

of a “collator of documents” and has purposely offered no precise view of the origin of the movement. When the texts are read as a connected narrative, however, a conflict begins to emerge as early as the 1920s among those who were seeking to establish an “Art International.” The texts give ample evidence of the disagreements between those in Western Europe who believed that a new form of art might produce a new form of society and those in Russia who were trying to produce a new form of art fully expressive of the new Soviet form of society.

As an enduring art form, Constructivism owes more to Gabo’s ideas than to the five artists whose 1921 exhibition, “ $5 \times 5 = 25$ ,” firmly established Constructivism as an art movement. These artists (Popova, Stepanova and Rodchenko working for Meyerhold; Vesnin and Exter for Tairov) pioneered Constructivism in the theater, and the omission of a specific text on Constructivist theater is surprising, especially since cinema and architecture are included.

The documentation of Tatlin’s shift in position—from the initiator who designed *Monument to the Third International* (which almost defines a Constructivist style even though, in 1919, the label had not yet been attached to an art movement) to the creator of the glider *Letatlin* (criticized as Khlebnikovian as early as 1932)—points to complex conflicts within the Soviet Union. The juxtaposition of texts by Gabo, Tatlin, Rodchenko, and Stepanova may imply an affinity between the artists which is unwarranted when their art works and writings are viewed in proper perspective.

This book is a very useful reference work (though, sadly lacking an index) and may serve to provoke a reexamination of the complexities and contradictions which today are all labeled “Constructivism.”

(I have been asked by Mr. Gabo to point out that part of the caption to the photo of his sculpture reproduced on page 5 is false. The “Head” was never in the Arensburg Collection; the recent reconstruction is in the Tate Gallery in London and is six feet high; the original [eighteen inches high] is in Mr. Gabo’s possession.)

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THE POET AS FILMMAKER: SELECTED WRITINGS. By *Alexander Dovzhenko*. Edited, translated, and with an introduction by *Marco Carynnyk*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1973. lv, 323 pp. \$8.95.

In a speech at an international gathering, Charlie Chaplin once declared that in the cinema, the Slavs had given the world one artist—Alexander Dovzhenko. Ukrainians, attending the meeting as part of the Soviet delegation, reacted to the praise of their countryman not with pride and enthusiasm but with embarrassment. For at that time, Dovzhenko was out of favor in the USSR and his work was severely criticized, censored, and even removed from circulation.

Acclaimed as a genius abroad, Alexander Dovzhenko (1894–1956) lacked the support, understanding, and freedom to give vent to his creative genius. As a filmmaker he was able to complete only eight feature films. Among the best known are his early ones: *Zvenyhora* (1928), *Arsenal* (1929), and *Earth* (1930). Bound by the narrow confines of the Soviet view of art, Dovzhenko had to endure constant

political interference in his work. If Stalin took a dislike to one of Dovzhenko's films at the first viewing, production and distribution ceased immediately. Dovzhenko's peculiar tragedy was that he tried both to conform and to remain a true artist under the impossible conditions set by the Soviet regime. Though Dovzhenko was never actively persecuted or imprisoned (despite accusations of "bourgeois nationalism"), his great genius was stifled and dwarfed.

Dovzhenko's "Notebooks" are a remarkable testimony to the frustrations of a great talent living and working under the Soviet system. They cover the last fifteen years of his life (1941–56), and in concise cinematographic fashion they relate not only his ideas on art and life, but also numerous anecdotes and episodes—raw material to be used later in his films or writings. Many entries express the great love he felt for his country and for his countrymen. Dovzhenko left the Ukraine and the Kiev studio when official criticism of his film *Earth* made life there unbearable. He spent many years in Moscow working for Mosfilm, but he always felt the separation from his homeland keenly. In one of the "Notebooks" he writes, "How did it happen that I was separated from my people for ten years? My God! Who took those years from me? Who will return them? Nothing can bring back the lost years, nothing" (p. 210).

*The Poet as Filmmaker* contains the first English translation of Dovzhenko's "Notebooks" and his twenty-page "Autobiography." The translation—a highly readable and literate one—is based on a collation of all available versions published originally in journals and in book-form both in Ukrainian and in Russian. The editor has made an effort to restore some official deletions using other available sources. His "Notes" provide many up-to-date bibliographical references, as well as clarifications of certain obscure entries in the "Notebooks." The value of the book is much enhanced by an excellent introductory essay, a chronology of Dovzhenko's life and work, and a filmography.

There is a reference in the book to an extensive separate Dovzhenko bibliography that is available in xerox or microfilm form. It is regrettable that this bibliography was not also included in the volume.

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VOLKSEPIK AM WEISSEN MEER: A. M. KRJUKOVA—EINE SÄNGER-MONOGRAPHIE. By *Karl Hartmann*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1974. 194 pp. DM 48, paper.

As the subtitle of this book implies, the author's purpose is to focus attention on the creative role of the individual singer in carrying forth oral tradition. The singer in question is Agrafena Matveevna Kriukova (1855–1921), considered by many to be the most prolific of all Russian *skaziteli*. Her repertoire, collected and published by A. V. Markov at the turn of the century, includes sixty-three songs, totaling some 11,200 verses. Kriukova's roots, like those of many other illustrious Russian folk singers, lie deep in the northern wilderness, in the White Sea region.

Hartmann begins with a brief biographical sketch of Kriukova, a description of how and from whom she learned her craft, and a schematic outline of her repertoire. The bulk of the study is taken up with a detailed analysis of the structure, style of composition, themes, and characters of Kriukova's songs and a