

THE 25th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) was held recently in Munich, Germany from May 23 to May 29, 1993. This world congress of ITI sits once in every two years. The next one is likely to be held in Mexico in 1995.

ITI was established in the year 1948 under the auspices of UNICEF and currently 87 countries are enlisted as members of this international forum. This year a 6-member Bangladesh delegation led by Professor Kabir Chowdhury participated in the congress. The delegation included Ramendu Majumdar, Ataur Rahman, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Mofidul Hoque and Debprasad Debnath. It is a matter of great pride that Bangladesh was elected in the 14-member executive committee of ITI securing the highest number of votes jointly with Korea. It is also a matter of great achievement that Ramendu Majumdar who represents Bangladesh in the Executive Committee of ITI as the Secretary General of ITI Bangladesh Centre was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of ITI by the vote of the members of the executive committee. A big surprise came when Ataur Rahman, member of the Bangladesh delegation was elected as the President of the Board of "New Theatre Committee", one of the permanent committees of ITI. Both of them are renowned theatre personalities of Bangladesh.

Ramendu Majumdar initiated the formation of ITI in Bangladesh through his international contacts. He is also one of the pioneers who created Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, a federate body of different theatre groups of Bangladesh and became its first chairman. Ataur Rahman, on the other hand, has displayed a rare understanding of the craft of theatre. He has demonstrated great skill not only as a stage actor but also as a director, playwright and critic. In fact he has excelled as theatre director and at present he is one of the very few imaginative directors in the country. He is the former chairman of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and is holding the post of General Secretary of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya, a pioneer theatre group of the country. He is also the secretary in charge of International Affairs, ITI, Bangladesh Centre.

Here Ataur Rahman in an exclusive interview expresses his views about the 25th World Congress of ITI held in Munich, Germany where Bangladesh achieved a great deal in the field of theatre.

Sajedul Awwal (SA): First, on behalf of the theatre practitioners of Bangladesh, let me congratulate you for becoming the President of ITI's "New Theatre Committee".

How did you gain this status? Through election or selection?

Ataur Rahman (AR): Thank you Sajedul Awwal for the feeling you have expressed towards me. Actually whatever has been achieved by me as an individual, or Bangladesh as a whole, I would like to give the entire

Bangladesh Plays its Part in ITI

ATAUR RAHMAN Interviewed by Sajedul Awwal

credit for to the height that has been achieved by the present-day Bangladesh theatre due to the undaunted spirit and untiring efforts of the theatre practitioner of the country. In the year 1991 and 1992, two successive years, Bangladesh theatre scene was exposed to foreign theatre expert when they met in Dhaka to participate in international seminars titled "Theatre Journals in Asia: Cooperation through Communication" (1991) and "Impact of International Interaction in Contemporary Theatre (1992)". The foreign experts returned home with good feeling about Bangladesh practice in Bangladesh. Their feelings may be summarized this way — Bangladesh theatre although poor in its attire, nevertheless, it has a soul which is dedicated towards a meaningful theatre. In his inaugural speech the President of German ITI Centre on the opening day of 25th World Congress, categorically mentioned that Bangladesh although poor as a country but is rich in culture and the developed countries of the world may have something to learn from Bangladesh.

In the opening session of the "New Theatre Committee" of ITI I tried to deliberate on the concept of new and old. I said that in the field of theatre what we propagate to be new may not be all that new and same goes for the old. I further said that if we

end of the workshop during the World Congress, I expressed my reservation towards such formal workshop presentations. I said that these kinds of international workshops are more important for the interaction amongst the young people of different cultures so that they can break the barrier of inhibition and the artificial armour they may have put around them, and could be united as true human beings instead of putting up formal shows. All these things possibly helped me to get in to the Board of "New Theatre Committee" of ITI. To my surprise immediate past President of the "New Theatre Committee" submitted my nomination in the Board almost without asking me and I was elected in the 6-member Board unanimously. Subsequently, on the insistence of US and German representatives in the "New Theatre Committee" I was unanimously made the President of this committee for a term of two years. Isabel Quintanar of Mexico and Philip Arnault of USA were elected as Vice-Presidents while Cesar Herrera of Uruguay was elected as Secretary, Gunther Beclitz of Germany and Christian Haller of Switzerland were elected as Members while Damian Popchrislov of Bulgaria Vesa Tapio Valo of Finland and Melina Sardi of Greece were elected as Corresponding Members.



At the 25th World Congress of ITI at Munich: (L to R) Debprasad Debnath, Ataur Rahman, Ramendu Majumdar, Nasiruddin Yusuf and Mofidul Haq.

try to do something new in the field of arts vis-a-vis theatre, it should come from within as a matter of creative flare and impulse but we should not try to do something new for the sake of new only or put up something new in order to sell the product, in this case the creative work. Any deliberate attempt to do something new in the field of performing art is usually boring and tiresome.

"New Theatre Committee" of ITI is in charge of organising international theatre-workshop of the young theatre practitioners all over the world and the participants as a matter of practice put up performances at the

SA: What is the structure of ITI Central Executive Committee?

AR: ITI has an executive committee comprising of 14-member — country is represented by an individual from the respective member-country. The Excom is elected for a term of two years. It is headed by President with 2 Vice-Presidents and 11-members. There is a Secretary General who is not elected but employed by ITI on 4-year contract. ITI's entire activities are manifested through eight permanent committees, playwrights committee, dance committee, music, theatre

committee, dramatic theatre committee, theatre education committee, communications committee, new theatre committee and committee for cultural identity and development.

Each of the committees has a Board comprising of maximum 10-members elected for a 2-year term.

SA: Where are the members of ITI Bangladesh placed in this structure? Was that also achieved through election?

AR: As already mentioned, Bangladesh was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of Excom (Prime-committee) represented by Ramendu Majumdar. Then, I was elected in the Board of "New Theatre Committee" as President. Ramendu Majumdar, apart from being elected as the Vice-President of Excom, also was elected in the Board of "Communication Committee" as Vice-President. Nasiruddin Yusuf was elected as Board-member of "Committee for Cultural Identity & Development". Mofidul Hoque was co-opted as Board-member of "Communication Committee". Bangladesh could have possibly more places in other five committees as well had those been represented by our delegation members.

SA: What is your reaction after gaining this impressive position within the permanent body ("New Theatre Committee") of ITI?

AR: I was first surprised and quite naturally became happy later on, as most probably I am the first Asian to have entered in the Board of "New Theatre Committee".

SA: As far as we know, only the theatre professionals usually become the members of ITI. Why is Bangladesh treated differently in this regard?

AR: There is always an exception to the rule. Bangladeshi theatre practitioners are not professionals in the strict sense of the term as they are not being able to earn their livelihood out of theatre. Yet, in Bangladesh, theatre practitioners are involved in this performing medium with professional zeal and commitment. That is why Bangladesh received special consideration to have become the full-fledged member of ITI.

SA: You are already the General Secretary of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya and Secretary for International Affairs of ITI, Bangladesh Centre and now you have become the President of a permanent committee of ITI Central. You have a lot to do internationally it seems. Would you please explain some of your responsibilities in this regard?

AR: Most important of all, I am a busy theatre director involved in directing plays for other theatre groups of the country apart from my own group. In our country, a person has to be involved in multifarious activities not by choice but under compulsion as we live in a non-professional and non-ex-



Ataur Rahman pertains society. This contra-characteristic of our society has made us unusually courageous and as such we are not afraid of anything. I think I will be able to bring in new life to "New Theatre Committee" of ITI by organising more international theatre workshops, seminar and meeting affording theatre practitioners of different countries and culture to exchange views and interact freely. My attitude in this regard might appear to be ignorantly blissful but I cannot help it.

SA: Given your involvement with both ITI and Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation (as special honourable member), will there be any conflict of interest? Please elucidate.

AR: International Theatre Institute is an organisation of individuals whereas Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation is a federate body of different practicing theatre groups of the country. The membership of ITI to an individual is given when he fulfils certain criteria relating to ITI activities, specially in terms of contributions towards respective fields of interest.

Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation membership is given to a practicing theatre group after the group fulfils certain requirements towards stage activities. Both the organisations work for the cause of theatre and its development. May be the modus operandi is different and area of activities is varying but the goal is the same. So, there is no conflict of interest likely to take place as far as I can guess. Moreover, one is international assignment which is ITI's and the other is national responsibility. I shall have to make time for both.

SA: We know that in keeping with the nature of the central ITI committees, there should also be eight permanent bodies in each ITI local chapter. What is the situation in Bangladesh in this respect?

AR: There is no hard and fast rule in this respect. Well, if there are corresponding local committees keeping in the line of central ITI, it will be a matter of appreciation. For example ITI, Bangladesh Centre has already established a local body of "Committee for Cultural Identity and Development". In future we may have local body of both "Communication Committee" and "New Theatre Committee" as Bangladesh is represented in the Board of these three committees. It all depends, in what way we would

like to further the activities of these committee.

SA: What are your plans for the "New Theatre Committee"?

AR: Apart from participating in the Board meeting and other events of "New Theatre Committee" as per the proposed agenda drawn at the 25th World Congress held in Munich this year, we have a plan for Bangladesh. At the end of this year and in the first half of the next year, I would like to be in Mexico and Uruguay to attend "New Theatre Committee" activities. In January 1995 we hope to organise an international theatre workshop, atleast for the SAARC countries, in Dhaka when the Board meetings of "Communication Committee", "Committee for Cultural Identity and Development" and "New Theatre Committee" alongwith an international seminar and theatre festival will also be held in Dhaka.

SA: Are you getting any help from the State with regard to the work of ITI? Or are you raising any vital issue?

AR: Not as yet. We will first try to let the State know what is ITI, which the Government either do not know or do not like to know as 'theatre' has not been a palatable commodity to the establishment. After having done the elementary task, we might consider to raise important issues with the government.

SA: We know that in many countries the state provides subsidies for promoting theatre. How would you draw the attention of the Bangladesh Government in this context?

AR: We have been failing to draw the attention of the Government for last 20 years in spite of the fact that we could draw the attention of international theatre experts and national, people think that our theatre is the brightest of all performing media developed after the independence of Bangladesh. As I have hinted, it only seems possible to draw the attention of the Government by mortgaging our soul, the way Dr Faust had mortgaged his soul to Lucifer.

SA: My last question — in order to ensure sustainable development in the arena of theatre it is high time to see the start of professionalism in theatre. If at least a core group of activists would work as full timers, it would be a powerful first step. What is your vision in this regard?

AR: I agree with you, in our society high time does not fly away. If we cannot utilise it, we shall try to keep the 'high time' going for some more time. You see, in spite of all our efforts we have miserably failed to have an acceptable stage in Dhaka. Nobody came forward as yet with a helping hand. Is there nobody in the country who can help us? Or is government the last resort to look forward to? We work in sub-human condition and our audience share our miseries. Let us first have a respectable stage, then we will think of other things. Yes, it will be difficult to sustain theatrical activities if the time is further prolonged unless professionalism emerges in the field.

The interviewer is a playwright and drama critic.

A Tome in Aid of Development Workers

BOOK REVIEW

Directory of Communication Materials of Development NGOs/Other Development Organizations Working in Bangladesh

Prepared and published by Village Education Resource Centre and Pact-Bangladesh, Dhaka.

Price: Tk 250, US\$20

Reviewed by Kawsar Hussain

WHATEVER may be one's arguments in favour of or against the non-government organizations engaged in development activities, these organizations or NGOs are an undeniable reality in the present-day LDCs like our impoverished motherland. At present, a large number of NGOs, local and international, are operating in Bangladesh, covering a wide range of development activities. They work independently to materialise their purpose and objectives and reach their respective goals. Keeping in mind the important role they can play in the development of our country and the well-being of our people, we can hardly over-emphasize the need of a concerted and coordinated approach to the operations of these organizations in their respective fields.

Though this has been a long-felt need, not much has so far been done in this connection. However, we have recently seen the publication of a Directory which can be said to be a positive step to fulfilling this need. This Directory, with a rather longish title, *Directory of Communication Materials of Development NGOs/Other Development Organizations Working in Bangladesh*, evidently originated from a desire to help development workers of various organizations.

As a part of their programmes, the development NGOs and other development organizations develop and publish a good number of communication materials every year with a view to catering to the needs of their own specific programmes, and also to the needs of their staff and client-partners. These materials can also be used as information materials by other organizations, non-government and government agencies, the general public and various target-groups. These materials may also be very valuable for, among others, the planners and policy-makers. The Directory is an attempt to bring all these diverse materials under study, and has listed them for the purpose of ready reference.

Only the first volume of the proposed two-volume Directory has by now come out, and the publishers say they are working on the second volume. The objectives of the Directory, as stated in the 'Introduction', are to provide support to manifold development activities of various organizations, avoid duplication of similar materials and thus save time, cost, energy, share expertise and skills in various fields in producing needed communication materials and, eventually, set up a Communication Materials Resource Library which will cater to the needs of all concerned.

And the very first volume has amply proved that it can achieve its objectives. Bi-lingual in nature, the Directory's first volume presents all sorts of information about as much as 39 leading NGOs and other development agencies in both Bangla and English, making it easily accessible for almost everyone interested in the workings of these organizations. This volume provides its users with the information about various types of development support communication materials (from books to leaflets to posters and stickers) developed and used by these organizations. But the Directory goes far beyond its avowed aim, too. It also includes short histories of those organizations, providing information about their establishment (including even the postal addresses and telephone numbers).

English museum, to find its head which was in Cairo museum. The head had become white but the body had retained its fine blue-green glazing. They were only brought together for the length of the exhibition.

The Sun Pharaoh might not have revealed all of his secrets yet. Recent excavations led to the discovery, in 1989, in a hiding place beneath the Temple of Luxor, of twenty-six granite, alabaster, sandstone or quartzite statues, many of which date from Amenophis III's reign. There is nothing to say that further treasures will not be unearthed one day.

The exhibition enabled a small headless statue from an

DIRECTORY OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS OF DEVELOPMENT NGOs/OTHER DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN BANGLADESH

কমিউনিকেশন উপকরণ সারাদিকা

VILLAGE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER PACT-BANGLADESH

bers), activities, programmes and future plans. As a result, the Directory will be of help not only in matters of communication materials, but also in many other respects. The readers and users will at once come to know almost everything they want to know about a large number of organizations, all in one, and will be able to quickly find out which of these concern them most and which serve their purpose best.

However, as the title suggests, the principal aim of the Directory was to give information about the communication materials. The team responsible for compiling and editing has done a wonderful job in this connection. The Directory lists and classifies a total of 965 titles of printed materials the aforesaid 39 organisations has so far published. These materials have been divided into 14 categories, namely, books (365 out of total 965), booklets (67), mimeographs (105), reports (134), directories (32), catalogues (17), magazines/journals (28), newsletters/bulletins (26), brochures (27), handouts (28), folders (6), posters/leaflets (70), flip charts/flash cards/cards (52) and stickers (8).

Besides, there is also a sector-wise list of the given materials. They have been listed under the following heads: Agriculture, child rights, community development, cooperatives, creative publications (this includes even the Bangla renderings of world classics); education, family planning, health, human rights, income generating projects, industry, law, liberation war, relief and rehabilitation, religion, social awareness, social welfare, technology development, training, women affairs, and others.

Though this list and classification cannot be said to be exhaustive and conclusive (the compilers admit that they could not collect all the materials, particularly those out of print), it will, nonetheless, be of great help to the interested agencies and persons. More than serving the purpose of ready reference, this will also serve as an information bank for materials of various types of different organizations. Moreover, it will show which sector or sectors have received or are receiving adequate attention from the point of development activities, and which sector or sectors offer scopes for more intensive or extensive work. This will thus help bring about a balance in the development activities in various sectors.

We congratulate the sponsors and publishers and the editorial team for undertaking such a time-consuming, tiring but much-needed venture. They have rendered a great service to the development organizations, development workers, policy-makers and all others who are curious about such organizations and their activities by offering them such a compendium of useful information. We look forward to having the second volume of the Directory soon, with less of the printer's devil and more of the editorial care.

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— L'Actualité en France

A Century after

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He believes that since Ngamiland was a cattle-disease area and beef from that area was not exported to Europe, the taking of cattle to Namibia will not have much effect on the economy.

Naane said his government does not generally view the decision of the Bahrero as a negative move since the idea was linked to Namibia's history. He says his people will miss the Bahrero.

He added: "We lived peacefully with them. Therefore their going should be seen as that of a family member leaving the family."

The repatriation process is the second in the post-colonial history of Namibia. In 1989, 45,000 Namibians from Angola, Zambia and other countries were repatriated following implementation of the UN Peace Plan for Namibia, Resolution 435, which paved the way for independence in 1990.

The repatriation of the Bahrero will be conducted in two phases and is scheduled over five years. The first phase involves about 1,800 people, without animals. It is expected to be completed in three months. Namibia has budgeted about \$3 million for this phase.

The second stage will take longer because there are not enough quarantine facilities for the animals.

The first 500 repatriated Bahreros are already resettled at the Oam reception centre. They are expected to stay for a year before deciding where to settle permanently. A small clinic has been set up in the village and a school will be built for the community.

— GEMINI NEWS

BRIAN BETHUEL KATJIMUNE is a Namibian journalist who has been writing on developmental, socio-political and environmental issues in his country for several years.

INTEREST IN GERMAN WANING WORLD-WIDE

by Gottlieb Ochsle

Once the language of scientists the world over, German has now become the language of hotel personnel and street vendors throughout the tourist centres of the Mediterranean. Despite still being of international significance, it has fallen far behind English, which is now the primary language of science world-wide.

"IN my experience", wrote Mark Twain, the American author and humorist during a visit to central Europe 100 years ago, "You need 30 hours to learn English, 30 days to learn French and 30 years to learn German". That was the age in which scientists and artists throughout the whole world would travel to the fledgling German Empire to learn and study in the laboratories and libraries.

Such was the importance of German in scientific research that during the first half of this century more scientific papers were published in German than in English. Today, English publications outnumber those in German by a ratio of 20 to 1. In other words: top level research today is written, spoken and read in English, and no longer German. These are the conclusions of the study conducted by the German scholar and linguist Professor Ulrich Ammon, at the University of Duisburg, entitled *Die internationale Stellung der deutschen Sprache* (International Status of the German Language) published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York.

In terms of numbers of publications, the German language reached its zenith as the language of natural sciences around 1920 — from which time on it steadily lost ground to English. Despite this, American chemists in the Thirties were still required to learn German, and German chemistry textbooks were still common at

American universities. Researchers in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and the Netherlands also used German as their scientific language. However, the situation has since changed radically. Natural scientists outside the German-speaking countries usually publish in English — in common with the majority of their German colleagues. Ammon: "English has become Germany's scientific language." The situation is exacerbated by the fact that German-speaking scientists have few opportunities of publishing in their mother-tongue since many German-language academic journals do not accept contributions written in German. The situation with regard to the reception of scientific literature is no better: During the Seventies and Eighties very little reference was made by English academic journals and textbooks to German-language publications.

However, German is still the world's third most popular foreign language at the secondary schools and universities, behind French. However, in no other country was the decline in popularity so marked as in the USA. Until 1917 — when America entered the First World War — German was the most popular foreign language at the Universities and colleges. Today it ranks behind Spanish and French in third place. Of particular significance is the fact that many students learning German are of German descent, motivated by family tradition and nostalgia rather than by

any practical notions of its usefulness. This also applies to Brazil and Australia, where despite ranking second behind French and still enjoying a relatively high status as a foreign language in schools — German is in danger of being replaced by Japanese, now the most popular foreign language at Australian universities.

In the countries of the Far East the trend is very different. Although German is hardly taught in Japanese schools, between 150,000-300,000 Japanese students choose each year to study German with their second compulsory foreign language. In China, German is still a "growth industry", ranking third behind English and Japanese in popularity among students, ahead of French and Russian.

Formerly the language of Nobel Prize winners, German is today rapidly becoming the lingua franca for restaurant owners, ice-cream vendors and hotel personnel along the Mediterranean sunbelt and on the east coast of Africa. The mass migration of Germans during the summer months is obviously also having a linguistic impact on the tourist destinations. Ammon: "Without doubt German-speaking tourism is helping to spread the German language throughout the world." However, he also concludes that English has now replaced German in all fields — as the language of conferences, diplomacy, science and of supranational organisations.

—GRS

Amenophis III

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was a peaceful reign without any wars except for a campaign in Nubia, and one marked by great architectural achievements and an exceptional flourishing and refinement of the arts.

It was in his reign that the colossal statues multiplied, whose concept Ramses II was to develop later on, going so far as to have the face on the magnificent statues of Amenophis III modified and replaced by his own features. In the Grand Palais, in Paris, superb royal animals (a pink granite lion, a huge blue granite ram and a little blue earthenware sphinx) watch over them.

The Pharaoh had appointed a kind of chief architect to take charge of the big building projects of his reign. This was Amenhotep, son of Hapu (in order to distinguish him from the numerous other Amenhoteps), of whom the museum of Cairo has lent a superb statue for the exhibition.

Refinement

Under the direction of this "chief of all works", the temple of Luxor was built, the temple of Karnak enlarged and, on the other bank of the Nile, in Thebes, the temple of millions of years was constructed. The latter is Amenophis III's funeral temple of which, today, only the famous colossi of Memnon which used to guard the entrance, still exist. These huge statues, 14 metres tall, had the features of the Pharaoh.

For this sumptuous exhibition, which has already been presented at the American museums of Cleveland (Ohio) and Fort Worth (Texas), 150 items of exceptional quality, coming from thirty public and private collections, were chosen, from the colossal pink granite, granodiorite or quartzite heads of Amenophis III right up to perfectly preserved objects from everyday life, jewellery, mirrors, boxes and files for ornaments and spoons for make-up.

Refinement is visible everywhere, in the provocative hip of the little wooden statue of a girl carrying a vase, the grace of the little swimmer pushing a make-up spoon in the shape of a duck in front of her or the shimmer of the glass bottle in the shape of a fish with its scalloped, multi-coloured fins and scales. The latter is the most famous Egyptian glass object.

The handle of another wooden spoon is in the shape of a lute-player. An ibex kneels on an acacia comb. A delightful little blue ceramic monkey gazes at the scene in a neighbouring display-case.

Tiy, the Great Royal Spouse

And then there is Tiy, Amenophis III's royal spouse, a beauty judging by the numerous portraits left of her by Egyptian sculptors.

Tiy, who is far less known than Nefertiti, Akhenaton's graceful wife, or Nefertari, Ramses II's, was certainly a capable woman. The Pharaoh had mentioned his wife on one of those enormous historical Egyptian carved chronicles speaking of the king's great deeds and also quoting the names of her parents, Tuya and Tuyu, a priest and a singer at the Great Temple. It was a way of showing

that the royal spouse was not herself of royal blood, as custom would have it for the main wives of the Pharaohs.

The most extraordinary portrait of Tiy is a polished yellow flasper head of which only the lower part remains, showing a sensors, expressive mouth with

curled, voluptuous lips. Tiy was an educated woman and a real patron for the artists of her time. She is also the first queen

He described himself as the "resplendent disk of the sun of all countries". Today, while Paris devotes a magnificent exhibition to him, Amenophis III is called the "Sun Pharaoh".

to have played such an eminent role. She regularly figures next to the royal husband on statues of the period and their two names often appear together on numerous objects and commemorative scarabs.

The exhibition enabled a small headless statue from an