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| Hijikata Yoshi (b. 1898-1959) |
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| Shingeki director and one of the most important early leaders of modernist movement in Japanese theatre, Hijikata Yoshi was the co-founder of the Tsukiji Shōgekijō and an active presence in Soviet-Japanese theatrical interactions.  Born of an aristocrat family, he lost his father as an infant and grew up in the houses of his maternal and paternal grandparents. Thanks to the theatre-going traditions of both families, he was exposed from an early age to theatre, both traditional and its emerging modern counterparts. This led to his creation, with friends, of two amateur theatres, at ages 13 and 18. At 21, he directed *The Death of Tintagiles* by Maurice Maeterlinck. His choice of this mystical piece was criticized as detached from life reflecting his aristocratic upbringing, a criticism that “hit my weakest spot” leaving a permanent impact on him. The impact was intensified later by the realistic and engaging stage of Hirasawa Keishichi’s Worker’s Theatre, a sharp contrast with the theatre he had known, as rich men’s pastime. Determined to make theatre his career around this time, he became a disciple of Osanai Kaoru and together they established theatre directing as a respected profession in Japan.    When his paternal grandfather died of Spanish flu in 1918, he inherited from him the title of “Count.” While a college student and an apprentice director he was able to accumulate a large amount of wealth, paying off family debts. Unable to stand the Japanese theatre establishment of the time and with a fortune, he left for Europe in November 1922 to study Western theatre. |
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