

Eugene Deslaw (Ievhen Slabchenko) fonds, A0000-000
An Inventory of His Papers at Oseredok

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Collection Summary

Repository: Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Creator: Eugene Deslaw (Ievhen Slabchenko)

Title: Eugene Deslaw fonds

Dates: 1903 - [ca. 197-?]

Quantity: 44 linear cm

Languages: Ukrainian, French, Spanish, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Romanian, English, German

Biography of Eugene Deslaw (Ievhen Slabchenko):

Eugene Deslaw (real name Ievhen Slabchenko) was born on December 8, 1898 in the village of Tahancha, Tahancha volost, Kaniv povit, Kyiv gubernia, Russian Empire (currently Ukraine). Appointed to the post of Ukrainian diplomatic courier in Europe by the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) in 1920, he remained in Europe after the UNR diplomatic missions were disbanded. Deslaw spent the remainder of his life in Paris (1925-1939), Madrid (1939-1953), and Nice (1953-1966), where he became a prominent figure in the cultural life of the Ukrainian émigré community. He studied international law at the universities of Prague and Berlin and at the Sorbonne in Paris. In France he adopted a new name – Eugene Deslaw – and married a local woman. During the interwar years Deslaw became involved in French avant-garde cinema, making a notable contribution to the genre. He directed the following short films: *La marche des machines* (March of the machines, 1928), *La nuit électrique*

(Electrical nights, 1929), *Montparnasse* (1931), *Revelation* (1948), and *Vision Fantastique* (Fantastic Vision, 1957). After the invention of the sound film in the late 1920s, Deslaw lost no time in experimenting with this technique in his movie *Robots*. A highlight in his career, came in 1938-1939, when the 1936 French feature film *La Guerre des gosses* (The Children's War, a.k.a. Generals Without Buttons) directed by Jacques Daroy, with Deslaw as his assistant director, won the 1938 National Board of Review Top Foreign Language Film award and then launched New York City television's first International Film Festival. In the 1950s Deslaw began working on French television and ended his career there as an archivist.

Deslaw's accomplishments extend beyond the sphere of filmmaking. He was very active in Western Europe as a propagandizer of things Ukrainian. During the war he became involved in the Ukrainian Red Cross to help Ukrainian refugees. After the war he continued helping Ukrainians in the DP camps by getting them jobs so that they could avoid deportation to the USSR. In the 1950s Deslaw began collecting Ukrainian materials and archives. In 1954 he compiled a Ukrainian film archive in Nice and organized a display of Ukrainian ceramics in Cannes. A decade later, in 1964, he completed a manuscript *Dyplomatychna Istoriia Ukrainy* (Diplomatic History of Ukraine). Unlike most Ukrainians who lived in the West after the revolution, Eugene Deslaw (Ievhen Slabchenko) made a name for himself outside Ukrainian circles. Deslaw died on September 10, 1966 in Nice, France.

For more information about Deslaw see Jaroslaw Zurowsky "Ievhen Deslav: A Forgotten Ukrainian Filmmaker" in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* IX (2) (Winter 1984), 87-92.

Scope and Contents of the fonds:

Most of the materials in the fonds reflect Slabchenko's/Deslaw's interest and participation in Ukrainian diplomatic activity, best exemplified by his unpublished manuscript *Dyplomatychna Istoriia Ukrainy* (Diplomatic History of Ukraine) and the artefacts and images he collected which relate to UNR diplomatic missions. Images, documents and labels collected by Deslaw were part of an exhibition in the late 1970s. The fonds also contains items relevant to Deslaw's film career, including newspaper clippings about the films he directed.

Arrangement of the Papers

The materials are arranged into three (3) series:

1. Unpublished Manuscript
2. Film Career
3. Exhibit: Diplomatic Activity (Artefacts)

Restrictions to Access: No restrictions on access

Restrictions on Use: No restrictions on use

Custodial History: Unknown

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series 1. Unpublished Manuscript

Box	Folder
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1	1	Dyplomatychna Istoriia Ukrainy, Chapters 1-37, 1964
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- 2 Dyplomatychna Istoriiia Ukrainy, Chapters 38-81, 1964
- 3 Dyplomatychna Istoriiia Ukrainy, Chapters 82-102, 104-113, 116-124, 1964
- 4 Dyplomatychna Istoriiia Ukrainy (Xerox copy), Chapters 1-65, n.d.
- 2 1 Dyplomatychna Istoriiia Ukrainy (Xerox copy), Chapters 66-102, 104-113, 116-124, n.d.

Series 2. Film Career

- 2 2 Newspaper Clippings, 1924-1938, 1942, 1945, 1947-1949, 1951, 1953
- 3 Photograph (Deslaw with colleagues in Madrid or Cannes) (1 photograph), [ca. 1950]

Series 3. Exhibit: Diplomatic Activity (Artefacts)

- 3 1 Publication Cover Pages I, 1903-1931
- 2 Publication Cover Pages II, 1934-1960
- 3 Mounted Photo Reproductions of Historical Events (45 photo reproductions), n.d.
- 4 Correspondence, UNR Documents, 1918-1922, 1954-1955, 1961
- 5 Newspaper & Bulletin Headings, 1921-1943
- 6 Bulletins, Newspaper Clippings, 1914-1955
- 7 Maps & Illustrations, [195-?]
- 8 Miscellaneous, [195-?] - 1969
- 4 1 Mounted Photos/images of Petliura & Vynnychenko (2 images), [ca. 1917-1921]
- 2 Mounted Photos/images of Ukrainian Embassy (Austria, Bulgaria) (2 images), [ca. 1917-1921]
- 3 Mounted Photos/images of Ukrainian Mission I (Belgium-Holland, Denmark) (2 images), [ca. 1917-1921]
- 4 Mounted Photos/images of Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission II (Greece, Sweden) (2 images), [ca. 1917-1921]
- 5 Mounted Photos/images of Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission III (Switzerland) (1 image, 1 note), [ca. 1917-1921]
- 6 Mounted ZUNR Bulletin (1 document), 1919
- 7 Photocopies of Photos/images and Descriptions, n.d.
- 8 Exhibit Labels, [ca. 197-?]