

THE DAILY EXPRESS
LONDON
2 DECEMBER 1947

BLACK MAGICIAN CROWLEY DIES

'Wickedest man in Britain'



ALEISTER CROWLEY
'Human sacrifices best.'

Aleister Crowley, magician and poet called "the wickedest man in Britain," who said he believed in blood sacrifices, "human sacrifices being best of all," died yesterday at Netherwood, Hastings, aged 72.

Death came to him just as if he had never "rediscovered the elixir of life" which he said would give him perpetual youth.

In recent years he was a fat, olive-skinned man with staring reptilian eyes, a heavy jowl and wispy grey hair.

On the third finger of his left hand he wore an emerald and diamond ring of two entwined snakes which he claimed was a powerful magic symbol.

He was accused of black magic, of celebrating the Black Mass, of raising devils, of obscene rituals, of drug-taking, and even of being responsible for the death in Sicily of a young man he employed as secretary.

On the only occasion when he tried to vindicate his character in court, he lost. The case was stopped by the jury.

'I'VE LEARNED—'

That was in 1934 when he alleged libel in Miss Nina Hamnett's book "Laughing Torso" in which it was said he practised black magic.

The judge, the late Mr. Justice Swift, said: "I have been more than 50 years engaged in the administration of the law.

"I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness. I thought that everything that was vicious and bad had been produced at some time or other before me.

"I have learned in this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough.

"I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself as the greatest living poet."

Crowley was born of a Plymouth Brethren family at Leamington, Warwickshire, and was educated at Malvern and Trinity College, Cambridge. There he began his studies in magick—so he insisted on spelling it—and then travelled in China and Tibet.

He claimed to be able to make himself invisible and to have walked in a scarlet and gold robe, with a jeweled crown on his head, unseen by anyone.

HAD 'TEMPLE'

He claimed that when he was born four hairs grew over his heart in swastika form. He said: "Before Hitler was, I am."

He was expelled from Italy after setting up the Abbey of Thelema, where he had a cat sacrificed. His permit to live in France was cancelled.

He had a "temple" in Chancery-lane, W.C., with walls lined with mirrors. He said he raised devils there and "people passing in the street fell down in fits."

At the trial of his libel action, he was challenged by counsel to do his magick, to make himself invisible, but he refused.

He spent the 1914-18 war in America, where he wrote: "The sovereignty of England must be destroyed once and for

all. England must be divided up between the Continental Powers."

He said he spent £100,000 on magick, but in 1935 he went bankrupt with liabilities of £4,710. The only dividend paid was 2d. in the £.