
REGIONAL CONTEST “BOOK OF THE YEAR” AND TYUMEN BOOK PUBLISHING OF 2000s. BOOK CONTESTS IN MODERN RUSSIA

It is a well-known fact that there are three main book contests in Russia. The contest “Best Book of the Year” is held by Book Publishers Association (ASKI) since 1991. Two other competitions, “Book of the Year” (which dates back to 1999) and “Malaya Rodina” (which dates back to 2005; the name of the contest can be translated as “My Native Land”) are held by the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications (FAPMK). Beside these three main and universal all-embracing contests there are private ones and those that deal only with some spheres of book publishing; the most well-known contest of them is “University Book” which has been held since 2000. There are also regional book contests that take place in a number of Russian cities — Kirov, Chelyabinsk, Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, etc.

Tyumen region publishing houses actively compete in all-Russian contests. For example, from 2001 till 2010 Tyumen publishers received 10 awards in FAPMK and ASKI contests; 3 awards out of these 10 are of the top level, and other 7 are awards of second level. Overall in Russia there were 1365 awards handed out in these 3 major contests (245 of them are of the top level, and 1070 are of the second level). For comparison, Sverdlovsk region received 29 awards during this period (2 of them are of the top level, and 27 of them are of the second level). By the number of awards Tyumen region takes the 13th place, Sverdlovsk region takes the 1st place (out of 50 regions) [1]. It is necessary to focus the reader’s attention here, as the leadership in the number of awards in our region is held by the foundation “Resurrection of Tobolsk”, headed by A.G. Elphimov. The “Publishing House of Tyumen State University” is also a leader in a number of awards in Tyumen. This statistics, however special it may look, gives rather clear information about the status and level of Tyumen book publishing of 2000s.

Tyumen Book Publishing of 2000s: Facts and Figures

In the year 2007, when the first Tyumen regional contest “Book of the Year” took place, there were 824 titles published in the region with the total circulation of 492.7 thousand copies. The largest number of books and booklets (1287 titles with the total circulation of 566.6 thousand of copies) in Tyumen region of 2000s was published in 2009; in the whole Russia there were 127 596 titles of books and booklets published with the total circulation of 716 553.1 thousand copies [2]. So it is possible to say that in Tyumen region out of 2009 there were about 1% of Russian titles published with the total circulation of 0.07% of total Russian amount of copies.

In 2007 there were more than 100 publishing, polygraphic and book selling companies in Tyumen. Reference book “Book Companies of Tyumen of 2008” created by lecturers from the Department of Publishing and Editing of TSU has data about 119 city book companies [3]. It is necessary to focus the reader’s attention on the fact that the majority of these companies were established in the post-Soviet era.

In 2009 “The Union of Polygraphists of Tyumen Region” was established by the leading companies of the region, such as “Tyumen House of Publishing”, “Tyumen Publishing House”, “Express”, “Vector Book” and others. The Union aims to create an environment to enable development of printing business.

In 2002 in TSU the new specialty “Publishing and Editing” has been opened, and in 2005 the new department appeared; this department has been teaching major in printing and publishing, and the department became the only one regional scientific center, studying Tyumen book publishing. All these facts mean that in the second half of 2000s a small, as compared to the overall Russian scale, but sufficiently representative, dynamically developing and pretentious book community has appeared, and it needed self-awareness and self-substantiation [4].

The image of dynamic growth of Tyumen publishing in 2001-2011 and its steep decline in post-crisis 2010-2011 in the background of overall situation in Russia is given in Table 1.

Tyumen Book Competition: History and Conception

The history of Tyumen book contest embraces the period of 5 years (2007-2011) [5].

In 2007 74 titles took part in the contest; in 2008 there were 356 of them; in 2009 — 215 titles; in 2010 — 256; in 2011 — 263. Traditionally 50-70 organizations from Tyumen, Tobolsk, Ishim, Yalutorovsk, Khanty-Mansiysk, Salekhard, Yekaterinburg and other cities of Ural Federal District take part in the contest.

Any contest, including our one, aims to create a hierarchy and to collectively form some criteria of professional skills evaluation. Also this contest helps to understand what is going on in Tyumen publishing sphere today and what its trends are.

The main aim of this contest was to unite all the territories of the region, including South areas as well as North (such as Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug) in the whole space of book culture. It is necessary to mention that, although publishing houses of Salekhard and Khanty-Mansiysk became constant participants of the contest, bookselling connections between the North and the South of the region still do not exist: it is almost impossible in Tyumen to buy a book from the North of the region, and vice versa.

The peculiarity of Tyumen book contest (the idea of its establishment belongs to the Department of Publishing and Editing of TSU) is that one of its main aims is to create tight and mutually beneficial system of links between the department and professional book community of the city and the region, and also to create a cooperation within the sphere for which the department trains highly qualified personnel: employers should know what to expect from the graduates, and graduates should know about their probable future employment.

In 2008 the contest was supported (organizationally and financially) by the Department of Informational Policy of Tyumen region and also by a number of regional organizations in some ways connected with publishing: “The Union of Polygraphists of Tyumen region”, “The Tyumen Regional Department of the Union of Designers of Russia”, “The Union of Journalists of Tyumen region”, “The State Library of Yugra” and others.

Table 1

Year	Total number of books and booklets published in Russia		Total number of books and booklets published in Tyumen region (including Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug)		Total number of books and booklets published in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug		Total number of books and booklets published in Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug okpyre	
	Number of titles	Number of copies, thousands	Number of titles	Number of copies, thousands	Number of titles	Number of copies, thousands	Number of titles	Number of copies, thousands
2001	55099	453373.33	284	249.84	113	56.31	8	6.5
2002	69749	591338.35	465	342.44	129	77.6	4	5.1
2003	80971	702307.4	616	467.4	203	116.9	6	4
2004	89066	685881.3	516	397.6	201	71.9	12	3.8
2005	95498	669401.8	806	416.2	186	74.3	9	7.4
2006	102268	633524.1	548	343.6	156	90.5	6	6.1
2007	108791	665682.7	824	492.7	322	241.4	7	3.9
2008	123336	760439.3	1007	694.9	262	404.0	7	2.7
2009	127596	716553.1	1287	566.6	216	101.4	9	3.6
2010	121738	653843.7	910	356.3	183	51.2	8	5.0
2011	122915	612506.3	732	320.0	112	33.9	14	3.1

Taken from: Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications (FAPMK) (<http://www.fapmc.ru/magnoliaPublic/rospechat.html>), Russian Book Chamber (<http://www.bookchamber.ru/>).

The jury and the council of experts usually consist of famous publishers, editors, polygraphists, writers, designers, artists and booksellers from Tyumen and Yekaterinburg. Every year the jury and the council of experts get from 10 to 15% of new members. Alternative jury of the contest consists of students that study editing; they create the atmosphere of impudence, courage and the originality of professional intellection, as well as introduce a skill to see and evaluate what will become essential in future.

Since 2009, each year the contest has its own topic. In 2009 it was devoted to the significant event in the history of not only Tyumen, but the whole of Siberian book publishing — it has been 220 years since in 1789 first printed books appeared in Tobolsk. The multimedia electronic guide “The adventure in the bookish Tyumen” was created by the lecturers of the department to celebrate the date; this guide was actually the first written history of Tyumen book publishing.

In 2010 the problems of electronic books development were topical for the contest, as well as the future of “paper” and “digital” books. The problem of reading itself was topical for the contest of 2011; in particular, the fact that the reading is becoming more entertaining, youth and womanish was massively discussed. The work “From scroll to electronic book: the cultural practice of reading man” written by lecturers of the department was also devoted to the problems of reading.

According to the idea of organizers, the web-poll on the site <http://idir.utmn.ru/> was supposed to expand the range of reading regional books; the results of the poll were supposed also to define the most read books of the region.

“Book of the Year” and publishing system of Tyumen

The amount (19), character and structure of nominations in the “Statute of the regional contest “Book of the Year” [6] reflects the situation in Tyumen book publishing and gives understanding of how the sphere is structured and what are its trends. The nominations are divided into general and special ones.

The general nominations are as follows: 1. “Book of the Year”. 2. “Publishing House of the Year”. 3. “Print Shop of the Year”. 4. “Editor of the Year”. 5. “Artist of the Year”. 6. “Designer of the Year”. In the first place, they give an understanding of the sphere of publishing system from the point of view of its internal hierarchy.

During all the years of contest there were 10 awardees in the category “Publishing House of the Year”; in fact, these are the best publishing houses of the region, and they represent all the range of development strategies of local publishing houses.

Publishing house of TSU established in 1994 is the acknowledged leader of Tyumen book publishing sphere, and it is one of the best university publishing houses in the country. In 2009, with 507 titles published with the total number of 166.1 thousand copies it headed the list of leaders of Russian regional university book publishing. The readers of this publishing house are students and lecturers of TSU; unfortunately the published books are not sold in Tyumen or even in Russian book market.

“Tyumen Publishing House” (appeared in 1998) and “Siberian Publishing House” (“TID”, appeared in 1995) generally focus on publishing regional studies of literature

and regional newspapers and magazines. For example, “TID” publishes about 40 local newspapers. Both publishing houses publish primarily made-to-order, non-commercial literature that is rarely met in bookshops of Tyumen and is almost unavailable for mass readers.

Unlike the above mentioned publishers, “Mandr & Ka” publishing house (appeared in 1994) actively works in the market conditions, selling its books, in the first place, in the “Znaniye” bookshop; this publishing house addresses to “usual” readers, cultural — from the Soviet rather demanding point of view. Through all the years of existence the publishing house of Y.L. Mandrika has published about 500 of titles of books and regional studies magazines, and to a large extent it is because of them that Tyumen of 1990s — 2000s holds the status of a cultural city.

Publishing houses listed above, as well as “Vector Book” (appeared in 1990), seem to be first post-Soviet, romantic generation of Tyumen publishers, and their perception of books has been formed in the era when our country was supposed to be the most reading country in the world. Book publishing for them is first of all an act of ministration to the community, and generally these people do not have a special education.

Publishing houses “Russian Week”, “P.P.Sh” and “InfoPlus” represent the new generation of Tyumen publishers, and they suppose the book to be a part of modern media-consuming chain. “InfoPlus” considers a book to be just one of many media products, and “paper” and “digital” books organically combine in their multimedia publishing projects. “Russian Week” combines publishing house, shop and Internet-site with an online shop. In the majority of cases this generation of publishers also does not have a special professional education, but these people are more skilled in market conditions and modern media technologies. They are like capital book publishers that in 2011 have established “The Alliance of Independent Book Publishers and Retailers”.

It is no coincidence that among ten best regional publishers of 2011 some Yekaterinburg publishers (such as “Basko” and “UrFD Publishing House”), as well as Tyumen ones, were named. This fact seems to be rather meaningful. Tyumen publishers can not always successfully compete with their colleagues from Yekaterinburg concerning book culture, design and polygraphy quality.

It is important to mention in this context that graduates of the Department of Publishing and Editing of TSU (2007-2011) are still unable to significantly change the situation in the regional book publishing: they become a part of the system without fundamentally changing it.

Judging by the winners of “Printing Shop of the Year”, it is difficult to name the polygraphy situation in the region well defined. Twice, in 2007 and 2011, the award in this nomination was won by company “Grapic” situated in Verona (Italia); this printing house prints books for A.G. Elphimov (the founder of “Resurrection of Tobolsk”), and the books printed there are real polygraphic pieces of art. In different years the award “Printing Shop of the Year” was given to “Uralskiy Worker” (Yekaterinburg), “Pareto-Print” (Tver), “Polygraphist” (Khanty-Mansiysk). “Tyumen

Publishing House”, the biggest and the oldest printing house of the region, was rewarded three times (in 2008, 2009 and 2011). Printing houses “City-Press” (2011) and “Printing House “Tyumen” that does not exist anymore were also honored. In 2010 the jury has made up a decision not to proclaim winners in this category anymore.

The problems of Tyumen printing houses in the majority of cases are connected not with the presence or absence of some special equipment or technologies, but usually with the lack of skilled employees: professional printers are not taught in the region. The contest “Poligraphia-ART” is supposed to increase the level of printing production in the region; the contest was established in 2012 by “The Union of Printers of Tyumen Region” supported by the Department of Informational Policy of Tyumen region and other organizations.

During five years of existence of “Book of the Year” contest there were 4 awardees in “Editor of the Year” nomination. Two of them (N.P. Dementieva and G.V. Litvinenko) represent TSU publishing house. A.I. Vasiliev is the editor-in-chief of the magazine (or almanac) “The Gates of Siberia”. E.S. Zashikhin is the editor-in-chief of “Socrates” publishing house from Yekaterinburg. Tyumen books, beside those published by universities publishing houses, can not boast of high quality editing. Book publishers rather often try to save money on editing, and there are no editors working on these books.

The way the situation is going on with awardees in nominations “Artist Of The Year” and “Designer Of The Year” shows great problems with artistic and technical design of Tyumen books. Book artists and designers are very rare in the region, and very often they work on books only by accident and nonperiodically. Neither the Tyumen Institute of Architecture, Design and Visual Arts nor the Tyumen State University are seriously engaged in the training of specialists in this sphere. It is no coincidence that there are only 2 Tyumen awardees out of 10 in the nomination “Artist of the Year”: A. Kukhterin and E. Andreev. Other awardees are from Moscow (E. Valerius, A. Bykov, A. Bakulevskiy), Saint-Petersburg (A. Azemsha), Yekaterinburg (B. Ryabitsev), Minsk (E. Sukhoverkhova). There are also 2 Tyumen designers out of all 4 awardees of the nomination “Designer of the Year” — N. Piskulin and E. Piskaikina. Two other awardees are from Moscow, they are A. Bykov and V. Valerius.

The analysis of main nominations of the contest “Book of the Year” shows that Tyumen book publishing needs systematic changes, connected particularly with staffing problems. But it is still not clear who and how should make these changes.

The repertoire of Tyumen publishing houses and book publishing development perspectives of the region

From the point of view of repertoire the trends of Tyumen publishing development match with general Russian ones [7]. As in the whole country, Tyumen book publishing rests on three pillars: educational, scientific and fiction books. For example, in 2011 in the contest there were 48 scientific, 31 educational and 49 literature-fictional books,

and 19 among them were documentary and non-fiction. These nominations are leaders of the contest by the number of titles, offered to compete. Regional studies books are traditionally very important for Tyumen book publishing (26 titles in 2011). A positive trend is also observed in corporate and reference books: in 2011 there were 13 and 17 titles of them respectively. Publishing house “Basko” has been the leader in the nomination “Best electronic book” for many years already. Lack of focus of Tyumen publishers on electronic books as well as electronic readers’ sales growth look disastrous as compared to success of “Basko”’s work with electronic books.

Among other problems that look much more obvious after the book contest “Book of the Year” we should first of all mention the absence of “Regional Program of Reading Support and Development” that with a good financial support can significantly help Tyumen books and readers to find each other. Also the region definitely lacks modern book shops that should become new culture centers. Tyumen with a few exceptions does not have local TV shows and radio broadcasts about books and reading itself. We do not have book critics in printed and digital mass media, and especially we do not have public service advertising, concerning books. Department of Information Policy of Tyumen region could initiate the establishment of “Tyumen Regional Program of Reading Support and Development” based on “National Program of Reading Support and Development (2007-2020)”. This program could have combined the efforts of all the institutions of reading infrastructure and significantly develop book publishing in the region.

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