Hellström Sveningson (Sweden).

5. Report of the General Secretary

Michel Vaïs' report is in Annexe A.

6. Report of the Treasurer

6.1 Irène Sadowska-Guillon presented her report, which is in Annexe B.

6.2 The two auditors, Irina Gogoberidzé and Halima Tahan, presented their report, confirming that the finances of IATC were in good order. After examining the supporting papers, they agreed that they approved the treasurer's report. Their own report was given in paper format to the Secretary General.

On a proposal from Ivan Medenica (Serbia), seconded by Larry deVine (USA), the assembly adopted unanimously these reports, and expressed its thanks to Irène and to the two auditors.

7. Reports of the directors of seminars and cultural bridges

Margareta Sörenson gave her report, which appears at Annexe C.

Two more seminars are being prepared in 2008, in Wiesbaden (Germany) in June and in Jonquièrre (Québec, Canada) in September; and two seminars in 2009: one in Romania in March and one in Amsterdam (Netherlands) in June.

Kalina Stefanova gave her report on cultural bridges. All the symposia since the previous general assembly were mentioned in the General Secretary's report: in Tokyo, Novi Sad, St Petersburg, Thessalonikhi (twice), Santiago, Beijing, not counting the Congress in Sofia.

8. Web Site

Ivan Medenica said he had commissioned the design of a new web site, on behalf of the Excom, and that this site would soon be ready to be placed on the IATC address.

9. Publications (including the journals exchange network)

Yun-Cheol Kim said he was disappointed. Some journals had not renewed their content on the site for a long time. The proceedings of the Seoul Congress arrived in Sofia, in both languages, one volume in French and one in English. The proceedings of the Novi Sad symposium had also arrived in Sofia. Ivan Medenica distributed copies, published in our two official languages.

Peng Tao, from China, announced that the proceedings of the Beijing symposium would be available soon.

Concerning the book project, Don Rubin announced that it consisted of publishing four books within the next five or six years, or more. One would be about the "theatre commentary", one about the history of theatre criticism, one about pedagogy, one about theory, finally, one book would be an anthology of theatre criticism. (The working group includes Sanja Nikcevic, Maria Helena Serôdio, Andrzej Zurowski and Don Rubin.) Beginning of work at Fall 2008, in Toronto.

Lucia Van Heteren proposed the composition of this working group, seconded by Paulo Eduardo Carvalho. Adopted unanimously.

10. Code of ethics

It was distributed to everybody present, in the two languages. Several members discussed the document, which was described as a work in progress. All those interested were invited to send any comments to the general secretariat, either to Michel or to Ivan. The Excom would then decide what to do with this text.

11. Proposals for future events

11.1 Next congresses

Larry DeVine introduced Jonathan Abarbanel, who had participated in the Lisbon Congress in 1990, and announced that he was working at organizing the next IATC Congress in Chicago, for the end of September/beginning of October, 2010. With about 25% of the necessary funding collected to date, Jonathan was hopeful that the total budget would be assured within one year.

Others: Tomasz Milkowski announced the preparation of a proposal for an IATC congress which could take place in Warsaw in 2012, in the framework of the cultural season organized within the Eurogames. Before this event, he announced the possibility of an Excom in Warsaw at the beginning of April 2009, in order to prepare for this congress. Ian reminded us that the organizers of the Europe Prize were also always ready to invite the IATC for an Excom or a congress. To this effect, the next editions of the Europe Prize will be two days longer, to make it possible for the IATC to organize a symposium. This will be subject to approval by the city which will host the next Prize.

11.2. Seminars for new critics and symposiums for established critics

Margareta Sörenson had already announced the seminars to come in 2008. Juan Antonio Hormigón announced that there would be a seminar for new critics in Santiago-de-Compostela and that the Spanish section intended to organize one every year.

Don Rubin reminded the assembly that in Toronto/Stratford/Niagara, in October 2008, the symposium would discuss the “theatrical commentary”: a historical analysis of our art, for the English speaking world, for the French and the Spanish speaking worlds, as well as for Central Europe and Asia.

Juan Antonio announced a symposium for established critics in 2009 (Spring or Fall), essentially about Latin America.

Lucia Van Heteren proposed a symposium in Amsterdam in June 2009, about the situation of critics and theatre companies in different contexts.

Paulo Eduardo Carvalho proposed, again in Almada (Portugal), a one-day symposium for 10 or 12 critics between 4-18 July 2008.

Sanja Nikcevic proposed a discussion on the pedagogy of criticism, which could take place during a symposium for established critics at the end of 2009 on this subject, in Croatia or somewhere else. She suggested that all those interested send invitations as soon as possible.

Ivan Medenica reminded that the next Sterijino pozorje symposium in Novi Sad (Serbia) would take place in May/June 2009. This time, it would be chaired by Dragan Klaić and the theme would be “The Future of International Theatre Festivals”.

Ian Herbert added that he would chair the Shakespeare Theatre Festival in Craiova (Romania), from 1st-10 May 2008, and that there would be a seminar for students in theatre criticism.

Andrzej Zurowski announced a symposium in Gdansk (Poland), during the first part of August 2009.

Savas Patsalidis announced that, during the Festival of the International Theatre Institute which was due to take place in Greece (13-19 May 2008), there would be a symposium to which he would try to get some IATC members invited to participate.

11.3. Excom meetings

Don Rubin and the CTCA invited the Excom in Toronto/Stratford/Niagara, from 6-13 October 2008.

11.4. Thalia Prize

Should the criteria be changed? Or the definition of the prize? Margareta Sörenson proposed that the Excom be open to new theatrical practices, to a participation of women, and clarify the rules of attribution of the prize.

Point of order: Deepa Punjani made it clear that she was not the chairperson of the Indian section of IATC, but that for the moment, she was in charge of international communications for the Indian section. The presidency would be decided by a vote soon, within the Indian section.

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Comfort break.

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Back to the General Assembly

12. Election for presidency

John Elsom, honorary president, was invited to chair the elections. He reviewed the regulations, which were adopted at the end of his own mandate as president in Montevideo, in 1994.

Yun-Cheol Kim was proposed for president by Ian Herbert (Great Britain), seconded by Don Rubin (Canada). Since no other candidacy was announced, Yun-Cheol Kim was elected unanimously. He addressed the Assembly and thanked the participants. (See his speech at Annexe D.)

12. Election for secretary general

Michel Vaïs was proposed by Larry deVine (USA), seconded by Tomasz Milkowski (Poland). No other candidacy being announced, Michel Vaïs was reelected unanimously, for a fifth mandate. He thanked the Assembly for their support.

13. Election for the Executive Committee

The following 14 sections were proposed and candidate for one of the ten seats on the Executive Committee. Each delegate was invited to explain briefly his or her intentions as an elected member of Excom. (Between parentheses are the results obtained after the vote.):

Canada/Québec (25)

Chinese Taipei (9 *Not elected*)
France (21)
Great Britain (19)
Iran (17)
Italy (14 *Not elected*)
Japan (20)
Poland (16)
Portugal (22)
Romania (14 *Not elected*)
Serbia (19)
Spain (12 *Not elected*)
Sweden (24)
USA (27)

14. Election of auditors

Irina Gogoberidzé and Louise Ghirlando were proposed by Sanja Nikcevic (Croatia), seconded by Travis Weekes (Caribbeans). Both were elected unopposed.

Yun-Cheol proposed Ian Herbert as honorary president. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Closing of Assembly

The agenda having been completed and there being no other business, the honorary president, John Elsom officially declared the assembly general closed at 15.15 pm.

Michel Vaïs
General Secretary