

Ms.
Coll.
00688

Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova papers
1923

Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova documents 2016

2 holograph, hand decorated certificates

1 typescript letter

Extent: 1 box (0.5 metre)

Document 1:

“To the enlightener of the stage, Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova, respectfully from the members of the Club’s Executive of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade Club”. No date. [1923]

Document 2:

“Dear Stanislava Eduardovna!

The Drama Circle of the Krasnoyarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade Club greets you on this day, your “theatrical birthday” – this “benefit” performance in your honour. On this auspicious day, as members of the Drama Circle, we bring you our profound gratitude for your devotion to our common goal of service to the art, and your warmth, which you have shared with us, in pursuit of this goal. We wish you a bright future, and hope that we will continue working together without fail.

Respectfully yours:

Chairman of the Drama Circle of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade

Vice Chairman

Secretary

Director of the Drama Circle of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade

Members (16)

January 27, 1923

Krasnoiarsk”

Document 3:

TLS January 20, 1923

“Dear Stanislava Eduardovna,

Today, celebrating the 20th anniversary of your stage career, the Executive Committee of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade has instructed me to bring to you its greetings and expressions of sincere gratitude for your participation in founding the Volunteer Fire Brigade’s amateur drama circle, and for your volunteership in the Club. For me, your old stage partner, this is an especially pleasant task to fulfill, for I recall the life of our Club’s stage, all the times you demonstrated your love of the dramatic

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arts, and your unselfish willingness to help out in difficult circumstances that so often occur in such amateur drama circles.

Congratulating you, dear STANISLAVA EDUARDOVNA, on this day of your 20th anniversary, the Committee and I personally wish you continued success and hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on our stage for a long time yet to come.

Member of the Executive Committee of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade

Krasnoiarsk

January 20, 1923”

Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova was born in 1887, of Polish descent. She was an actress in the Karl Liebknecht drama club of Krasnoiarsk. She later helped found the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade’s amateur drama circle and was both an actress and club member. These documents were presented to her to mark her 20th anniversary as an actress. Dranishnikova was arrested and accused of counter-revolutionary activities on February 18th, 1921. Unusually, she was released on April 17, 1921.

“Revolutionaries, Firefighters and Thespians”

PJRC update № 9 • Fall 2016

Wasył Syderenko

Recently, the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library received a most unusual gift, a set of three documents: two hand-drawn certificates, and one typewritten cover letter, dated 20 & 27 January 1923 in Krasnoiarsk, Siberia. The most striking feature of the certificates is the florid handwriting with unusual arabesques, which makes reading the text quite challenging. Fortunately, the writing is stylistically uniform. Once certain letters are identified, it becomes fairly easy to interpret the words. Apparently, these are congratulatory certificates that were given to Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova on the occasion of her 20th anniversary as an actress. The letter and laudatory texts reveal that Dranishnikova helped found the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade’s amateur drama circle and participated both as actress and club volunteer. All the club members signed the larger of the two certificates. One can decipher the name of the artistic director, I. Bystrov, and that of one of the members, Frolova. On the reverse is a printed crest of the Volunteer Fire Brigade commemorating the 20th anniversary of its founding in 1899. The symbolism and mottos are pre-revolutionary as God is mentioned and the old orthography is used. So, who is Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova, and what fair zephyr brought here these relics of thespians past from such far off lands? Serendipitously, a quick check of the Memorial society’s online database produced an immediate match. Apparently, Stanislava was born in 1887. She was Polish, literate, lived in Krasnoiarsk, and was an actress in the “Karl Liebknecht” club. On 18 February 1921 she was arrested and charged with counter-revolutionary activities. The prosecution, however, was terminated 17 April 1921 by the Krasnoiarsk Cheka because of exonerating circumstances, and she was released. Her memory was rehabilitated 14 March 2004. She was one lucky lady! Further

research has proved fruitless. No more information about Dranishnikova has been found. Nevertheless, some interesting facts have emerged. The “Karl Liebknecht” Theatre was a dramatic club associated with both the firefighters and the railway workers union. It was founded and built in 1900, receiving its revolutionary name in 1917. The building itself was constructed of timbers and stood until 1984 when it was torn down. During its demolition, the theatre’s entire archive perished. Surviving photographs and press clippings provide but rare glimpses into the life of the theatre. In 1923, the year Dranishnikova was feted, the theatre staged two operas: *Rusalka* by Alexander Dargomyzhsky and *Faust* by Charles Gounod. The work most often staged was the *Zaporozhian Cossack beyond the Danube* by Semen Hulak-Artemovskiy, proving the presence of many Ukrainians in the city. Recently, the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library received a most unusual gift, a set of three documents: two hand-drawn certificates, and one typewritten cover letter, dated 20 & 27 January 1923 in Krasnoiarsk, Siberia. The most striking feature of the certificates is the florid handwriting with unusual arabesques, which makes reading the text quite challenging. Fortunately, the writing is stylistically uniform. Once certain letters are identified, it becomes fairly easy to interpret the words. Apparently, these are congratulatory certificates that were given to Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova on the occasion of her 20th anniversary as an actress. The letter and laudatory texts reveal that Dranishnikova helped found the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade’s amateur drama circle and participated both as actress and club volunteer. All the club members signed the larger of the two certificates. One can decipher the name of the artistic director, I. Bystrov, and that of one of the members, Frolova. On the reverse is a printed crest of the Volunteer Fire Brigade commemorating the 20th anniversary of its founding in 1899. The symbolism and mottos are pre-revolutionary as God is mentioned and the old orthography is used. So, who is Stanislava Eduardovna Dranishnikova, and what fair zephyr brought here these relics of thespians past from such far off lands? Serendipitously, a quick check of the Memorial society’s online database produced an immediate match. Apparently, Stanislava was born in 1887. She was Polish, literate, lived in Krasnoiarsk, and was an actress in the “Karl Liebknecht” club. On 18 February 1921 she was arrested and charged with counter-revolutionary activities. The prosecution, however, was terminated 17 April 1921 by the Krasnoiarsk Cheka because of exonerating circumstances, and she was released. Her memory was rehabilitated 14 March 2004. She was one lucky lady! Respectfully from the members of the Club’s Executive of the Krasnoiarsk Volunteer Fire Brigade Club. № 9 • Fall 2016 PJRC update 9

The history of Krasnoiarsk begins in 1628 when a border fort was constructed by Russian explorer Andrei A. Dubenskii on the site of the present-day city. It was only in the 19th century, when the city was that the population of Krasnoiarsk began to grow. It soon became the place whereto political exiles were sent. In the late 1820s, eight Decembrists settled in the region. These were soon followed by Polish exiles from the November (1830-1831) and January (1863-1864) uprisings. During World War I, many refugees, prisoners of war, and military allies of the White Movement (Czechoslovaks, Latvians, and Italians) came to Krasnoiarsk. They had with them five military bands, four orchestras, and a choir. Yevgenia S. Tsareva, a musicologist from Krasnoiarsk, describes this period as one of extensive Europeanization. Even the Bolshevik takeover in 1920 did not reduce the influence of European culture. Maybe this is why Dranishnikova survived her arrest in 1921. In 1919-1920, Krasnoiarsk was part of the territory controlled by Admiral Alexander V. Kolchak. Early in January 1920 the city was seized by the Red Army in what was known as the Krasnoiarsk Operation. Local historian Viktor A. Aferenko in his book *Ekho Grazhdanskoii voiny* (Echo of of this operation. Relative peace did not come to the city for quite some time. Another local historian Vladimir M. Bushuev in his book *Grani: Chekisty Krasnoiaria ot VChK do FSB* (Edges:

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Krasnoiarsk security officers from the Cheka to the FSB, 2000) describes a particular occurrence on the eve of 19 February 1921. For several months the Cheka had observed the activities of a counter-revolutionary cell inside the city. It was discovered that a massacre of Communist Party officials was being planned on the eve of 21 February 1921. A gathering of Party members was to take place at the Pushkin Theatre in Krasnoiarsk. The building was to be seized by the counter-revolutionaries and all attendees killed. There was a list of Cheka members and civil workers who were to be killed in their homes as well. In a pre-emptive strike 18 February 1921, the Cheka arrested 89 people, the same day that Dranishnikova was arrested. As an actress, was she associated with people from the Pushkin Theatre? Were any of the theatre workers collaborating with the counter-revolutionaries? Was Dranishnikova an innocent bystander, at the wrong place at the wrong time, or was she actually aiding and abetting someone? Whatever happened, she was exonerated and released two months later. It may have been something more than just the love of European culture that secured Dranishnikova her freedom. Of course, one more question remains unanswered—how did the three documents make their way to Toronto, Canada? The story may be another Zhivagian epic or a secret never to be discovered. Anyone with information that can help us solve the mystery is kindly asked to contact the Petro Jacyk Resource Centre.