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# The University of the Theatre of Nations: Explorations into Cold War Exchanges<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The article analyses the Cold War history of the University of the Theatre of Nations, a project developed by two international organisations, the Theatre of Nations Festival and the International Theatre Institute. By placing the university project within the larger framework of theatre exchanges and training programmes developed during the post-war period, the article discusses the role played by these international organizations in creating spaces where theatre practitioners from all over the world could acquire contacts and build networks that connected them to their peers despite ideological divisions. Within this framework, the article shows the contribution made by Eastern European practitioners to the development of the Theatre of Nations University and to projects implemented by the International Theatre Institute throughout the Cold War period.

## Keywords

International Theatre Institute, Cold War, cultural diplomacy, Eastern Europe.

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Viviana Iacob is a postdoctoral Humboldt fellow at the Centre for Global Theatre History at Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich. Her research interests centre on theatre history after 1945 in Eastern Europe, Cold War internationalism and the role of international organizations in the cultural diplomacy of state socialist regimes. She is currently working on a monograph that places Romanian theatre within global circulations and networks articulated across multiple institutional and cultural spaces produced by exchanges between the East, the West, and the South. Her publications include “Scenes of Cold War Diplomacy: Romania and the International Theatre Institute, 1956–1969.” *East Central Europe* 45, (2018): 184-214; “Caragiale in Calcutta: Romanian-Indian Theatre Diplomacy during the Cold War.” *Journal of Global Theatre History* 2, (2017): 37-46.

The creation of the University of the Theatre of Nations (UTN) and its various incarnations during the Cold War period can be framed within the larger issue of theatre training, as discussed and debated by experts from the East, West and South within the projects developed by the International Theatre Institute and its sister organisation, the Festival of the Theatre of Nations. Although the UTN was just one of the projects developed by these organisations, it epitomizes the connections, circulations and entanglements characteristic of Cold War theatre exchanges and the relevance of international organizations for the cultural diplomacy of Eastern European states. The article presents a brief history of the UTN that brings together both French and English language sources while incorporating the story of Eastern European contributions to this initiative. It also places the university within the larger framework of projects developed by the International Theatre Institute in order to show its global reach and the mechanisms employed by its leadership to ensure the project survived and thrived in spite of Cold War ideological divisions. The aim is therefore to outline the history of this project by emphasizing the interconnections between liberal and state-socialist forms of internationalism.<sup>2</sup>

The UTN started as an adjacent activity to the Festival of the Theatre of Nations; by the late sixties, its organizers managed to transform it into a Cold War contact point<sup>3</sup> that facilitated the circulation of theatre practitioners and ideas from the East, West and South. According to its creators, the UTN aimed to provide young practitioners from all over the world with a glimpse into the training required to navigate the new emerging global theatre culture. For Eastern European participants, the University of the Theatre of Nations offered access to an international arena where ideas about theatre were debated. Openly discussing concepts and practices in order to redefine a field of knowledge was not a course of action preferred by state-socialist systems. Instead, a process of negotiation was practiced whereby new ideas were carefully introduced to fit constantly fluctuating ideological outlines. In this context, looking into the role played by organizations such as the Theatre of Nations Festival (TNF) and the International Theatre Institute (ITI) in local theatre cultures from Eastern Europe becomes essential.

Although the corpus of studies on cultural exchanges during the Cold War has been steadily growing (Mitter, Major 2004; Vowinckel, Payk, Lindenberger 2012, Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith, Segal 2012; Mikonen, Koivunen 2015; Mikonen, Parkkinen, Giles Scott-Smith 2019), theatre exchanges between the East, the West and the Global South, let alone the role played by international organizations in these circulations do not feature in the literature. Charlotte Canning's work<sup>4</sup> was among the first to address the role played by international organizations in showcasing North American theatre culture abroad during the Cold War. She discussed the issue within the larger framework of internationalism during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Christopher Balme and Berenika Szymanski-Düll's volume<sup>5</sup> also explored theatre exchanges during the Cold War. Moreover, it proposed a global framework for analysing the performing arts' function in cultural diplomacy programmes during the period. However, the role played by international institutions in theatre exchanges between socialist states and the global North or South still needs to be addressed.<sup>6</sup> Daniela Peslin's history of the Festival of the Theatre of Nations<sup>7</sup> is a notable exception in this respect. She mapped the evolution of the festival from a French perspective and, in doing so, she included Eastern European participations in a narrative that focused on the idea of France's cultural resplendence in the world (*le rayonnement*

*culturel de la France*). Peslin's book covered in detail the period between 1954 and 1968, but relegated the next two decades of the festival's history to an epilogue. However, even if during the 1970s and the 1980s the epicentre of the Theatre of Nations Festival was no longer the French capital, its history is no less relevant for the Cold War context, especially for theatre cultures from the former Soviet bloc.

## A Brief History of the UTN

The International Theatre Institute (ITI) was created in 1948 under the aegis of UNESCO. It mirrored the interwar Société Universelle du Théâtre created by Firmin Gémier and therefore the idea of a festival that would accompany the congress of the organisation was always a desired format. The first season of the Theatre of Nations Festival (TNF) took place in 1957. However, TNF's history started in 1954 with the first season of the Paris Dramatic Festival. The success of the enterprise encouraged the French ITI centre to submit it to the ITI Congress as a suitable candidate for a festival that would mirror ITI's goals. The project to transform the Paris Dramatic Festival into the future Theatre of Nations was initiated at the ITI Dubrovnik Congress in 1955. As early as 1961, the festival's relevance as the place where theatre cultures from across the world could contribute to mutual understanding prompted ITI president Vincenzo Torraca to state that the TNF was the beating heart of ITI.<sup>8</sup> According to Claude Planson, the TNF's artistic director, by 1963 the festival presented a complete map of European theatre, while also creating the opportunity for performance traditions from around the globe to be discovered.<sup>9</sup>

The exploration of world culture through performance provided the context for the creation of the University of the Theatre of Nations in 1961. The idea of the university was wholeheartedly supported by the cofounder of the festival Claude Planson, but it has been credited to Albert Botbol<sup>10</sup>, a young Jewish/Moroccan director who by 1961 had already been noticed as an up and coming talent at the Theatre of Nations Festival.<sup>11</sup> The university responded to the internationalist context that the Theatre of Nations Festival had already created. The more the festival featured theatre traditions from around the world, the more it was besieged by young people asking for information or suggestions for training possibilities. Botbol's idea that training should be focused on example was central to the university's activities. Moreover, as he himself stated, the aim of the university was to give the new generation of theatre practitioners around the world a universalist approach to their professional training rather than to create an academic programme.<sup>12</sup> As early as 1963, scholarship holders from around the world, such as French-Brazilian Beatrice Tanaka, Romanian Ion Maximilian<sup>13</sup>, or Argentinean Jorge Lavelli, could attend lectures on the theatre of the absurd, Haitian voodoo or Noh, and interact with theatre practitioners, such as Ivo Chiesa and Luigi Squarzina or Julian Beck and Judith Malina, who were showing their work at the festival.

Initially the University of the Theatre of Nations was imagined as a series of lectures and workshops for young theatre practitioners. The project was first presented in 1961 by A.M. Julien, the Theatre of Nations Festival's general director, at the ITI congress in Vienna. ITI ratified its creation in 1963 at the Warsaw Congress. At the time, Julien stated that the UTN should not be considered as a school for professional training or a

department emerging in competition with the Sorbonne.<sup>14</sup> The statement was repeated by Botbol, that same year, at the symposium for actor training organized by the ITI in Brussels. According to Botbol, the university was aiming to give its participants a state of mind rather than instruction in the traditional sense of the word.<sup>15</sup> Even though the initiators of the project did not see the university as an academic training programme, it was nevertheless intended as a way to introduce and expose young theatre practitioners from around the world to the newest directions in theory and practice. In 1963 the TNF had reached critical mass in terms of internationally disseminating its scope and results. This level of exposure was also due to the extensive network that ITI put at A.M. Julien's disposal starting in 1957. This included not only access to ITI centres from the West, East and South, but also continuous visibility in the organization's publications. Moreover, the creation of the university should also be placed in the context of a number of projects focused on stimulating the circulation of theatre practitioners among ITI member states. For example, in the absence of theatre exchanges within the framework of an international festival, the institute initiated a scholarship programme in 1949.<sup>16</sup> The fellowships would be awarded to young theatre practitioners from various countries so that they could experience or become acquainted with a theatre culture different from their own. In 1961, reflecting UNESCO's support for the decolonization of Africa, the ITI Congress put forward a motion to support African states by awarding scholarships to theatre practitioners from the continent; five grants were budgeted for 1962. To these figures, one should add the fellowships provided by national ITI centres. For example, in 1963, the Greek ITI centre provided 60 scholarships for university or theatre school students for a period of 25 days in association with the Athens and Epidaurus Festival.<sup>17</sup> By 1968, 92 young professionals from 45 countries had received ITI scholarships.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, starting in 1963, five symposia on the subject of actor training were organized in Western and Eastern Europe. As I mentioned earlier, the UTN's director attended the first meeting in Brussels. By 1965, 172 experts representing 63 countries and groups of students from 22 theatre schools were involved in this project.<sup>19</sup> Among the topics discussed were issues such as training programmes offered by universities, the curricula of theatre schools from both the East and the West, and the differences entailed by these two institutional formats: the number of years needed to complete basic theatre training or the fact that directors, set designers and technicians should have acting training. The lack of communication between theatre schools in the West was also debated, as was the model of subsidized theatre training typical for Eastern Europe. Among the schools involved in this project that lasted five years were the Lunacharsky Institute from Moscow, the Max Reinhardt School from East Berlin, the Academy for Dramatic Art from Rome, the theatre department from Kansas University, the Bucharest Theatre and Film Institute, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts and the Academy for Dramatic Art from Belgrade. Besides the presence of these schools (comprising groups of students and their teachers), there were theatre experts from a variety of countries in ITI, including representatives of the Global South such as those from Colombia or India. The purpose of these exchanges was to come up with the best approach to train the theatre actor, while also considering the different political and cultural backgrounds of the trainees. This idea of experiencing another's theatre culture as a means to reach a common ground for discussion was central to all ITI projects that tackled the issue of training.<sup>20</sup>

The University of the Theatre of Nations mirrored the festival in scope and focus, becoming known by the end of the 1960s as an international arena for interactions and exchanges. By 1963, the UTN had matured into a programme with four sections or “cycles” as its creators called them, designed to be attended in a progressive fashion. The first cycle was dedicated to revising basic knowledge to provide a baseline for all participants, a general course in theatre culture. The second was focused on technical training and the study of disciplines such as architecture, stage design and cultural policies, but also administration. During the third cycle, participants were separated into working groups. Each group elected its own director, designer and manager and presented a production at the end of its work. By 1963, five such productions were presented at the Theatre of Nations Festival under the category “*créations mondiales*”.<sup>21</sup> Each season the students also took an exam and received certificates. The scope of the fourth cycle was to introduce the students to a specific theatre tradition. In its inaugural year this cycle focused on “black theatre” (*théâtre noire*) from around the world. The ensembles and companies present at the festival in previous years were taken as a point of departure for a round table discussion with writers, ethnographers and Africanists. This was a first attempt to map existing traditions of “black theatre” and debate their presentation at the TNF. Its creators saw the university as an organic extension to the festival, a space for discovering, nurturing and guiding new talent rather than an academic institution. One might even argue that they knowingly and purposefully resisted the university model.<sup>22</sup> For example, in order to change the tonality of the enterprise, which seemed to focus more and more on lectures to attend and exams to be passed, a first study trip was organized in 1964 to Morocco in order to familiarize the students with Arab culture in local contexts.<sup>23</sup>

In 1966, the UTN became the International University of Theatre (UIT).<sup>24</sup> The rebranding of the university signalled that the festival had been entrusted to Jean-Louis Barrault; its new headquarters were now the Odeon Theatre. As was the case with the festival, the university also changed direction and location. After Botbol, André-Louis Périnetti, a former UTN fellow and one of Botbol’s closest collaborators, took over the reins of the project. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, the university was transformed into a laboratory bent on discovering new directions in the theatre. Even though after 1966 the festival and the university were no longer cohabitating, the two maintained a close relationship.<sup>25</sup> According to an ITI brochure currently available online, the 1961 -1973 period is seen as a continuum. The brochure mentions that during this period, “more than 1000 participants, from 54 different countries, attended UTN sessions which varied in length from one to six months.”<sup>26</sup>

The university only survived up to 1972 when the Festival of the Theatre of Nations also came to a halt, as the French government withdrew its financial support. Like the festival, the university also benefited from an endowment from the French Ministry of Culture<sup>27</sup> and, just like the festival, it required a catalyst figure to help it survive ideological and financial pitfalls through the years. Under Périnetti’s leadership the university matured into an international theatre destination mirroring the goals of the Theatre of Nations Festival: research, consecration and discovery. It employed and featured talents discovered within its own ranks, such as Victor Garcia or Jean Marie Patte, but it was also the host of Joe Chaikin’s *End Game*, Charles Marowitz’ *Macbeth* and companies such as the Odin Theatre (Denmark), La Mama (US) or the Nottara Theatre (Romania). In the end, these public activities engulfed and consumed the university. Even though Périnetti

brought the UIT with him to Strasbourg when he was given the direction of the National Theatre, the project did not survive the 1973 season.

The ITI brochure mentioned earlier noted the rebirth of the University in 1984. In 1983, Périnetti was nominated secretary of the International Theatre Institute, a position which he held until 2004. In 1984, the UTN was re-launched as an ITI project. Périnetti is credited with proposing a new format for the university, that of an itinerant event, an idea that was in tune with the age. ITI had changed considerably in the 1970s. It was now a much larger and a much more diverse organization. It had always faced financial and ideological issues, but during the late 1970s and early 1980s, they became acute. In the new format, future host countries could cover the expenses for both the Festival of the Theatre of Nations and its accompanying university.

The idea of an itinerant University of the Theatre of Nations was not new. Back in 1963, while addressing the ITI Congress in Warsaw, Jean Mourier, a member of the Committee of the Theatre of Nations and a representative of the French delegation, argued that the University's activities could take place all over the world where there were ITI centres. In his view, such a practice would make a great contribution to the subject of actor training, consolidating the status of the University as a natural extension and efficient complement to the TNF.<sup>28</sup> Périnetti knew ITI's history well. His extensive theatre knowledge and worldwide contacts were in great part a by-product of ITI's projects throughout the Cold War. Therefore, proposing an itinerant format for the UTN in 1984 reactivated a two-decade-old idea in order to respond to new challenges.

## Internationalism from the East

The history of UTN, however, was not solely driven by liberal internationalist projects engineered from the West. Publications such as the brochure mentioned above, Philippe Ivernel's dossier dedicated to the anniversary of fifty years of UTN, or ITI's celebration of Périnetti's career<sup>29</sup> overlook the contribution of socialist states to the Theatre of Nations Festival or its university. An example of such an intervention from the East is the 1975 edition of the TNF organized in Poland.

The context of this event is deeply connected to the history of ITI after 1968 and to the growing influence of Eastern European states over this international organisation during the 1970s. While the 1959 ITI congress changed the power dynamics<sup>30</sup> in the institution with the USSR joining its ranks, the Moscow Congress (the first ITI event to be organized in the Soviet Union) clearly indicated the growing influence of socialist theatre practitioners over ITI activities. This development was reinforced by the Romanian Radu Beligan's nomination as president in 1971, and the Polish season of the Theatre of Nations. The proposal for a Theatre of Nations Festival in Poland was put forward by the Polish delegation at the ITI congress in Moscow (1973). As I already mentioned, 1972 was the last season of the TNF supported by the French state. During the congress several proposals came from Polish and Soviet representatives regarding the TNF and a study committee was created in order to discuss its future. Among the offers debated at the congress were the Soviet Union's proposal to finance the permanent study committee that would oversee

the TNF for the following two years and the bid for a Theatre of Nations Festival to be organized in Poland. By the end of the talks, the congress approved a series of principles to be followed in the future. It also decided that the responsibility for the governing body of the festival located in Paris should rest with UNESCO and that its organization had to be decentralized, resting with the country that hosted the event.<sup>31</sup>

Navigating Eastern European waters during the Cold War was not easy for the ITI leadership. The bid to organize the Theatre of Nations Festival in Poland must have seemed the best possible outcome at the time. During the 1970s, Poland was going through a series of liberalizing reforms and its theatre diplomacy programme was second to none among Eastern European countries. The fact that the Festival was taking place in Poland was perceived as a solution to prevent an excessive influence of the USSR over this project. An article published in the Times reported that, at the congress in Moscow, Louis Barrault, the last director of the TNF, had successfully managed to save the initiative from the Soviets.<sup>32</sup> Poland, as host country, with its less dogmatic socialist regime and a highly internationalized theatre culture, had been a necessary compromise for the survival of the TNF.

Archival documents and the publications produced by the Polish ITI centre on the occasion of the 1975 festival show that the organizers attempted to resurrect the Theatre of Nations with all its side projects, including the university. They also aimed to put a national stamp on the entire event: to reconstruct it in all its aspects, but in a local context. The 1975 season (8 -28 June) was accompanied by a Congress of the International Association of Theatre Critics<sup>33</sup> (9-10 June) and a symposium on new tendencies in contemporary theatre (11-13 June). Between June 14 and July 7, a new cycle of the University of the Theatre of Nations spearheaded by Grotowski and his Laboratory Institute took place in Wrocław. All these events were organised in parallel with a festival of Polish theatre. The budget was \$460,000. With the exception of 400 pounds offered by the British Council, all the funds were provided by the Polish government.<sup>34</sup>

The inaugural event of the Theatre of Nations University of Research, the title given to the event by the Polish organizers, was a conference chaired by Jean Darcante, ITI's general secretary. Participants from 26 countries took part in workshops led by Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Jean-Louis Barrault, Luca Ronconi, Andre Gregory and Joseph Chaikin. Brook and Gregory led sessions for young theatre actors. Barba (Odin Theatre) and Sören Larsson (Daidalos) held open training classes around a specific production. Grotowski's Laboratory showcased paratheatrical experiments developed for the project *Mountain of Fire* featuring all sorts of ventures, ranging from acting therapy to medical consultations "on the positive disintegration in creative development"<sup>35</sup> offered by Prof. Kazimierz Dąbrowski. The University also had a mediating component so that the wider public could be thoroughly informed about the range of approaches offered to the trainees.<sup>36</sup> Screening rooms around Wrocław featured recordings of Ronconi's *Orlando Furioso*, Grotowski's *The Constant Prince*, the ritual forms of theatre in Bali or films documenting training and production work such as the methods of the Laboratory Theatre illustrated by Ryszard Cieślak, or Brook's experiments in Africa together with those led by Barba in southern Italy. The artists engaged in the University's activities presented their work to the wider public. There were conferences that lasted multiple hours in which Brook or Barrault illustrated their approaches and answered questions.

The festival offered the Warsaw public productions from USSR, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, East and West Germany, USA, Scotland, Spain, France, Sweden, Uganda and Japan. The last two countries, represented in the competition by Robert Serumaga and Suzuki Tadashi respectively, were seen as the revelations of the festival.<sup>37</sup> The TNF in Warsaw was a tour de force by any standard. Everyone who was anyone in the international theatre community was invited and participated in the activities of the festival. The gathering was an impressive demonstration of how to connect a socialist theatre culture with the wider world while also maintaining the core TNF values. The idea of the festival as an atelier for theatre research followed the pattern set by both Claude Planson and Louis Barrault. Planson's mission to showcase extra-European performing traditions at the TNF and Barrault's propensity for experimentation were taken to heart by the Polish organizers. One of Barrault's first projects intended to open the TNF to new explorations was entrusted to Peter Brook in 1968. Although the 1968 student movement cut this particular initiative short,<sup>38</sup> the idea was pursued in the following years with the experimental atelier at Dourdan and Luca Ronconi's commissioned production, *Orlando Furioso*.

The workshops and conferences held throughout the event followed a historic commitment to catering to the festivals' audience. Daniela Peslin showed that when the festival was held in Paris, activities such as the conferences held by the ITI French Centre, the debates organized around theatre issues or the radio programme of the TNF were the means by which the organizers increased and managed the festival's audience.<sup>39</sup> While following the same idea, the scope of the Warsaw festival allowed exposure to a great variety of theatre traditions and formats and provided a carefully balanced context for both local and international audiences.

The international visibility of Polish theatre in 1975 was due in part to Grotowski who in turn owed much of his fame to the Theatre of Nations and to the ITI network. He was first discovered by the international theatre community in 1963 during the ITI Congress in Warsaw.<sup>40</sup> By the late 1960s, Grotowski had been invited to the TNF (Paris 1966), to ITI events such as the Montreal Colloquium on theatre architecture (1967), and he was featured in ITI's flagship publication, *World Theatre*. This newfound international visibility led to an invitation to the first edition of the Belgrade International Festival (Bitef),<sup>41</sup> a workshop on his method at NYU in 1967 and a tour of Mexico with the Laboratory Theatre. In 1973 when the Polish government offered to host the Festival, Grotowski held a unique position on the Cold War theatre stage, as he was able to flawlessly navigate an extensive network of practitioners and cultures that connected the East, the West and the Global South. The Polish government had no reason not to support Grotowski's contribution to the Polish UTN season, while the ITI saw him as one of the leading theatre figures of the day. The Theatre of Nations Festival and University in 1975 was a win-win situation for all parties involved: the star-studded gathering expanded Poland's international relevance and status; the ITI and TNF leaderships saw the event and the UTN in particular as a good representation of their core values. The 1975 season is then an illustration of how socialist and liberal forms of internationalism could coexist during the Cold War within the framework provided by the ITI.

The 1975 festival launched the World Seasons of the Theatre of Nations. During the next decade a large number of ITI events took place in Eastern Europe, including two more

seasons of the Theatre of Nations Festival in 1976 (Belgrade) and 1982 (Sofia). After the TNF season in the Bulgarian capital, the ITI Congress decided to organise the festival every two years, starting in 1984 in Nancy. As pointed out earlier, this was also the moment when ITI publications mark the re-launch of the UTN, ignoring the role of the Warsaw TNF in keeping this project afloat. At the time, however, the significance of the 1975 festival was acknowledged: Polish theatre director Janus Warminski opened the festivities in Nancy<sup>42</sup> – he had been elected president of ITI in 1979.<sup>43</sup> The Nancy season of the UTN was followed by one in Barcelona in (1985)<sup>44</sup> and another in Baltimore (1986).<sup>45</sup> Polish candidates participated in all the above-mentioned seasons. Romania also re-launched its connection with UTN in its second reiteration.<sup>46</sup>

In 1984, the festival's mobility was seen as a positive element for the UTN because it ensured significant international visibility and direct contact between the TNF participants and the university. The ITI leadership hoped that in the future the university could be organised independently from the festival. While carrying the Theatre of Nations "label", the University could generate four to five events per year in different countries. Every two years the work carried out by this itinerant university (i.e. the most successful productions created by its students) would be featured during the Theatre of Nations Festival.<sup>47</sup> In 1986 the success of the UTN in this new format was already seen as a means to rejuvenate the Theatre of Nations Festival. In 1989, there were two seasons, one in Helsinki and another in the Republic of Korea. By the late 1980s, the UTN had become an ITI flagship project.

Its lasting relevance in an Eastern European context is maybe best exemplified by the creation of the UNESCO Theatre Chair "Theatre and Culture of Civilizations" in Bucharest. In 1995, the ITI congress decided to include within its ranks the academic world of theatre. Two years later, the Chair was founded in the Romanian capital as an extension of the UTN.<sup>48</sup> By 2012 when the project concluded, it had created a network of 97 theatre schools from all over the world with regional offices in Shanghai, Xalapa, Lima and Washington.<sup>49</sup> From an Eastern European perspective, during the Cold War, the University of the Theatre of Nations offered young practitioners unparalleled access to ideas, practices and people that had a defining influence on the international theatre community. Moreover, as the Romanian example shows, after 1989 it also provided the means for reinventing local theatre initiatives as liberal internationalist projects.

## Conclusion

The university's connection to the TNF generated a wealth of information that was simply unattainable in Eastern European countries prior to 1989. However, it is important to note that each socialist state had its own "ideological template" when it came to engaging with ITI and their relationships with this international organisation "changed over time and in substance, from nation to nation."<sup>50</sup> For instance, Romania reached the apogee of its relationship with ITI at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Bulgaria attained a similar level of visibility during the second half of the 1970s and the early 1980s, while Poland's involvement with the ITI simply dwarfed all other Eastern European countries during the 1970s. Each socialist country's participation in international theatre

organisations during the Cold War mirrored the domestic vicissitudes of individual party-states policies and their subsequent ideological shifts in terms of cultural diplomacy.

By focusing on the UTN's history, this article also shows socialist states' contributions to the activities and consolidation of ITI as the primary site of international theatre exchanges during the Cold War. Events such as the 1975 season of the TNF and its University highlight the crucial role played by Eastern European ITI members in preserving these projects at a time when the organisation faced financial crisis. Not only did Eastern European theatre cultures find international recognition during the first two decades of the existence of the TNF, but also experts from the region reimaged the festival and its university, leaving on both an imprint that survived the collapse of socialism.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Research carried out within the scope of a Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers granted by the Humboldt Foundation (May 2020-April 2022).
- <sup>2</sup> For a discussion on competing forms of internationalism during the Cold War, see Sandrine Kott's "Cold War Internationalism" in Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin eds., *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 340-362.
- <sup>3</sup> Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt, "Introduction: Theatrical Trade Routes," *Journal of Global Theatre History* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1-9.
- <sup>4</sup> Charlotte M. Canning, *On the Performance Front: US Theatre and Internationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- <sup>5</sup> Balme, Christopher and Berenika Szymanski-Düll, *Theatre, Globalization and the Cold War* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
- <sup>6</sup> The current ERC project *Developing Theatre. Building Expert Networks for Theatre in Emerging Countries after 1945* at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich explores connections and circulations between the global East and South via international institutions such as the ITI.
- <sup>7</sup> Daniela Peslin, *Le Théâtre des Nations, Une aventure théâtrale à redécouvrir* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009).
- <sup>8</sup> *Report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress Vienna, 1961*, p. 2, International Theatre Institute Archive, BnF, (ITI, BnF).
- <sup>9</sup> Claude Planson, "The Sixth Season of the Theatre of Nations," *World Theatre* 12, no. 1 (1963): 49.
- <sup>10</sup> By all accounts, the first courses were put together by Planson who then tasked Albert Botbol with taking over the idea. Botbol was one of UTN's first fellows and the person who transformed the initiative into a full blown project.
- <sup>11</sup> Albert Botbol created the National Moroccan Theatre in Rabat soon after Morocco's independence and, in 1958, he participated in the Theatre of Nations Festival with an adaptation of *The Imaginary Invalid* catching the attention of the festival's organizers. In 1961, he was already heading the Theatre of Nations University while also being involved in projects that brought performance traditions from the Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Cameroon to the festival's stage. He led the UTN until 1966 when he embarked on a career with UNESCO for the next two decades.
- <sup>12</sup> Albert Botbol, "The Theatre of Nations University," *World Theatre* 12, no. 1 (1963): 52.
- <sup>13</sup> Ion Maximilian attended the University of the Theatre of Nations in 1962. He came from a family that had been an integral part of Romanian theatre for three generations and, like Grotowski, he had trained with Yuri Zavadski.
- <sup>14</sup> *Rapport du 10<sup>e</sup> Congres, Varsovie, 8-15 juin, 1963*, p. 14. (ITI, BnF)
- <sup>15</sup> *Rapport de la première rencontre internationale pour l'enseignement de l'art dramatique, Bruxelles 3-9 janvier, 1963*, p. 85. (ITI, BnF)
- <sup>16</sup> Eight annual scholarships were created by ITI in 1949. Jean Darcante, "Landmarks in the History of the international theatre institute," *World Theatre* 8, no. 1 (1959): 4.
- <sup>17</sup> Data collated from reports of the Vienna (1961) and Warsaw (1963) congresses. (ITI, BnF)
- <sup>18</sup> ITI, *International Theatre /Informations Internationales, 1948-1968*, *World Theatre* 17, no. 1-2 (1968): 129.

- <sup>19</sup> Data collated from the documents and publications related to the first 3 symposia organized in Brussels (1963), Bucharest (1964) and Essen (1965). (ITI, BnF)
- <sup>20</sup> For an overview of the ITI symposia on training the actor, see Viviana Iacob, “Scenes of Cold War Diplomacy: Romania and the International Theatre Institute, 1956–1969,” *East Central Europe* 45, (2018): 184-214.
- <sup>21</sup> *Rapport de la première Rencontre Internationale pour L’enseignement de l’art dramatique, Bruxelles 3-9 janvier, 1963*, p.86. (ITI, BnF)
- <sup>22</sup> On the history and role of the University, see David John Frank & John W. Meyer, “University Expansion and the Knowledge Society,” *Theory and Society* 36, (2007): 287–311. See also Christopher Balme in this issue.
- <sup>23</sup> On this occasion thirty fellows from fifteen countries travelled to Morocco. See Philippe Ivernel “Legs du passé ou promesse d’avenir? De l’Université du Théâtre des Nations (UTN) à l’Université internationale du Théâtre (UIT), Un dossier,” *Revue D’Histoire du Théâtre*, no. 255 (2012): 278.
- <sup>24</sup> ITI “Recreating an International University of the Theatre,” *Theatre International* 3-4, no. 11/12 (1984):83.
- <sup>25</sup> Ivernel, “Legs du passé...”, p. 243.
- <sup>26</sup> *The International Theatre Institute, An Indispensable Bridge-builder for the Process of Worldwide Peacekeeping and Mutual Understanding through the International Theatre Community*, (ITI brochure) 2005, p. 14.
- <sup>27</sup> Between 1961 and 1966, while the Theatre of Nations was housed at the Sarah Bernard Theatre, the university was supported by an endowment from the French Government. Some fellows received grants from the French state while others, particularly those from Eastern Europe, were funded by their respective countries. In 1966, the university found itself in rather unstable circumstances with a number of locations allotted by the city of Paris. In 1967, the Ministry of Culture and the Board of the University of Paris decided to embark upon a joint venture in a desire to transform the *International University City of Paris/ Cité internationale universitaire de Paris*, into a site that could function all year round. During the May 1968 events, the UIT was at the centre of the student movement.
- <sup>28</sup> *Rapport du 10<sup>e</sup> Congres, Varsovie, 8-15 juin, 1963*, p. 15, (ITI, BnF).
- <sup>29</sup> ITI, *In Memoriam, André-Louis Périnetti (1926-2017)*. [https://www.iti-worldwide.org/pdfs/Andre-Louis\\_Perinetti\\_In%20Memoriam.pdf](https://www.iti-worldwide.org/pdfs/Andre-Louis_Perinetti_In%20Memoriam.pdf)
- <sup>30</sup> See Hanna Korsberg, “Creating an International Community during the Cold War,” in *Theatre, Globalization and the Cold War*, ed. Christopher B. Balme and Berenika Szymanski-Düll (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 151-164.
- <sup>31</sup> See *Report of the Study Committee, Study Committe (Proposition A, B) and Principles of the Status of the Theatre of Nations, Moscow Congress, 1973*, Moscow Congress Folder, International Theatre Institute, German Centre Archive Berlin, (ITI Berlin).
- <sup>32</sup> Margaret Croyden, “New Trends in Russia?,” *Times*, Section 2, Sunday, July 23, 1973, p. 4. 1973. Moscow Congress Folder (ITI Berlin).
- <sup>33</sup> The association was created in 1956 in Paris in connection with the Theatre of Nations Festival.
- <sup>34</sup> *Specification of Costs for the Theatre of Nations Warsaw, 1975*, (I.T.I. BnF). The sum of \$500,000 in 1975 is equivalent to \$2,418,959 in 2020.
- <sup>35</sup> Tadeusz Burzynski, “L’Université de la Recherche du Théâtre des Nations à Wrocław”, *Théâtre des Nations Warszawa 1975*, *Le Théâtre en Pologne* Novembre – Décembre, (1975):50.
- <sup>36</sup> The University numbered 500 participants but over 5000 attended the events. Burzynski, p.50.
- <sup>37</sup> See the issue dedicated to the festival in *Le Théâtre en Pologne* Novembre – Décembre, 1975.
- <sup>38</sup> For an overview of the impact that the 1968 student movement had on the festival scene in France, see Peslin, (2009), David Looseley, “The World Theatre Festival, Nancy, 1963-88: a Critique and a Retrospective,” *New Theatre Quarterly* 6, no. 22 (1990):141-153 and Philippa Wehle, “A History of the Avignon Festival,” *The Drama Review* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 52-61.
- <sup>39</sup> Peslin, *Le Théâtre des Nations*, 95-101.
- <sup>40</sup> See Karolina Prykowska Michalak, “Years of Compromise and Political Servility – Kantor and Grotowski during the Cold War,” in *Theatre, Globalization and the Cold War*, ed. Christopher B. Balme and Berenika Szymanski-Düll (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 189-206.
- <sup>41</sup> Besides Grotowski, the first Bitef season featured Romanian director David Esrig’s *Troilus and Cressida*, an adaptation that was acclaimed at the TNF in Paris in 1965, and Judith Malina and Julian Beck’s *Living Theatre*, another revelation of the TNF during its French tenure.
- <sup>42</sup> See *Telegram to Janus Warminski*, May 22, 1984, (ITI, BnF).
- <sup>43</sup> Périnetti recalled the time Warminski was ITI president with fondness. In his view, Warminski’s presidency was a moment of triumph for ITI, a feat even more remarkable if one considers that between 1981 and 1983 Poland was under martial law and was mostly shunned internationally until the middle of the decade. See ITI, *In Memoriam, André-Louis Périnetti (1926-2017)*, p. 12-13.
- <sup>44</sup> See *Telegram to the Polish ITI centre*, April 10, 1985, (ITI, BnF).

- <sup>45</sup> The season in Baltimore was organized with UNESCO's support despite the withdrawal of the US from this international organisation. The costs of the event were covered by the North American ITI centre and UNESCO. See *Letter from Andre-Louis Perinetti to Janus Warminski*, May 6, 1986, (ITI, BnF).
- <sup>46</sup> *Letter from Margareta Barbuta to André-Louis Périnetti*, April 15, 1985, (ITI BnF).
- <sup>47</sup> ITI, "Recreating an International University of the Theatre," *Theatre International* 3-4, no. 11/12 (1984):85.
- <sup>48</sup> Ivernel, "Legs du passé..." , p.300.
- <sup>49</sup> "In Memoriam..." , p.10.
- <sup>50</sup> I am taking here James Mark and Quinn Slobodian's approach to historicizing Eastern Europe's relations with the Global South as a framework of reference for the socialist states' involvement with ITI during the Cold War. See James Mark and Quinn Slobodian, "Eastern Europe in the Global History of Decolonization," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, ed. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 355.

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