

Report of the XXIst World Congress of the IATC, which took place in Bucharest

XXI Congress of the International Association of Theatre Critics

Minutes of the General Assembly
Bucharest, 5 November 2003, 9am

1. Verification of those present

The following 20 national sections, being up to date with their subscriptions, were officially represented, with the right to vote: Bulgaria, Canada (AQCT and CTCA), China (Hong Kong), Czech Republic, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United States. The delegates from Japan and Russia, who were present for part of the congress, had had to leave before this meeting.

The sections of Belgium, Cuba, Iran, Macedonia and Norway were eligible, but not represented. A number of individual members of the association were also present as observers.

2. Opening of the Assembly

Before giving his address, the outgoing President of the Association, Ian Herbert, asked the assembly to stand for a minute's silence in memory of Tatiana Proskournikova, for many years delegate for the Russian section, and previously for the Soviet Union. He then made the proposal on behalf of the Executive Committee that the status of Honorary Vice President be accorded to Andrzej Zurowski (Poland) and Soila Lehtonen (Finland), in respect of the exceptional service they had performed for the Association. The motion was carried unanimously.

The President then mentioned some of his activities over the past two years: he took part in the Congress of the International Theatre Institute, for the first time in his role as President of IATC. He had also taken part in a festival of classic theatre in Rzeszow, in Poland, in the Sterijino pozorje colloquium in Novi Sad (where he had helped to relaunch the Serbian section), in the Havana International Theatre Festival, in a colloquium in Riga, Latvia, on Postmodernism and Theatre, and in a meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, with representatives of the cinema critics' body FIPRESCI.

His hope for the future was to further enlarge the membership of IATC, to increase links with sister bodies in theatre and with those representing critics in other art forms, following an example being set by the US section ATCA. He pointed out that IATC would celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2006 and hoped that we would be able to mark this with some ceremony.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted and is as it appears below.

4. Adoption of the minutes of the Assembly General of 31 May 2001, held in Montreal

These minutes were adopted without change, proposed by Hervé Guay (Quebec/Canada), seconded by Tish Dace (USA).

5. General Secretary's Report

Michel Vaïs as Secretary General recalled that his report had already been sent to all delegates by e-mail. In it he summarised the activities of the Association – seminars, ExCom meetings, colloquia, participation in juries, cultural bridges, etc. – since the previous Congress. He also referred to recruitment, to the support received from partner organisations, and to communications. The report appears as an appendix to these minutes.

6. Treasurer's Report

6.1. Irène Sadowska-Guillon presented her report on the state of the Association's finances since the Montreal Congress. She noted that the balance in hand of 9 569,76 € in May 2001 had increased to 12 725 € on 21 September 2003. The financial situation was therefore healthy. Our funds come almost entirely from subscriptions from national sections and individual members. Annual subscription income is around 3 500 €, but delays in payment affect the stability of our funds. The fact that we no longer ask for subscriptions in Dollars, preferring instead the Euro, has saved money on foreign exchange costs. Finally, the subsidiary account for Publications and Website, fed by the royalties paid by Routledge on the publication *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* which had been donated to the Association by John Elsom amounted to 196.60 € in 2002 and 157.50 € in 2003. Recurring expenses had remained at about the same level. The banking costs of exchange and commission were significant, (80 € in 2002, 74 € in 2003), and should always be carried by the section sending the money. This report was adopted unanimously on the proposal of Ian Herbert, seconded by Michel Vaïs, and the Assembly offered a vote of thanks to Irène.

6.2. Auditors' Report : in the absence of Carola Oyarzún, Georges Schlocker delivered his report alone. Having examined the relevant documents he declared himself satisfied with the Treasurer's Report. At the request of Juan Antonio Hormigón, of the Spanish section, the General Secretary reads out the list of sections, with the number of members in each section, as supplied by the treasurer. It was agreed that this list should be included in the minutes of the Assembly and it appears below. (Note: names marked with an asterisk are those of sections which were not in good standing at the time of the Assembly.)

Belgium: 20/30
Bulgaria: 20
Canada: 35
Canada (Quebec): 25
China (Hong Kong): 50
Cuba: 15
Croatia*: 43
Czech Republic: 39
Denmark: 25
Estonia*: 20
Finland: 100
France: 150
Germany*: 60
Great Britain: 100
Greece: 40
Iceland : 5
Ireland: 20
Iran: 20/40
Italy*: 100
Japan: 37
Korea: 17
Mexico*: 20
Macedonia: 15
Moldova: 16
Netherlands*: 70
Norway: 50
Poland: 55
Portugal: 17
Russia: 40
Romania: 100
Serbia: 17
Slovenia*: 34
Slovakia: 45
Spain: 50
Sweden: 154

Turkey: 48
Ukraine: 51
Uruguay: 22
USA: 300

7. Report of the Director of Training Seminars

Margareta Sörenson, who took over the post from Maria Helena Serôdio a year earlier, recalled that the seminars planned for 2003 had been postponed for various reasons, so that there had been no seminar since the one in Almada (Portugal) in July 2002. If the present difficulties continued, it might be necessary to look at shorter seminars in future, or ones with fewer participants, or in specialised areas, and perhaps even paid for by the participants. In spite of this, there were a number of promising future proposals in the air, which will be elaborated in point 10.2.

8. Cultural Bridges

Kalina Stefanova recalled the objective she had set herself in taking on this kind of activity – to create bridges between areas which were normally kept apart. The first meeting, in Singapore, involved an encounter between artists and critics; subsequently, in Varna, there had been a meeting of former participants in IATC seminars. In Sofia, at the end of October 2003, the senior officers of IATC had met their opposite numbers in the Fédération internationale de la presse cinématographique (FIPRESCI). She hoped that joint initiatives would result in the future from this meeting. Finally, Kalina spoke of various possibilities for cultural bridges in 2004, one in Norway and one in Cape Town.

9. Publications / website

The President reminded delegates of the Hungarian website publication, European Review, organisers of an electronic cultural bridge, whose address appears on the IATC website. He also gave an address where delegates could look at the proposed new design for the IATC website, by Naglaa Rego:

www.davinastudios.com/iatcsite/aict.htm. Finally, it was proposed that the IATC website should carry links to members' publications, such as: www.adeteatro.com, www.revuejeu.org and www.theatrecord.com, as well as sites of sister organisations and other useful theatre and criticism sites.

10. Proposals for future activities

10.1. Next Congress

Juan Antonio Hormigón (Spain) said that there were possibilities to organise the next congress in Spain, but that nothing had yet been signed. Kalina Stefanova (Bulgaria) explained that there is also a strong possibility to hold a congress in Bulgaria, but that in view of the closeness geographically of her country to Romania, Bulgaria could change their proposal, perhaps to organise an event in preparation for the 50th anniversary celebration in 2006, if Spain were to receive rapid confirmation of their possibilities. Georges Banu (France) proposed that we note the two proposals, and leave the decision to ExCom in Spring 2004, since neither proposal is accompanied by a 100%, signed invitation. This proposal was carried unanimously.

Yun-Cheol Kim (Korea) proposed to organise an extraordinary congress in Seoul to mark IATC's 50th anniversary in 2006. Ian Herbert added that there was the possibility of working with other organisations close to our own, who would also be celebrating their anniversary at the same time. He also noted that the Hong Kong section was exploring the possibility of hosting a congress at some future date. Perhaps this section could join with Korea in 2006?

10.2. Proposals for Young Critics' Seminars (in chronological order)

1. Mark Fisher (Great Britain) suggested a seminar in connection with the Children's Theatre

Festival in Edinburgh, in May 2004 or 2005. He also mentioned the possibility of a seminar in conjunction with the Edinburgh International Festival, in August 2006, to celebrate the IATC 50th anniversary.

2. Saïd En Naji (individual member, Morocco) proposed a seminar in Morocco for July 2004.

3. Margareta Sörenson (Sweden): seminar in Gothenburg, August 2004;

4. Ludmila Patlanjoglu (Romania): seminar in Mangalia, August 2004.

5. Andrea Tompa, individual member, Hungary (whose national section is due for recognition at the next ExCom): seminar in August, 2004 in Pecs, or July 2005 in Szeged.

6. Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Portugal): seminar in Porto, December 2004.

7. Ivan Medenica (Serbia): seminar in Novi Sad in association with the Sterijino pozorje Festival, May 2005.

8. Georges Banu (France): seminar in Limoges, at the Festival des francophonies, 20–25 September 2005, one week for 10–12 persons.

9. Finally, Hervé Guay proposed a seminar in Montreal for the 15th Congress of ASSITEJ, September 2005, 20 persons (with the possibility of paying the transport costs for three students from Latin America or Africa).

10.3. ExCom Meetings

Before leaving Bucharest, Nikolai Pesochinsky (Russia) left two written propositions:

1. 26–30 March 2004, Moscow, at the invitation of the Golden Mask Festival.
2. 5–15 October 2004, St Petersburg, at the invitation of the Baltic House Festival.
3. Kalina Stefanova (Bulgaria) offered to invite ExCom to Bulgaria in either Spring or Autumn 2004.
4. Selda Ondül (Turkey) proposed to invite ExCom to Bursa, near Istanbul, in October 2004 or 2005.
5. Irina Gogobéridzé (individual member, Georgia) had sent a proposal for the beginning of December 2004 in Tbilisi, on the re-opening of the Rustaveli Theatre; (although she is an individual member, this might be the opportunity to relaunch a Georgian Section).
6. Hervé Guay (Quebec/Canada) passed on a proposal from the English section of Canadian critics to host an ExCom during the Magnetic North Festival, in Ottawa, held in partnership with the National Arts Centre, in June 2005. He also proposed, in the name of the Quebec section, to hold an ExCom meeting at the same time as the seminar for young critics at ASSITEJ, in Montréal, September 2005.

All these proposals would be examined by the incoming Executive committee.

10.4. Colloquia, Meetings of Experienced Critics, etc.

Apart from the Cultural Bridges, (Item 8), the following proposals were made:

1. Tomasz Milkowski (Poland) proposed a meeting for twenty experienced critics in Sopot, Poland, in June 2005, on the topic of Theatre and Television.
2. Ivan Medenica (Serbia) proposed a further colloquium in Novi Sad with Sterijino pozorje in June 2005.
3. Nikolai Pesochinsky (Russia) had included in his letter a proposal for a colloquium somewhere in Russia in 2005, at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture.

11. Other Business

Andrzej Zurowski (Poland) reminded congress that IATC members are still invited to recommend productions for the Gdansk Shakespeare Festival, the most important Shakespeare festival in continental Europe, for which IATC is an official partner organisation. All suggestions should be sent to andrzej-zurowski@wp.pl.

12. Modifications to Statutes

The following proposals were brought forward by the Executive Committee (changes underlined):

Article II.2

... at least ten members, or five members in the case of a country having a population of less than one million inhabitants.

Article II.2.b

... at least ten theatre critics — or five, in the case of a country having a population of less than one million inhabitants —.

The Executive Committee also suggests that these new national sections (from countries with less than one million population) should each have the right to send one delegate rather than two to Congress, although each section would still have the right to one vote.

Article II.2.a

After 'comprising critics', to add 'theoreticians and researchers' of various disciplines.

All these modifications were proposed by Georges Banu (France), seconded by Tish Dace (USA) and adopted unanimously.

13. Election of President

Ian Herbert was proposed by Tish Dace (USA), seconded by Georges Banu (France). In the absence of any other candidate, Ian was unanimously elected unopposed.

14. Election of General Secretary

Ian Hill (Ireland), seconded by Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Portugal), proposed Michel Vaïs. He was unanimously elected, unopposed.

15. Election of Executive Committee

The following eleven countries were proposed and accepted candidature for one of the ten seats on the Executive Committee. (Votes obtained in the voting of delegates appear in brackets):

Bulgaria (17)

Canada/Quebec (11)

France (18)

Korea (20)

Poland (14)

Portugal (18)

Russia (20)

Romania (19)

Spain (17)

Sweden (18)

USA(18)

Canada/Quebec, having the least votes, was eliminated. The Executive Committee therefore consists of representatives of the following ten countries: Bulgaria, France, Korea, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the USA.

16. Election of Auditors

Georges Schlocker, (individual member, Switzerland), was proposed by Tish Dace, seconded by Yun-Cheol Kim. Halima Tahan, (individual member, Argentina) was proposed by Georges Banu, seconded by Hervé Guay. Both were elected unopposed.

17. Conclusion of the Assembly

The agenda having been completed, the President, Ian Herbert, officially closed the General Assembly at 1.20pm.

Michel Vaïs

General Secretary