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DIMENSIONS OF THE GROUP LIFE AROUND DIMITRIJE MITRINOVIC IN LONDON DURING THE 1930S

Abstract: In this paper the author describes and analyses the intense group life of some 30-40 followers around Mitrinović in the 1930s on the basis of his interviews with surviving group members between 1978 and 1983. Interviewing them, the author realized their peculiar human qualities that he highly appreciated. The group members displayed deep devotion and loyalty to Mitrinović, who endeavoured to prepare a group of individuals who could perform an essential integrative function in the new social order. To achieve that, Mitrinović wanted to universalize the individual and encouraged his followers to learn foreign languages and become acquainted with foreign cultures and basically designed his own learning process for that purpose. The group was to be a living model of the desired social order and that model was called the Human Household. The author explains some of the terms that the members of this group used, such as personal alliance, woodbine, canoes and others. The initiative was the result of Mitrinović's realisation that a new order could only grow organically, as a grass-roots movement.

Keywords: Followers of Mitrinović, group life, new social order, human household

Introduction

In this chapter I will try to provide the reader with a sense of the intense group life involving some 30–40 followers that developed around Dimitrije Mitrinovic (DM) in London during the 1930s. The analysis is based on research notes and interview material generated over a number of years between 1978 and 1983, when I was gathering material for my first attempt at an intellectual biography of Mitrinovic which was published in 1984.¹ But before turning to the main focus I want to confess that despite my lengthy studies a couple of mysteries remain regarding this period of DM's life. First confession: throughout the period of my research, and over subsequent years of conversation and discussion with the main informants of my study, I never felt that I really 'knew' Mitrinovic as a person. He remained a subject of study, I never felt I got to grips with him as an individual human being. I suppose this was due in part to my lack of an imaginative or artistic capacity. It was also due in part to my timidity – I lacked the courage to enquire of my informants about the more intimate aspects of Mitrinovic's life: his relationships with women,

1 A. Rigby, *Initiation and Initiative: An Exploration of the Life and Ideas of Dimitrije Mitrinovic* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, Columbia University Press, 1984). A revised version was published as *Dimitrije Mitrinovic: A Biography* (York: William Sessions, 2006).



New Atlantis members in the garden of Norfolk Lodge

the sources of the money necessary to support his life-style, and other dimensions of his life that still remain a mystery to me.

The second gap in my understanding relates to my failure to comprehend the depth of the devotion and loyalty towards DM displayed and repeatedly affirmed and evidenced by my core informants. These were people who had very strong characters, with clear and insightful intellects – they were not the kind of people I would normally associate with being devotees, a status that I have always assumed involved some relinquishment of one's critical faculties. Most of the people I interviewed and got to know over the period of my research had made their mark in their own professional field. Dr Violet MacDermott (nee Maxwell) was an eminent Egyptologist; her husband Niall was an eminent lawyer who eventually took up the office of Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists; Harry Rutherford ran the family business; Ralph Twentyman was consultant physician at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital and editor of the *British Homeopathic Journal* for many years; David Shillan was a linguist and recognised authority on the teaching of English as a foreign language.

These people were not the sort of vague romantics who might be susceptible to the appeal of someone promising insight into some aspect of esoteric wisdom. And yet they displayed a remarkable degree of trust in, and devotion to, Mitrinovic. Here is an extract from a conversation I

recorded back in September 1987. I had asked if people ever confronted Mitrinovic in open disagreement:

I don't think anyone ever felt inclined to confront him in that kind of way, in the verbal sense. People tended to confront him by just disappearing. ... You had this sense that you were in the presence of someone who was so immeasurably above anything that you knew ...

Later in the conversation one of the respondents reflected,

I suppose those of us who are here ... must have been so altogether taken by him. I know it is something unimaginable. I remember saying to myself, fairly early on, how this seems to be some combination of infinite wisdom and infinite love. Now that sounds a naïve response, but it was how I felt.

In such encounters I returned again and again to the nature of their relationship with Mitrinovic, who seemed to exert such a powerful influence over their lives. It became clear that it was not all plain sailing. As one of my key informants recalled,

I can remember sometimes going back at night after what was very soul-seeing sessions, very difficult ones, and some of us would be saying 'Well, I don't know if I can carry on with this.' And I remember I would go back and I would have to – for myself – work out as it were backwards what was it all in aid of.

However, over time, those who stayed the course began to realise that the flow of influence was not all one way, even if they rarely felt adequately equipped to contradict and question him openly. 'All silence is resistance' was one of his favourite aphorisms. If he sought to develop some particular idea or suggest a specific course of action which commanded less than total affirmation from those present, he would more often than not take this as valid criticism and change his approach or drop the notion completely. As one of the group recalled, 'I have known situations where he would throw out some notion to a small group of people, and because those people did not react that notion would never come up again. You acted as a kind of sounding board ...' They were co-workers in the exploratory process, as one informant described it:

It wasn't a situation in which he was the person with total wisdom. ... He was learning and working things out with us in a very definite sense. Now, he may have been more adept at the working out than we were, but we felt it as a co-working out.

Underpinning this awareness of their status as 'knowing participants' was the deep sense that Mitrinovic was *for* them. As one participant described it, 'There was not a single person in the room there that did not

believe that when it came to it, whatever your problems, he would do anything – move heaven and earth – to see you through. And that was never doubted by anyone.²

Before going on to examine the nature of the project in which they were engaged, it is necessary to present a brief overview of Mitrinovic's overall vision, within which the group work he orchestrated was an integral part.

The world view of Dimitrije Mitrinovic

Commencing in August 1920 Mitrinovic contributed a series of articles to the radical weekly publication *The New Age*, under the collective title of 'World Affairs'. The overall theme was the portrayal of the world as an evolving organism, whose organs were constituted by the different races and nations, each having its own character relating to its proper function in the context of the world as a whole. Individuals were likened to single cells within the organism, each a constituent part of a common humanity sharing a single world. He affirmed that history was evolving in the direction of the conscious realisation by individuals of their membership of this unified whole. In other words, the world as an organism was evolving in the direction of self-consciousness. Once achieved, then the utopian dream of a world without war would be realisable.³

At one level this notion of humanity as a developing organism was a 'creative fiction', a source of insight into the inter-relatedness of all humanity.⁴ It was, if you like, a paradigm that could embrace all the diversity of humanity and yet locate this within an overarching conception of the unity of the whole. But throughout his life Mitrinovic talked, wrote and acted as if humanity actually was an organism, and that the world really was one great mind in the process of becoming self-conscious. It

2 One of the group recalled that 'one of the things he did was give you more appreciation than you would ever meet with anywhere else. And he affirmed it not only to you but he invited others to appreciate this wonderful person. And all of us ended up being far more built-up people than we would ever have dreamt of conceiving ourselves before ...' (Conversation, September 1979).

3 It is interesting to note that a few years before DM's contributions to *The New Age* the English writer, socialist and advocate of sexual freedom Edward Carpenter used the analogy of the human body as a model of a harmonious society. See E. Carpenter, "Non-governmental society", reprinted in *Freedom: Anarchist Review*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (27 February 1981), 13.

4 Mitrinovic was influenced in his approach to 'creative fictions' by Hans Vaihinger. See H. Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of As If* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952).

was his conviction that if the immanent potential within this conception of humanity was to be realised, then it was necessary for people to act as if it were real and realisable. Only then was there a possibility of humanity creating a world that would serve as a common household for us all. Reality was what one created, and as William James observed, ‘There are cases ... where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming.’⁵

If humanity is an organism, and individuals are its constitutive cells, then it is only through the self-consciousness of individuals that humanity itself can become a self-conscious organic entity. Therefore, true self-consciousness entailed awareness of oneself as a unique individual within the whole of humanity – past, present and future. Hence, if the world was to change, individuals must change. ‘Self-change for world change’ was the maxim. An organism grows from a seed, hence the important task was to plant the seed. Furthermore, as humanity constitutes an organic whole, a change in consciousness anywhere, if sufficiently significant, could have a profound effect on the rest of the organism. This was to become the dominant motif in Mitrinovic’s life. – the preparation of groups of individuals in the here-and-now so that they might be equipped to perform an essential integrative function in the new social order to which they aspired. This was the senate function, to be fulfilled by people with a deep understanding of the fundamental unity underpinning the flux of human life, and thereby capable of assisting the parties to a conflict to move above and beyond the immediate issue of tension. The group life that Mitrinovic orchestrated during the latter half of the 1930s in London was focused primarily on preparing his intimate associates for this initiative.

The universalisation of the individual

There were various dimensions and features to this process of preparing for the senate initiative, but a core element was what Otto Weininger had termed ‘the universalisation of the individual’.⁶ The challenge was to find a way for humanity, with all its contradictory aspects, to live together. Hence, a necessary attribute of those tasked with comprehending

5 William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919), 255.

6 For Weininger, the hallmark of a “genius” was the awareness within themselves of the full range of human emotions and qualities, and who as a consequence could understand and empathise with a whole range of human types. See Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (London: Heinemann, nd.), 107.

and communicating the shared interests of the whole was the capacity to identify with as wide a range of human types, cultures, predilections and qualities as possible. If individuals were to act as cosmopolitan citizens, able to comprehend and communicate the interests of the whole of humanity, then they needed to be able to identify with the rest of humanity in a very real sense, by developing within themselves an awareness of as wide a range of human types, cultures and qualities as possible.

It seemed as if Mitrinovic possessed this capacity to an astonishing degree. One of his circle told me,

He seemed to include so many aspects, nationalities, within himself, he could be comprehended by different people. If you were English you saw Englishness. If you were Serbian you saw Serbian ... He was not a foreigner, he was a total human being, the nearest to a total human being that I have ever met.

An important part of the activities which Mitrinovic directed was the understanding of different cultures and world views. Learning to appreciate the food and wine of different lands, along with their folk tales and music, during evenings out at London restaurants was a part of this process. Something of a linguist himself, he encouraged others to learn different languages, whilst they also studied the myths and legends of different cultures. As one of his closest collaborators recalled:

... as a young person at that time I received in common with my companions a great widening of my general cultural horizons – in music, in art and in literature. We heard wonderful music from his collection of classical records. ... Books on art, with great reproductions of great paintings were available to us, and sometimes given to us to keep as our own. We were taken to art exhibitions, also to museums, and our sense of discrimination was encouraged. ... In general, I think that all of us would agree that our general cultural education was greatly increased and widened.⁷

Looking back through my notes and transcripts from the interviews and conversations I had with group members in the 1970s and 1980s, I was struck by the vigour with which they rejected any notion that they were involved in some kind of training exercise. 'It was life,' one of them responded, 'It was for real. There was no idea that we were training, everything was absolutely real. ... There was no sense that we were play-acting.' This was echoed by another member who observed, 'None of the initiatives were done just for training people for senate We regarded it as an activity, we were actually going to achieve something.' What such responses illustrate is the strength of the experiential learning process

7 Quoted in Rigby, *Dimitrije Mitrinovic: A Biography*, 156.



Cover page of Dimitrije Mitrinović. A Biography (2006) by Andrew Rigby

with which they were involved. They were learning by doing, aspects of which will be examined in the next section.

Group work: Creating human household

Mitrinovic created around him a community of people, who had come together because of their shared commitment to the utopian venture, and one of the key activities he orchestrated was the creation of a living model of the sought-for social order – a ‘human household’ (HH). As some of his co-workers recalled in a conversation I recorded in 1987,

He (DM) might talk about creating Human Household. ... You created, as it were, an invisible entity. These various invisible entities had different names. If it was Human Household you talked around that subject. You created a reality between you, so to speak. ... We spoke in a way imagining that we are now a Human Household. ... How do we proceed? ... So that as a result of it you felt that you had sort of built it in imagination and were able to reproduce it to someone else who knows nothing. You then had the experience. It was a reality that you had created. It was a composite reality.

You might have to write up the points that you had agreed on, so that you had some formulation. ... Then you would have to include someone else. Then it was taken for granted that it would be part of your attitude with anyone you met. ...

It wasn't just a good idea. If you had created it and had agreed together that this was the right thing, the right way to be, then you would do it, you would be it.⁸

Ellen Mayne, one of the women who cared for Mitrinovic in his later years made a list of the twenty key guidelines for a human household. I reproduce it here in order to provide the reader with a sense of the principles that one of Mitrinovic's most devoted co-workers felt were significant in the creation of human household.

1. *Unity* – the belief in the divine in every human being.
2. *Equality* – each is responsible to each for each.
3. *Forgiveness* – forgiveness before acts are committed, not to pass judgements or to punish, to forgive including ourselves before any misdeeds are done.
4. *Silence* – by their fruits shall ye know them.
5. *No propaganda* – do the works and ye shall know of the doctrine.
6. *No Violence* – revolution of love and reason.

⁸ Ibid, 176.

7. *No hatred.*
8. *Pooling* – to accept responsibility for each other’s welfare as if it were one’s own.
9. *Not to like but to love* – love is shareable equally, liking is idiomatic and individual.
10. *Nextology* – acknowledging the recognition of those near to each one of us, relations or friends, everyone who has crossed one’s path in life.
11. *No punishment* – punishment is more defiling than crime. ... Once in the HH no-one can be turned out or leave it. If one becomes involved in self-centredness or forgets the others remember and wait.
12. *Sharing destiny forever* – share responsibility of one another’s Karma and help resolve problems in life.
13. *Accept before enquiring* – accept one another just as they are then cure them or forgive them afterwards, don’t ask them to be perfect before you accept them.
14. *Absolute truth can and must be spoken* – one’s own truth as one knows it can be spoken. No single can say he knows THE truth.
15. *Not good not bad but my taste of which I have neither shame nor concealment* – Nietzsche.
16. *Absolute decision to follow the thread of human decency in everyone and plan world order from it.*
17. *Western man may fail but the whole cannot fail.*
18. *Realise your heart’s desire by mutual support* – remember that salvation is never attained alone. We cannot actualise our own truth without mutual help.
19. *Open to all mankind, races, religions, sexes, ages – provided they are worthy of it.* As HH is unity and equality of man there can be no exclusiveness, only a certain quality to be maintained.
20. *No organisation leader or structure.*⁹

Relationships within human household

The list reproduced above is a representation of the ideal-type relationships members engaged in creating a human household might aspire to attain. The different dimensions that characterised the actual lived ex-

⁹ Edited version of hand-written listing compiled by Ellen Mayne. Original deposited by Margaret Shillan in Mitrinovic Archives, J.B. Priestley Library, Bradford University.

perience of the group members were identified by different labels: personal alliance, Woodbine, barley, cactus, hyacinth, blackies, whities and monsters. In this section the aim is to convey to the reader some sense of the phenomena to which these concepts referred, using as much as possible the words of those who were familiar with the terms themselves and the phenomena to which they referred through their involvement in the group work that took place around Mitrinovic in the years prior to the Second World War.

Personal alliance, Woodbine and canoes

In my biographical study of Mitrinovic, published in 2006, I wrote, ‘At the core of the various activities in which the group engaged was an irrevocable commitment they each made to the other, the personal alliance that they established between themselves – to share their lives together, that whatever might happen they were fundamentally *for* each other.’¹⁰ At the time I wrote this I presumed that it was this basic commitment to each other that was at the heart of *personal alliance* or ‘PA’, the special relationship that linked the members of Mitrinovic’s circle, and about which there was an element of confidentiality, akin to the masons and other secretive societies.

In 2016, in discussion with some friends who had grown up in the post-war years amongst the surviving members of Mitrinovic’s circle, it transpired that personal alliance involved no commitment whatsoever.¹¹ PA was essentially an affirmation from an existing group of people, that they valued this particular person, and as a consequence they offered him or her their friendship and comradeship. It was a very personal one-way process, without any demands being made of the person. In most cases the ‘invitation’ would be accepted, and the occasion be celebrated with the symbolic drinking a glass of pale ale, also known as PA.¹²

Woodbine, on the other hand, referred to a commitment made between two people towards one another, comparable to a marriage vow, a commitment for better or worse, caring for and respecting each other. At the time Woodbine was the name of the cheapest cigarette on the market, so the offer of a Woodbine cigarette was a symbol of the relationship established, comparable perhaps to a masonic handshake. Woodbine is also the name of a species of spreading plants, like clematis and honeysuckle – a symbolic referent to the idea that the mutual commitment between

10 Rigby, *Dimitrije Mitrinovic: A Biography*, 150.

11 Discussion in London, 11 March 2016.

12 Apparently, part of the ceremony involved listening to the playing of “The Moldau” by the Czech composer Smetana.

two people might spread and grow, encompassing wider networks of people. As one of the participants in the 2016 discussion tried to explain the distinction:

PA was in no sense binding.. If they introduced you to PA and your ordinary good manners would permit you to drink no doubt a glass of beer with them, but if at that point you said, 'Well look, actually I have got much more important friends than you and I am going to push off and do something else', you know that's for you to decide.

Whereas the idea of Woodbine is one in which you make a commitment to a group of people big or small and the Woodbine element, there is a growth thing about Woodbine, the idea as I understood it at the time, that it was an expanding thing, although in fact it didn't expand after a certain point, but it was a commitment about... responsibility and taking responsibility for the other members of the Woodbine and it could be quite literal, you know, in terms of providing accommodation, anything, money from time to time or support or whatever.



Wild Woodbine Cigarette pack
Source: Wikimedia

Another concept used in relation to the mutual commitment underpinning the Woodbine relationship was *canoes* – people who had entered into a commitment towards each other were responsible for paddling their own canoe. As it was described in the 2016 discussion, ‘Canoes was the idea that two people are in one canoe and they just need to get on, and find a way of having a relationship.’

Barley, Cactus and Thompson’s Ticket

As should be abundantly clear by now, Mitrinovic was very fond of coining simple terms taken from other contexts in order to capture the essence of his thoughts and ideas. *Barley* was the term used to refer to the warm and caring relationship that was so essential to the creation of human household. Looking at Ellen Mayne’s listing of the main points of human household the majority refer to this barley aspect – unity, love, equality, forgiveness, acceptance, nonviolence. But point 14 refers to ‘absolute truth’ that ‘can and must be spoken’. This was the cactus aspect, the truth-telling that is necessary in any relationship based on care and mutual respect.¹³ David Davies, a member of Mitrinovic’s circle in the 1930s was later to recall the discomfort occasioned by the barbs of such truth-speaking sessions.

Six or seven of us would meet for a session of three or four hours, generally late at night, for one’s unconscious was supposed to be less remote in the deep night. One of the group would start, perhaps, by criticising something I had done – a speech I had made, or the way I had behaved on some particular occasion. Against that criticism I would defend myself. By this time we were fairly launched, and gradually were out in deep waters. A member of the group would then say, in language that lacked nothing of brutality and candour, exactly what he, more frequently she (which made it worse!), thought of me. I was an unprincipled liar; or a shallow, pretentious poseur; a hollow, insincere tub-thumper; an impossibly vain, egotistic trumpet; a twister. And much else.¹⁴

With such a powerfully charismatic figure as Mitrinovic at the helm, it was understandable that many of the participants in the group life felt it necessary to present themselves in a manner which they presumed to

13 During the research process I was advised that DM introduced a third element to the barley-cactus polarity – *hyacinth*. I suspect this referred to his practice of treating a victim of his own ‘truth-speaking’ to some kind of restorative balm, like a special meal. See D. R. Davies, *In search of myself* (London: Gordon Bles, 1961), 142.

14 Davies, op. cit., 141.

be appropriate and fitting to the occasion. To address this all-too-understandable occurrence there was the institution of *Thompson's Ticket*. Here is Ellen Mayne's account of her involvement in this activity.

There were three of us. Watson Thompson, myself and another woman, we were charged with interviewing everybody in a certain group. It was very interesting because we had to work in accord, and we had to explore whether there was any superficiality – we didn't think about that as our aim, but talking to that person we would sense whether they were really centred or merely sentimentalising or trying to be clever or something like this. If they tried to be clever and artificial they didn't get the ticket. And if they threw all that out and really spoke really genuinely they got what we called the 'Thompson Ticket'. We use the device to get to the core and centre of people, because there was a lot of jockeying for position and whatever ...¹⁵

I recall enquiring what happened if you got your 'ticket', to which Harry Rutherford replied, 'Nothing. All it meant was that at that moment and on that occasion, you had your ticket. Nothing was permanent.

Blackies, Whiteys and Monsters

The people involved in the intense group-life in the 1930s had different schemas for distinguishing between different human types. One of these was based on people's orientation to time. *Whiteys* were those who were particularly concerned with the continuity between the past and the present, steady types who tended to remain on an even keel, less swayed by their passing emotions than *blackies*. *Blackies* were more concerned with the immediate present, experiencing time as a series of discrete moments and hence vulnerable to each momentary impulse.¹⁶ *Monsters* were those who were always determinedly working towards some future goal.

According to Ellen Mayne two of DM's closest collaborators were different 'colours'. She described Valerie Cooper as a 'super-whitey', whilst Winifred Gordon Fraser was a 'genuine blackie'. Violet MacDermott, who was responsible more than anyone else for the transfer of the Mitrinovic archives to Bradford University, was characterised as a 'whit-ey-monster' – she could be incredibly focused and hard-working once she had decided on the proper way forward, and despite her deceptively gentle manner she could be extremely resistant to any attempt to sway her from her chosen pathway.

¹⁵ Ellen Mayne, September 1979.

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Gender

Mitrinovic attributed a particularly significant role to women in the creation of an organic social order. Modern civilisation he considered to be male: materialistic, bereft of any sense of moral purpose. What was required was a new initiative from women. If they joined together they might recover their sense of purpose and commitment to the preservation of life. They might then provide the necessary impulse for men to reclaim their purpose in recreating the world, instruments of the women's initiative.

Within the circle gathered around Mitrinovic one of the more stable group formations was the division between the sexes. Each group met apart from the other, had its own constitution and its own allocation of functions within the group. The men were referred to as 'auxiliaries' – instruments of the feminine initiative, without which he considered men to be directionless and helpless. However, it would seem that if women were to exercise their power, then it was necessary for them to dress accordingly – as explained by Ellen Mayne.

The sort of people DM had around him, the younger ones – he was trying to make us into European citizens, so to speak. People who could meet anybody, speak to anybody, be thoroughly well-informed ... and with a cultural approach that was more profound than we ever thought was possible – because we were all meeting all sorts of people, and he was insistent that women should wear good clothes and look decent, not looking as if you had just come up from the country, so you looked as if you could talk with anybody.¹⁷

Brazil

Another metaphor introduced by Mitrinovic was *Brazil*, which acted as a prompt to people that there was a wider world outside their intensive 'internal' group-life. As Violet MacDermott recalled,

it was not just for oneself – there was always the aspect of the world outside. It was all in the context of a world that was going on. He would read the newspapers everyday, seeing what was going on and significant events, and when he was talking he would introduce them, Germany doing this and so forth. Almost as if we were senate, what would be the constructive thing to do? Because it was a very crumbling world in those days. ... We had to be conscious all the time of our relationships – one was with DM, the other was with each other, and the other was with the world. And we had to work really hard to keep the balance between oneself, the world, and DM ...

¹⁷ Ellen Mayne, September 1987.

So, Brazil was a metaphor for that wider world. Hence, if someone sensed that the focus of attention was too narrowly directed towards Britain, they might observe, ‘Brazil? What is going on in Brazil?’ as a way of reminding the others of their responsibility and allegiance towards the world beyond.¹⁸

Conclusion

It was Mitrinovic’s insight, which he shared with other utopians of the Blutbund such as Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber, that a new cooperative order cannot be imposed from above, but must grow organically from the grass-roots upwards, sustained and strengthened by the daily collaboration and comradeship of individuals. He realised, along with others before him and since, that the creation of a society free from domination and exploitation cannot be achieved unless the values of freedom and fellowship are embodied in the actual process of creation. Such values cannot be imposed, neither can they be created by mere talk – they must be lived in the daily round of life. In the words of Martin Buber, he looked to ‘the renewal of society from within, by a regeneration of its cell tissue’.¹⁹

It has not been my aim to evaluate the significance of Mitrinovic’s utopian project. Rather I have tried to share some sense of the dynamic that informed the lives of his co-workers who gathered around him during the 1930s in London. They were party to a unique experiential learning process, orchestrated to a very large degree by Mitrinovic himself. At the end of long hours of serious discussion, deliberation, planning and reflection, in the early hours of the morning, Mitrinovic might announce that it was time for ‘small friends’ – a time for relaxation, joke-telling, and inconsequential chat. During my time in Ditchling where the bulk of my research for my biography of Mitrinovic was carried out, I would spend my day examining archives, talking with the Harry and Gracie Rutherford, Violet MacDermott, Ellen Mayne and, occasionally, Ralph Twyman and writing up my notes. Then, in the evening, we would often end the work-day in relaxation together. It was during such times, as ‘small friends’, that I witnessed the depth of their care and concern for each other, a commitment that had persisted since they first encountered each

18 *Brazil* was also used as a metaphor to remind people that they should be able to communicate the core ideas to people in other parts of the world. The challenge was to be able to express the essence on a postcard that could be sent to Brazil, where there might be another group of people engaged in the same exploratory project as the people in London.

19 Martin Buber, *Paths in utopia* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 99.

other in the 1930s. Over time I developed a deep affection and regard for them all. I hope that in sharing some of their insights, words, symbols and experiences I have paid proper respect to a group of quite remarkable people.

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