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Which war? Amateur theaters commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Great Patriotic War victory

Аннотация. Статья посвящена новаторскому любительскому театру в Советском Союзе в 1983–1985 гг. — период подготовки к празднованию 40-летнего юбилея победы над Германией в Великой Отечественной войне. Несмотря на культ Победы, существующий по сей день, ряд театральных студий отказался в эти годы от постановки ортодоксальных пьес о войне. Напротив, даже в тех случаях, когда пьесы прямо обращались к событиям войны, в постановках было место и для иронии (иногда благодаря звучавшим в спектаклях песням Владимира Высоцкого). Некоторые студии, игнорируя тему Второй мировой войны, переносили акцент на другие, более противоречивые сюжеты, такие как, например, политические репрессии, ядерная война и антивоенные настроения. Благодаря своему смелому подходу эти спектакли получали признание на различных смотрах. Такой успех представляет интерес в свете репрессивных мер против искусства после 1983 г., связанных с очередным пиком противостояния в холодной войне. Поддержка студий и их спектаклей со стороны местных домов культуры, жюри и критиков демонстрирует ограниченность возможностей партии и правительства определять культурные приоритеты.

Ключевые слова: В. Белякович, В. Высоцкий, В. Голиков, Р. Гринберг, С. Кургинян, М. Розовский, русский театр, М. Щепенко

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> *...when we write about the war, it must, of course, be borne in mind that our thoughts are always aimed in a given direction, like the pointer of a compass, and that direction has but a single designation — our times. Otherwise, all efforts lose their meaning* [Apukhtina 1978: 38].

Soviet writer Iurii Bondarev's 1975 observation about novels depicting World War II also reflected the perspectives of Communist Party leaders, artists, and the broader public, although their views were neither uniform nor merely polarized. His assessment was valid not only during the thirtieth anniversary of the Soviet victory, and his comments apply to other representations of the subject: monuments, individual memories, and even social practices.

This paper reorients that compass to amateur theater from 1983 to 1985. The amateur arts festival honoring the fortieth anniversary of the Soviet victory over the Nazis provides an opportunity to see the collision (or not) of official expectations and popular representations at the moment when, in the words of Nina Tumarkin, the cult of the World War two was experiencing its "last hurrah" [Tumarkin 1995: 29]. As Bondarev suggests, interpretations about the war illuminate other aspects of Soviet society and culture in the transitional period between the "mature socialism" of Leonid Brezhnev's leadership and Mikhail Gorbachev's programs of glasnost' and perestroika, which were implemented only after the festival.

Since the appearance of Tumarkin's study, scholarship on the cultural resonances of the war has evolved away from discussion of a cult per se toward the evolution of the war's myths and memories. Some scholarship has addressed monuments, the most concrete symbols of war [Schleifman 2001; Forest, Johnson 2002; Palmer 2009]. Considerable attention has also focused on questions regarding memory itself [Kirschenbaum 2006; Carleton 2011; Amar 2011]. Although other scholarship has focused on literary and film interpretations of the war [Shneidman 1979; 1989; Segel 1993; Youngblood 2007; Baraban 2007], theatrical productions remain relatively unexplored. Scholarly interest has been so great that *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* (2011) and *Journal of Baltic Studies* (2008) devoted entire issues to these topics. They all recognize the powerful memories of the war, both central, official narratives and local, individual re-workings of official myths to better fit real, personal tragedies.

The war's enduring significance made it an especially fertile soil for alternative theatrical interpretations. These innovative efforts were achieved through diverse approaches to scripts: long-established plays, scripts based on prose works, or self-written texts that blended historical documents and fiction. Some amateur troupes contributed to collective memories of the war, but for others the festival provided an opportunity to shift attention from World War two to other wars or war more generally. The productions addressed here did not challenge notions of widespread suffering and the long-standing impact of the war, but adherence to these conventional understandings on one level allowed them to incorporate other, more heterodox themes, including the purges, nuclear war, and pacifism. In spite of their multilayered messages, these productions received acclaim at local and regional festivals. Published reviews reveal critics' perspective, but it is hard to know which aspects of the productions attracted juries: the sensitive portrayals of wartime, the controversial elements, successful stage

techniques, or some combination. All the same, the productions and their reception offer an opportunity to assess central efforts at ideological conformity.

This study does not provide an exhaustive overview of the innovative work. The festival had no national gala that brought to Moscow the best productions from the regions, so evidence is scattered. National press coverage of the regional festivals was episodic at best, an indication of the lack of interest in what was often expected to be tedious amateurism. A complete study of regional newspapers is prohibitive. As a result, the evidence here reflects a minimum and suggests that other compelling productions undoubtedly appeared. Omitted here are the majority of amateur troupes that were satisfied to choose orthodox texts that reinforced dominant myths.

This use of the war for contemplation of other, more problematic wars and struggles is particularly surprising given the crackdown on the arts that was underway when the festival began in 1983. Central-level intolerance for nonconformity resulted from increasing Cold War friction and related concerns about economic growth. The war in Afghanistan had severely eroded relations with the United States. Tensions escalated when Ronald Reagan became U.S. President in 1981. He immediately requested a substantial addition to the military budget and buttressed this military muscle with strong ideological language. Referring to the Soviet Union as "the evil empire" in early 1983, he dismissed nuclear freeze efforts in favor of "an effective strategic defense" against a Soviet nuclear attack. Soviet leaders interpreted these initiatives as a disavowal of mutual deterrence. To add to the growing estrangement, the United States deposed the socialist leader of Grenada in September. In the wake of these developments, Soviet military leaders genuinely feared that NATO exercises in November 1983 could be used to launch a nuclear attack [Garthoff 1994: 85–141; Fischer 1997; Oberdorfer 1998: 15–106]. Growing recognition of long-standing economic weaknesses further exacerbated Soviet insecurity. In late 1982, newly elected General Secretary Iurii Andropov acknowledged the disappointing progress of the Eleventh 5-Year Plan (1981–1985) [Rowen 1984]. These concerns created a fortress mentality among Soviet leaders with consequences for the public.

Foreign policy anxieties led party leaders to demand that artists close ranks in this time of crisis. The link between art and foreign policy coalesced in major speeches on ideology by Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko at the June 1983 plenum [Chernenko 1983 = Черненко 1983; Andropov 1983 = Андропов 1983]. Specific measures for professional theaters already reflected the growing intolerance in March when the Central Committee called for greater intrusion by party cells into all theater activities, including choice of repertoire, work discipline, and "the moral climate" [V Tsentral'nom Komitete KPSS 1983 = ЦК 1983]. The Ministry of Culture targeted all genres of both professional and amateur collectives. Directed to all levels of governmental and trade union organizations, unpublished sections of one Ministry resolution were unusually blunt in their demand that cultural officials "remove from repertoires any works with outdated and weak ideological-artistic attitudes". Invoking the specter of "formalism", the resolution called for the dismissal of individuals, including supervisory administrators and officials who would bear full responsibility for unacceptable activities [Постановление 1983: 126–127]. The demand for compliance was so great that candor replaced the usual obfuscation. At the fiftieth anniversary of the Writers' Union in 1984, Chernenko, now General Secretary, warned,

> Freedom of expression is not the privilege of the elite ‹…› no one and nothing can free a person from the obligations of all society's demands and laws. It is naive to think that it is possible to sully (чернить) the moral-political foundations of our system and simultaneously expect thanks and recognition for it [Chernenko 1984 = Черненко 1984].

In the current environment, there was no need to pretend that censorship did not exist.

Numerous amateur theaters were affected by these measures, but enforcement was highly localized and inconsistent. At least two acclaimed troupes, "Chelovek" in Moscow and "Sinii most" in Leningrad, were shut down. A production that included Vladimir Vysotskii's music was closed in Leningrad but continued in Angarsk, Dimitrovgrad, and elsewhere. Some performances of Evgenii Shvarts's *The Dragon* (*Дракон*) were banned while others were praised. A production of Ludmila Razumovskaia's *Dear Elena Sergeevna* (*Дорогая Елена Сергеевна*) was closed in Perm, but a Krasnoyarsk production was performed at least until late 1983. Other approved productions were prohibited. The crackdown was in full swing as the festival got underway.

Along with the ideological pressure on artists, the party was pursuing economic reforms that threatened to undermine festival participation. The event lacked the resources to provide incentives that might have encouraged some degree of conformity. Plans and goals for the festival paled in comparison to the grandness of its predecessor celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the 1917 Revolution. Fiscal austerity permeated the war commemoration. No national-level competitions would take place in the performing arts (song, dance, theater, and instrumental ensembles), so these participants could not expect a coveted trip to Moscow. This restriction may have led some troupes to consider texts that would have been controversial in Moscow but tolerated at home. In addition, festival activities could no longer occur during work or school time, a long-standing practice that was first forbidden in 1981 but often ignored [Постановление 1981; Шитов 1986: 151].

Festival juries faced a dilemma in these circumstances. The ideological and economic demands of the day threatened to undermine the quantity and quality of productions. At the same time, festivals were grappling with a growing lack of relevance, because public leisure activities increasingly drifted away from organized experiences, including theater, that clubs traditionally supported. Despite the restrictions, local participation goals reflected unchanged expectations. In this environment, juries and clubs were hard pressed to punish deviants, and the lack of a Moscow finale freed them to evaluate productions based on local expectations that did not always comply with national ideological expectations [Costanzo 2008; 2013].

Festival productions continued some trends from the 1975 commemoration. The topic of World War Two was a popular vehicle for amateur theaters in the 1970s, but not only for the obvious reasons. There was central pressure to create works that presented the war in a positive light. The legacy of the war also retained its relevance for the public, and genuine patriotism played a role. War plays resonated for another reason. Amateur plays in the era after 1968 were particularly concerned with questions of individual morality, and the war provided the ultimate proving ground for integrity because choices had mortal consequences. As a character in Boris Vasil'ev's *Not on the Lists* (*В списках не значился*) put it, "If you survived, it means that someone

perished for you. ‹…› It wasn't just a question of conscience, but also a question of life" [Васильев б. д.: 17]. A number of plays were set in the Belorussian Republic, a liminal space where discipline, order, and obedience to official institutions had little meaning after the Germans invaded and Soviet power could not influence citizens' decisions. Such plays exalted individual sacrifice rather than war itself, although individuals' willingness to die reinforced the belief in a just war. This emphasis did not challenge pervasive myths that increasingly humanized the war.

By the early 1980s, the concern with individual morality remained, but innovative amateurs were adding new directions. Perhaps the decline of the cult nudged them away from standard interpretations. Or perhaps amateurs were frustrated by a lack of new, compelling plays that grappled with the increasingly complex understanding of the war. In addition, these amateurs did not want to replicate plays already performed widely on professional stages. A look at the festival productions shows the limited willingness of some troupes to glorify the war, and local juries did not reward crude patriotism. Many troupes opted to perform sanctioned but complex plays (or prose) by Vasil'ev, Vasil Bykau, and Mikhail Roshchin. While these choices adhered to the festival's theme, other troupes challenged conventional representations of the war.

One shift in the presentations of the war was the depiction of Germans. Gone were evil Nazi characters who hang children and coopt some Russians into collaboration, as in Bykau's *Sotnikov* (*Сотников*). Instead, they were now neutral or completely absent from some plays. The new approach was most effective in productions that continued to explore the consequences of individual morality. For instance, Sergei Kurginian, an engineering Ph.D. who led the Moscow Geological Institute's collective "Na doskakh", wrote a script based on Bondarev's 1975 acclaimed novel *The Shore* (*Берег*). N. N. Shneidman writes that in Bondarev's novels, individual ethical problems are often secondary to major political conflicts and military confrontations, and his innovations bear the stamp of official approval [Shneidman 1979]. According to a review, however, Kurginian inverted those priorities. Although the novel is set in Berlin in 1971 with flashbacks to mid-1945, the production focused on the war's end, and 1971 served as a vehicle to emphasize the importance of "Memory", the real hero of the play, according to reviewers [Bagariatskii, Efremov 1985 = Багаряцкий, Ефремов 1985: 26]. The narrator, Nikitin, is still haunted by the death of his lieutenant while he was trying to save two youths, the only German characters, from needless execution after the war was essentially over. Critics praised not only the choice of play but its ability to embody on stage the novel's fabular elements. The reference to fable (притча) by reviewers hinted that they found contemporary resonances. The minimal depiction of international relations in the 1970s further suggested to contemporary audiences that current foreign policy was not relevant to individuals' daily experiences and moral choices. This interpretation contradicted central ideological concerns but could be easily justified as a product of time constraints and irrelevance to the festival theme, although Kurginian's intentions are unclear.

In this case, the "text" of a play was conformist enough. But orthodox plays sometimes included unorthodox production elements that changed the meaning, and a familiar title obscured the actual messages. Valerii Beliakovich used this strategy in *The Russian People* (*Русские люди*), Konstantin Simonov's 1942 Stalin prize-winning play at Theater-studio "Na Iugo-Zapade". In it, Germans were portrayed "not as monsters, but people", according to one critic [Vladimirova 1985 = Владимирова 1985: 20].

Set in a Russian town under German occupation, the plot emphasizes positive characters' patriotism, rather than communist ideology, although the town also has its share of cowards and collaborators [Segel 1993: 308–311]. In addition to its three-dimensional Germans, Beliakovich treated the war ironically by incorporating unsanctioned songs of Vladimir Vysotskii, who sympathized with soldiers but was neither pro-war nor pro-Soviet. Although censors demanded that he remove Vysotskii's music, he ignored them[1]. For this defiance the troupe suffered no consequences, and the music enhanced its positive reception. One critic wrote that the use of Vysotskii was so seamless that the songs seemed to be written expressly for the production [Vladimirova 1985 = Владимирова 1985: 20]. *The Russian People* received critical acclaim at Moscow's city-wide festival, and in March 1985 the theater received "people's theater" status, an award that required approval by Mossovet cultural administrators who had recently censured the troupe for other transgressions [Решение 1983].

Regardless of their critical perspectives, the above productions shared the festival's theme by depicting the war. Other troupes saw the festival as an opportunity to address a different, domestic calamity: the purges. In these productions, the impending war provided only an expedient backdrop. For example, Mark Rozovskii at "U Nikitskikh vorot" studio wrote and staged *You'll always be* (*Всегда ты будешь*), based on the diary of Nina Kosterina. True to his roots at the acclaimed 1960s studio "Nash dom", Rozovskii tells a story that on the surface endorses orthodoxy but underneath reveals a condemnation of the Communist Party. Published in *Novyi mir* in 1962 at the height of revelations about the purges, Kosterina's diary covers 1936 to 1941. Like the mythologized WWII partisan martyr Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia, Nina is fatherless, except that hers is not dead but imprisoned in a labor camp[2]. The diary chronicles the emotional turmoil of her late adolescence, including her difficulties as a child of an "enemy of the people". In spite of the shabby treatment by the Soviet state, her patriotism grows as the war approaches. Hoping that her actions will redeem her father, she volunteers for a partisan unit against the wishes of her true love, unlike Zoia's family. Finally, like Zoia, Nina dies early in the war, but no legends, photographs, or posthumous awards for bravery commemorate her [Kosterina 1962 = Костерина 1962]. In fact, the diary ends with her departure to the partisans, and the production says little about the war itself. She leaves her childhood behind in the diary, though the purges had already destroyed any innocence. Her heroism demonstrates an especially deep and authentic patriotism because she is willing to die for her country despite her family's tragedy. Thus, the play also provides a counterpoint to the Zoia myth because Nina's sacrifice is truly selfless and untainted by the state's ideological machine.

Rozovskii did not completely neglect the war. He incorporated letters from soldiers and period music that resonated with Kosterina's generation. Performances opened with Nina and her friends singing the popular war song "Riorita", which included the line "In a month and no longer, the war will be over". A contemporary of the real Nina, critic Aleksandr Svobodin vouched for the song's authenticity and the genuine naiveté that it revealed about the Soviet public's attitude early in the war. He praised Rozovskii's ability to capture the atmosphere of the times [Svobodin 1985

[1] Valerii Beliakovich (В. Р. Белякович). Interview. Moscow, 1991, October 19. All interviews conducted by S. E. Costanzo.

[2] The production was praised in *Pravda* [Kuchkina 1985 = Кучкина 1985], but none of the reviews at the time explicitly stated her father's plight.

= Свободин 1985]. Forty years later, spectators with hindsight of the extraordinary losses to come were horrified by the misplaced optimism, and below the surface, Rozovskii hinted that the party misled the public about the dire circumstances.

Rozovskii's troupe was engaged in giving voice to what Catherine Merridale describes as the "unspoken grief" of victims of other Soviet tragedies that was silenced by commemorations of the war [Merridale 1999: 62]. Other troupes, including "Subbota" and "Perekrestok" both in Leningrad as well as "Maneken" in Cheliabinsk, also addressed the purges in Vasil'ev's *Tomorrow was war* (*Завтра была война*), a 1984 novel with only a superficial connection to the festival's theme of World War two. The title is intentionally confusing: the war is only briefly mentioned. Instead, the main action occurs in 1939–1940 in an unidentified town where Vika is a sincere, energetic, and bright sixteen-year-old. Her father, a director of an aviation factory, is arrested and accused of an economic crime, a thinly veiled reference to the purges. Her classmates try to support her, but a strident teacher demands her expulsion from the Komsomol. To spare her friends from this act of betrayal, Vika commits suicide, and the students honor her by insisting on a funeral. Her father's subsequent exoneration underscores the meaninglessness of her death [Vasil'ev 1984 = Васильев 1984]. For Vasil'ev, the students' formative experience was not the war in which many of them would die, but the unjust moral dilemmas of the purges that transformed them into adults. Their innocence, like Kosterina's, was lost here, not at the front.

If some troupes performed plays comfortably anchored in the past, other amateurs mounted productions that confronted the immediate threat of nuclear war. On one level, these plays corresponded to shrill Cold War rhetoric and central party claims that the Soviet Union was peace loving while the United States was belligerent. Their prognosis is grim, however, and war is not averted. On the surface, the Soviet Union may not be culpable for the outcome, but it is unable to prevent the catastrophe (hardly an uplifting end). For instance, Leningrad State University (LGU) student theater staged a fable with an undefined setting that encouraged multiple associations. M. Gindin's and V. Sinakevich's script *The Beast* (*Зверь*) had not yet received official sanction, but the troupe received approval to perform it, another example of the disconnect between local and national priorities. This fable begins after a nuclear disaster when a family of bald humans is searching for a husband for their only child. "Daughter" has two suitors: "Beast", a hairy, unattractive man who has saved newspapers and books, a sign of his intellectual leanings and a desire to preserve culture and civilization; and "Friend", an attractive, briefcase-carrying bureaucrat, who is "very offensive", according to Director Vadim Golikov. Although she loves Beast, Daughter chooses Friend because she does not want hairy children. She reveals an ongoing preference for superficiality rather than moral and intellectual character, and she does not consider the broader implications of her decision. Father and Friend so severely beat Beast that he is literally senseless. Thus, the protector of civilization is destroyed, while the real beasts survive [Гиндин, Синакевич б. д.].

Production techniques enhanced the text's pessimism. During performances spectators followed the cast through a series of rooms, and, for the finale, spectators retraced their steps to the exit while the entire troupe was strewn about the rooms[3]. They represented the casualties of the next nuclear war. At the local festival, no scandal

[3] Vadim Golikov (В. С. Голиков). Interview. Leningrad, 1991, July 18.

resulted from the play's unpublished status, and the production won awards for best director and best actor [Golin'kova 1988 = Голинькова 1988]. If challenged, troupes such as LGU could claim that the villain was the United States, and this interpretation fit with the harsh anti-American rhetoric at the time, but spectators would have decided for themselves.

"Na ulitse Chekhova" theater-studio's writer and director Mikhail Shchepenko suggested another, broader interpretation for some productions: these unglamorous war plays were fundamentally anti-war, another problematic theme. Like LGU, his Moscow troupe dealt with the consequences of nuclear war in *Once in the Morning before Sunset* (*Однажды утром перед закатом*), based on Shchepenko's script. In this case, supervisory officials recognized the unorthodox subtexts and nonetheless supported the troupe in spite of potential fallout. Shchepenko recalled that the theater's supervisory organization, the Mendeleev Institute party committee, wanted to ban performances of *Sunset*, but the Institute rector successfully defended the production by arguing that "pacifist" ideas had the right to exist[4]. His view contradicted prevailing ideology and the festival's underlying message about the acceptability of a just war. Pure pacifism may have been frowned upon in professional productions, but the amateur realm offered greater tolerance for such views, and those views were sometimes protected when harassed. Anti-war beliefs were not confined to the amateur realm at the time but had also emerged as a peace movement among some dissidents since 1982 [Rubenstein 1985], although no local cultural officials acknowledged any similarity.

Anti-war beliefs were particularly evident when Vysotskii's songs were used. Beliakovich was not the only director to incorporate his music in festival productions. His ironic view of war and his empathy with common soldiers more closely reflected the public mood than central rhetoric. Despite central efforts to circumscribe Vysotskii's popularity, acclaim for productions with his music demonstrates that his work was increasingly accepted in local mainstream *official* culture. For the festival, Ivanovo's "Molodezhnyi" theater-studio celebrated poetry about the war, including the bard's songs, in *First Steps* (*Первые шаги*). An article in *Sovetskaia kul'tura* praised both the production and Vysotskii's contributions to the public's understanding of the Soviet victory [Efremov 1985 = Ефремов 1985]. It is unclear if the newspaper's editors knew that the review was written by a member of the troupe's soviet. Regardless, the newspaper at least tacitly endorsed his views because it typically published disclaimers when editors disagreed[5]. For early festival competitions, Director Regina Grinberg incorporated Vysotskii's music in the second act, and the troupe was awarded a prize at its local festival [Chebotareva 1985 = Чеботарева 1985: 74]. By early 1985, however, the production had omitted other poets and added his songs with social commentary that had no connection to the war.

Another subversive Aesopian interpretation also lurked beneath these depictions of conventional and nuclear tragedies of war, although neither critics nor juries expressed the possibilities on the record. The productions could be read as a commentary on the Afghanistan war, a Soviet foreign policy disaster that was increasingly

[4] Mikhail Shchepenko (М. С. Щепенко). Interview. Moscow, 1991, February 6.

[5] The article only lists his professional job. Such "self-written" articles in the press were common for amateurs.

unpopular. Nazi or nuclear belligerence paralleled Soviet aggression. Given the censorship surrounding the Afghanistan war, it is unclear if the parallel was intended, and troupes could deny any such purpose.

* * *

Innovative amateurs were not interested in conventional theatrical manifestations of the cult of the Great Patriotic War. The commemorative festival presented an opportunity for them to explore their attitudes toward all types of war, and they engaged in reflections that even conservatives like Bondarev could recognize as relevant to the circumstances of the 1980s. Among the best productions were plays that not only did not glorify the Soviet Union's role in the war. Some of them espoused anti-war views or may have led spectators to question the morality of the current war in Afghanistan. Others used the war to remind spectators not of war against Germany, for which everyone was proud, but of the internal "war" that raged during the purges and represented a national shame. None of these plays adhered to the central party's ideology that insisted on artistic loyalty in light of the deepening conflict with the United States.

Some low-level officials and juries did not share central fears or perhaps had a more immediate concern that local cultural institutions would grow increasingly irrelevant as the public chose other leisure options. The decision to support innovative amateurs at the expense of central priorities suggests that party leaders had not only lost control of unofficial culture; they were ceding control of official culture as well. This heterodoxy extended beyond renegade artists to include the press, officials, and juries who were all responsible for cultural oversight. Commemorative festivals, often assumed to be rituals of conformity, instead reflected local priorities that increasingly sanctioned discussions of previously taboo subjects. Although these efforts appear tame when compared to the heyday of glasnost, they demonstrate that, in some locales, Soviet culture was already moving in the direction of greater openness even in the relatively repressive environment of the 1983 war scare.

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Which war? Amateur theaters commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Great Patriotic War victory

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Abstract. This paper analyzes innovative amateur theater in the Soviet Union during the period 1983–1985 — a time, when the country prepared to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Soviet victory over the Nazis. In spite of the ongoing cult of World War Two, a number of theatre studios did not put on orthodox war plays. Instead, although some plays focused on the war, they often approached it ironically, sometimes by incorporating the songs of Vladimir Vysotskii. Other troupes ignored the war and emphasized other, more controversial themes, including the purges, nuclear war, and anti-war sentiments. At festivals, these productions re-

ceived acclaim for their heterodox interpretations. Their success is significant because it occurred in the midst of a national crackdown on the arts that resulted from the 1983 war scare. The support from local clubs, juries, and critics for these troupes and their productions demonstrates the limited ability of central governmental and party organizations to dictate local cultural priorities.

Keywords: V. Beliakovich, V. Golikov, R. Grinberg, S. Kurginian, M. Rozovskii, Russian theater, M. Shchepenko, V. Vysotskii

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