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Professional-Creative Direction in Activity of the Chelyabinsk Branch of the All-Russia Theatrical Society

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Professional-creative direction as the main one in the work of Chelyabinsk Branch of All-Russian theatrical society helped the outstanding and the starting actors in their creative work in the aim of propaganda of the theatrical art of the South-Ural region and of the country as a whole. Laboratories, seminars, conferences on questions of theory and practice of the scenic art were organized to help the workers of the theater and theatrical collectives to improve their professional level. Much attention in this work was paid to the creative section such as art – staged section, criticism section etc. Newly formed Department of the creative youth helped to organize professional study in the theatres of the region. The research of the archival documents helps to come to the conclusion that the professional creative activity was carried out with the help of various forms and methods of cooperating with the actors of the theatre and it had the educational aspect.

Keywords: All-Russian theatrical society, Chelyabinsk Branch, the basic directions and forms of work, professional-creative activity.

The organization of the Chelyabinsk branch of the All-Russian theatrical society has been already formed on the prepared ground. This process was preceded with the creation of professional theatres in the region. Only with their presence the necessity for the establishment which would organize, direct and supervise their work could appear (Aref'eva, 2008). The Soviet state expected from All-Russian theatrical Society not simply centralized management but «the association of all drama, musical and children's theatres, in one, ideologically connected establishment»¹.

In the given research the professional-creative direction is allocated as one of the basic in activity of all-russian theatrical society. It

is understood as a line of work of a branch of all-russian theatrical society in accustoming outstanding actors and only starting actors to the creativity with the aim of propaganda of the theatrical art of the South-Ural region and the country as a whole.

The Chelyabinsk branch of all-russian theatrical society formed in 1946 became stronger year by year both quantitatively and qualitatively (in 1946 – 50 persons, accordingly further: 1950 – 80, 1960 – 170, 1965 – 200, 1970 – 297, 1980 – 364)². In different years Garyanov (since 1946), Udzanov (1947-1961), Mazurov (1961-1963), Ageev (1963-1974), Kuleshov (1975-1978), Gorbunov (1978-1980) and others supervised the branch³.

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With the purpose of giving all-round aid to workers of the theatre and theatrical collectives in their professional perfection, central all-russian theatrical society organized laboratories, seminars, conferences on questions of the theory and practice of scenic art, directs the experts – advisers, critics, lecturers to various regions of the country⁴. This work becomes more active in 1960th. So in 1965 the candidate of art criticism, critic V. Vanslov (Moscow) was sent to Chelyabinsk. He held a creative seminar for actors of theatres of Chelyabinsk and the region, and participated in seeing the performances of the Chelyabinsk opera house. In the creative report about performances «Eugeny Onegin» and «Carmen» V. Vanslov stated «that the performance «Eugeny Onegin» is bad and old. It goes languidly, without enthusiasm. The conductor conducts the performance poorly. The orchestra rattles and frequently muffles singers. The performance should be removed and staged again. The performance «Carmen» is good, especially on the musical level». N. Shaidarova – «Carmen» gives an interesting meaning of the image, not imitating uncountable other «Carmen». I. Zak conducts the opera with the big skill. The orchestra sounds clearly, expressively with true tempoes. The chorus sounds well»⁵. Undoubtedly the arrival of the critics had positive effect on work of theatres; however the attitude to the critics was ambiguous. On the one hand the professional estimation of the done work was necessary, on the other hand critics came seldom, they did not see the development of the theatre and actors that is why their estimation was not always objective. There were remarks to Chelyabinsk Branch of all-russian theatrical society that it was necessary to think of fastening two or three critics from the centre to the Ural region: «it is very important for the critics to come each two or three months. (...) Let them come to look at the theatre, actors and let them tell if we grow and do not. (...) If the

critic did not come at once but from time to time he would speak about our work and we would not react so painfully»⁶.

The organization of work of professional collectives at theatres became very important⁷. The big place in the organization of such work was allocated to creative sections both working and newly formed. So in September, 1965, newly created art – staged section had its first classes. The winner of the state premium the artist – Andzhan A.I. (Moscow film studio) was invited to conduct classes. He gave some practical classes working with a make-up, the lecture «The application of new materials in hairdresser's work». The positive feature in the work of the section was the fact that make-up artists visited each other on workplaces and adopted something for work. Classes were held in Tsvilling's theatre and make-up artists from all theatres of the region attended them⁸.

In November, 1965, Chelyabinsk branch made a request for the organization of classes on scenic speech. In this connection the adviser of all-russian theatrical society Elistratova A.A. (Moscow) came to Chelyabinsk. She admitted that the speech culture in Chelyabinsk region was very poor, especially in Zlatoust. Elistratova's arrival served as a good push for the activation of individual work of actors at the speech culture. Lectures «The modern literary pronunciation» and «Speech culture of the theatre» were organized by her. The individual work was a very positive feature in her technique⁹.

To increase the professional skills stage managers of Chelyabinsk and the region trained in creative laboratories in Moscow since October till December, 1965: the main producer of Chelyabinsk drama theatre Sapegin B. V. was trained by Tovstonogov, the main producer of the theatre of a young spectator Scomorovskij B.A. was trained by Pluchek, the main producer of the opera house people's artist of RSFSR Dautov

N.K. was trained by Pokrovskij¹⁰. As we see, the process of vocational training was carried out under a precise management of the central all-russian theatrical society.

Since May 1968 till November 1970 all work of all-russian theatrical society was directed to the organization of a worthy celebration of a 100-anniversary of V.I. Lenin's birthday and XXIV congress of the CPSU. The main emphasis in work was made on the actions connected with the increase of ideological and professional level of workers of the theatre: for example, in Tsvilling's theatre in Chelyabinsk the seminar on aesthetics and the lecture «Lenin in art» were held; in Magnitogorsk in Pushkin drama theatre there was a political education on Marxist – Lenin aesthetics and the lecture «The image of a woman – communist on the Soviet stage», in Zlatoust drama theatre there was a lecture «Theoretical Lenin's heritage in literature and art» and a political class «The history of the CPSU»¹¹. According to the plans of the centralized actions the expanded session of Presidium of the Council of all-russian theatrical society «The image of the communist on the Soviet stage» was held in Ulyanovsk. The purpose of the given action was the generalization of the theory and the practice of work in staging the performances the basis of which was the image of the communist as an example of a person selflessly devoted to the people, to the party to the ideals of the constructions of a communist society.

Chelyabinsk branch of all-russian theatrical society had the review of performances at various theatres of the region and invited the best directors, producers and actors to the exit session of the Presidium of all-russian theatrical society¹².

Comprehensive work of Chelyabinsk branch of all-russian theatrical society with the artistic youth was systematically carried out. Review of the young actors, two regional reviews of the creative youth devoted to a 100-anniversary

of Lenin's birthday, regional contest of readers, zone conference «Producer's work with an actor in the conditions of a city theatre», creative meetings of young actors with each other were held together with the Regional committee of Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union. Branch of all-russian theatrical society insisted on having daily work with the youth at the theatres: «It is necessary to form the outlook of our young actors, – a member of all-russian theatrical society, producer B.A. Skomorovskij said, – for them to understand what they do, what ideas they have»¹³.

In 70-s the party-state leaders of the country strengthened ideological influence on the process of cultural construction. There were more various forms and methods of such influence, the role of a public opinion in questions of culture raised; discussions became the norm of spiritual life of the Soviet society. Discussions and conferences on themes «For close connection of literature and art with life of people», «The role of art in Communist education of Soviet people», were developed on pages of newspapers and magazines («The Soviet culture», «Art», etc.). Many themes were connected with the youth, among them are: «Art is the important means of the education of the youth», «The civic position and the creative growth of a young actor» (Shalunovsky, 1969; Civic position..., 1960). Correspondents marked that the absence of good plays on up-to-date themes limits opportunities of the young actors. In spite of the fact of being busy young actors in Chelyabinsk and Magnitogorsk theatres did not have worthy roles for 2-3 years¹⁴.

In March, 1969 under the initiative of Chelyabinsk branch of all-russian theatrical society the review – competition of theatrical youth was held. 67 persons who played in 36 performances of all genres of classical and modern dramatic art took part in it. The purpose of the competition was the acquaintance with

young creative talents, their civic position and strengthening high communist spiritually moral norms in lively scenic images¹⁵. Critics and the press estimated a professional level of young actors positively. Alongside with the positive moments lacks were also marked. In the review the significant work of a young actor or an actress in the creation of the image of a young Soviet positive hero was not noticed. The art authorities of many theatres did not care of giving young actors interesting and art significant roles¹⁶.

In February, 1971, the Department of the creative youth was formed at Central all-russian theatrical society. The Department was engaged in all-round analysis of work of the theatrical organizations of RSFSR with the creative youth, maintenance of the further improvement of the contents, methods and forms of ideological education and professional work (The status of the Department..., 1971). Chelyabinsk branch of all-russian theatrical society started to cooperate with the newly – created organization. To improve the professional skill of the theatrical youth it tries to organize professional study at the theatres of the region. Together with the main producers, branch of all-russian theatrical society developed the curriculum where the individual work with the actor was emphasized. Teachers of Chelyabinsk institute of culture on scenic speech, voice training and characteristic dance Lukjanova L.N., Dikopolskaya V.A., Bejlin V.I., were invited to conduct classes¹⁷.

The participant of a seminar on aesthetics in Moscow, the candidate of philosophical sciences G.N. Zatevahina did a big professional – creative work with the youth. Actors said that «the major quality of her lectures was the skill to coordinate the abstract aesthetic categories with daily life of our theatres»¹⁸. Organized at Chelyabinsk Branch of all-russian theatrical society art-staged section from the first years of existence (1965) and during all the creative way saved up a certain experience

in conducting the classes on the improvement of professional skills of workers of stage shops. Therefore it addressed to the popularization of the section. For this purpose two exhibitions «Stage properties» and «Creativity of young artists of the theatre» were organized. The exhibition drew the attention of the diversified spectator layers. One of the records in the visitor's book spoke convincingly about its success. «This exhibition is good with the novelty. Works are creatively interesting, there are no hardened dogmas in them, each work is a new discovery»¹⁹. Definitely such exhibitions were stimulus to the further creativity. They revealed original, gifted artists.

By February, 1975, with the approval of the Region committee of the party the section of criticism was formed which was headed by the chairman Zatevahina G.N. A small stuff of the section was given a task to popularize the work of the theatre in the press as much as possible, to discuss urgency questions of theatrical life, to print creative portraits, to publish pressing articles. For example at one of the sessions of the critics' section the works published in the collection «Ural theatrical» were discussed: Zatevahina had the review of the performance «Vigorous people», Morgules had the review of the performance «Shveik» and «Til», critic Letyagina had the review of the performance «Ivanov», critic Stul wrote about Magnitigorsk puppet theatre²⁰. On one of the creative critics' meetings with actors of the theatre it was told that they want to see in critics «first of all people who would be aware of cares, excitements and plans of the theatre». The informal creative approach to the estimation of theatres' work, genuine interest to the processes, taking place inside theatrical collectives made the section of critics the leading one in the structure of Chelyabinsk Branch of all-russian theatrical society²¹.

It paid a lot of attention to the organization of the creative activity and the proof of the plans

of work can be found in archival sources. The basic items of the plans were: the organization of evenings of art reading of young actors, evenings of the not played roles, review of the best films of the Soviet and Foreign cinema, the organization of leisure and rest of creative workers²². The actor's club, having become an integral part of life of many actors, organized meetings with workers of the enterprises. It is necessary to admit that because of the absence of the place for the actor's club, the hall of the theatre and the «red corner» on the territory of an enterprise could be a place holding such meetings. Actors and workers exchanged with greetings, had quizzes. In breaks between the performances of the theatre there were dances and talks with a cup of tea²³.

Thus, professional-creative activity of the Chelyabinsk Section of all-Russian theatrical society in 1960-1970-th was carried out in conditions of strengthening ideological party-state influence. The politics of «cultural construction» was carried out by means of a theatrical art through variety of forms and ways of interaction of the party-state institutes with directors, actors, artists and art critics. This activity carried in itself also the educational aspect shown in education of figures of theatre from positions of soviet-patriotic values. At the same time Chelyabinsk Section of all-Russian theatrical society aspired to render to figures of theatre and theatrical collectives all-round aid in their professional-creative perfection.

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Abbreviations:

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RSALA – Russian State Archival Organization Literature and Art

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