



Marxist History and Historians in the 20th Century

Collection Summary

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MARXIST HISTORY AND HISTORIANS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Dona Ruth Anne Torr (1883-1957) was a Marxist historian, translator and activist. Born into an aristocratic family, she broke from her bourgeois ties and was a founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). She went on to build a burgeoning reputation not only as adept historian, but also as a passionate activist who gave her life to the cause. She has been cited as a major influence by E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm.

This collection contains Torr's personal papers, including research notes and other materials relating to her biography of noted labour activist Thomas Mann. Together, these documents provide an invaluable insight into Marxist historiography and the rich social history of the British labour movement. In addition, they shed light on the life and times of one of British communism's most important female figures.

The collection is accompanied by a contextual essay written by Dona Torr's great nephew, Professor David Renton. According to Professor Renton, "Torr was a loyal and active member of her party, who sustained her political duties even at a cost to her own writing. Fellow Communists remember her working in her branch, selling the Daily Worker, and delivering leaflets from her bicycle during the General Strike."

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