BULGAkov'S
MOLIERE AND HIS
RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE MOSCOW
ART THEATRE

In October of 1929, eight months after THE
DAYS OF THE TAURUS was banned, Bulgakov
began work on a new play, A CABAL OF
HYPOCRITES (MOLIERE), during a period of
great personal persecution — two months after receiving his letter from Stalin.
Bulgakov presented the play to Leonidov in
January of 1930, and he informed Stanislavsky
that the play was interesting but that the
theatre had decided not to "push it through
to the public" due to the need for contemporary
plays. Nonetheless, in February of 1930, A
CABAL OF HYPOCRITES was rejected for reasons of
content. Stanislavsky was well aware of the
play and privately expressed the hope that
Bulgakov would submit it to another theatre.
Despite the fact that the censorship, the theatre intention, the censor could not be
reversed so that it could pass the censors.
In 1931, a CABAL OF HYPOCRITES was finally
put in the Moscow Art Theatre's repertory,
but rehearsals were few and widely spaced.
In the summer of 1932, the play was ac-
cepted for production, but again no work was
begun on it. In 1933, there were a few rehearsals,
and scenes were even being made, but Stanislavsky felt that the theatre would not be
able to stage it by the end of the year. Finally,
in 1934, work began in earnest. The play
which had been given to the theatre in 1930
was not put into production for four years
so it was not in the author's interest to
improve himself in the story of Moliere again after
having been involved with so many other
generic ideas about the production. N.Gorchakov
was director of A CABAL OF HYPOCRITES, Bulgakov
the assistant director, and Stanislavsky
himself served as production manager.
A date was set for the first rehearsal, but
on the night before, Bulgakov called Gorchakov
and asked him to come to his apartment
and discuss the play separately. By this time
the role of Moliere had been assigned, but there had been no
rehearsals. This sub rosa conversation was
conducted so that Stanislavsky could express
disatisfaction with the play. He disliked the
picture presented of Moliere, because Moliere
was not revealed as the great genius he was;
Stanislavsky praised the way the play's action
was developed, the vivid portrayals of the
people and events surrounding Moliere, but he in-
sisted that it was a "great shame in the play"
that Moliere was not shown in all his glory as a
writer. Bulgakov was out to point out, cor-
crectly, that in not one scene did Moliere or his
ideas come through — therefore the death itself did not
imply anything about the play's success.
Mihail Afanasevich, I hope, will see the
end of that and correct the text at last.
SMALL OR THE ENTERTAINMENT POLIS

FOUR TITLE GIRLS

Hladna Theezet

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