

NORTHERN DAILY MAIL
11 APRIL 1934

'BLACK MAGIC' ACTION

The Cross-Examination of Mr. Crowley

STRANGE STATEMENTS

Why He Wrote Article "Against His Country"

The hearing was resumed before Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury in the King's Bench Division to-day, of the libel action by Aleister Crowley, the author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," which he alleged imputed that he practiced "black magic."

Other defendants were Constable and Co. Ltd., publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers, the defence being a plea of justification.

At the material time Mr. Crowley had a villa on the mountain side at Cefalu, Sicily, which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He denied that he practiced "black magic" there.

In his cross-examination yesterday, Mr. Crowley agreed that he assumed the designation of "Beast 666" and "The Master Therium" (the Great Wild Beast).

"666 is the number of the sun, and you can call me "Little Sunshine," he added.

He also said he had the distinguishing marks of a Buddha at birth and still had some of them.

He claimed to be a "master magician" saying that he took a degree which conferred that title.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. for printers and publishers, in cross-examination to-day read a poem from the book "Clouds without Water," and asked Mr. Crowley "Is that not filth?"

Mr. Crowley: You read it as if it were magnificent poetry. I congratulate you.

Later Mr. Crowley remarked: "I should like to be universally hailed as the greatest living poet. The truth will out, you know."

"IMAGINARY AUTHOR"

Asked about another poem, Mr. Crowley said that the author of those words had been "dead for years."

Mr. Hilbery: Is the Aleister Crowley who wrote that dead?

Mr. Crowley: Do I look like it? It is not Aleister Crowley who wrote that. It is an imaginary figure in a drama—I created the drama.

"I created this work of an imaginary author" Mr. Crowley added.

Still another poem was mentioned by Mr. Hilbery who asked "Is that anything but disgusting and infamous?"

Mr. Crowley. It means, if I may say so, that even the vilest of women, become a refining and inspiring influence in a man's life.

Mr. Hilbery read an extract from an article which Mr. Crowley said he contributed to a Chicago magazine before America came into the war and asked:—

Did you write that against your own country?

Mr. Crowley: I did, and I am proud of it.

Mr. Hilbery: Was it part of the German propaganda in America?—Yes.

Mr. Crowley explained that what he wanted to do was to overbalance the sanity of German propaganda by turning it into absolute nonsense.

Mr. Hilbery: That is your explanation after the Allied cause is safe and no longer in danger?

Witness: Lots of people knew it at the time.

"CALLED 'THE WORST MAN IN THE WORLD' "

Mr. Crowley agreed that he wrote "The diary of a drug fiend," which was assailed in the press.

He agreed, too, that in a newspaper article he had written: "I have been shot with broad arrows. They have called me 'the worst man in the world.'"

Mr. Hilbery: Did you say "Horatio Bottomley branded me as a dirty degenerate cannibal"?—Yes.

There was some laughter at this, and Mr. Justice Swift sternly intimated that a repetition of the laughter would cause him to have the court cleared.

"I also had the reputation of being the best man in the world," declared Mr. Crowley a few moments later.

He agreed that he had been depicted with his thumbs in a position representing the horns of a ram.

In a London flat which he once had was "a hall of mirrors, the function of which was to concentrate the invoked forces."

On one occasion he invoked the forces, with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants.

Mr. Hilbery: Was that your black magic or your white magic?—It is white magic, in which you protect yourself from such things.

WITHOUT BEING SEEN

Mr. Crowley said that because of his magic he had once walked in the street in Mexico in a scarlet robe and with a jeweled crown without anyone seeing him.

Mr. Hilbery: As a part of your magic do you believe in a practice of bloody sacrifice, do you?—I believe in its efficacy, but I do not approve it at all.

Don't approve it? You say (in his book on magic) "For nearly all purposes, human sacrifice is best?—Yes, it is.

Mr. Justice Swift: DO you say that you don't approve it?—Yes.

Mr. Crowley said that at the villa at Cefalu there "was a sort of a square box" used as an altar. On it were a book purporting to contain the laws and candles for ceremonial purposes. Incense, a dagger, and a sword were used and he wore an appropriate robe.

Mr. Hilbery: In some of the ceremonies were you endeavouring to get concentrated spiritual ecstasy?—Yes.

Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?—There was no hasheesh but there was opium and strychnine.

Are you skilled to administer hasheesh?—I can get the desired result in ten minutes.

Mr. Hilbery, referring to the "Abbey" in Sicily, asked "With your approval an inmate had a razor or knife with which to cut himself if he stumbled into using a forbidden word, whatever it was?"

Mr. Crowley: "They were not gashes but minute cuts. You can see marks of them on my own arm.

Asked if heroin was used there he said that it had been prescribed for him for asthma.

THE RITUAL

Questioned about the ritual of his magic circle, Mr. Crowley said that he walked round the room in "a sort of three-fold step which resembles the waltz."

"The pace resembled the pace of the tiger stalking the deer," he added.

He had never performed a ceremony naked in the presence of another person.