

Obituary

DR RITA LEROI

The sudden and unexpected death of Dr Rita Leroi on 8 September 1988, a few days before her 75th birthday, came as a great shock to all her very many friends and colleagues all over the world.

She was born in Germany in 1913 and was brought up mainly by her mother, who was a journalist. She attended the Stuttgart Waldorf School before proceeding to commercial college and then worked as a journalist for a year before commencing medical studies. After her marriage to Hans von May she finished her medical studies in Berne and then for five years she worked as a Resident in hospital.

She became a Clinical Assistant at the Ita Wegman Clinic in Arlesheim and then for 18 years, from 1946–1963, worked in general medical practice in Basle. It was during her time at the Ita Wegman Clinic that she was able to establish firmly and inwardly her relationship to the anthroposophical medical impulse and work. She developed a deep and continuing interest in cancer and the Iscador treatment of this disease. In 1954 she married Dr Alexandre Leroi who was the leader of the Society for Cancer Research and Director of the Hiscia Research Institute in Arlesheim. It is here that Iscador is produced and researched into the many problems to be solved in developing it into an effective remedy are undertaken.

In October 1963 the Lukas Klinik, devoted to the care and treatment of cancer patients, opened in Arlesheim and Rita Leroi became its Director. On the death of Alexandre Leroi in 1968 she also took on the directorship of the Hiscia Research Institute. In 1978 she was selected President of the International Anthroposophical Medical Association.

Into this framework of her activities Rita

Leroi brought outstanding personal qualities which enriched all she undertook, so that whether it was in outer activities in meeting the world or in personal meetings with friends, colleagues or patients, her direct personal being was immediately present. Through this she also gave the same recognition to the person with whom she met. Everything around her became warmed through and made personally human. She had the capacity to look into every detail of the ever enlarging activities in which she played so leading a role, but in such a way that she lifted them up from mere fact and detail into human significance, a truly artistic achievement. With all her deep commitment to the needs of the anthroposophical medical movement, and the strongly held personal views she had in this respect, she managed an amazing tolerance and granting of freedom towards those of differing attitude. She was certainly helped in this by a good sense of humour.

She travelled all over the world, to India and Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South America, North America and all European countries, including a number of visits to the United Kingdom. In all these regions and countries she undertook lectures, participated in conferences and sought to inspire the renewal of medicine as a fully human activity. It was particularly in the field of cancer that she worked, a field in which the technological achievements and methods of modern medicine can so easily overwhelm the human.

The extension of the Iscador treatment of cancer all over the world is due very largely to the work of Alexandre and Rita Leroi. They have bequeathed a wholesome and sound foundation and an inspiration for those who come after.

L. R. TWENTYMAN