

Naomi Haldane Mitchison to serve as Regents' Lecturer

February 13, 1984

Naomi Haldane Mitchison, an English novelist who has published over 70 books during a long and distinguished literary career, will serve as a regents' lecturer at the University of California, San Diego during February and early March.

Her visit to the campus is sponsored by the Department of Literature. While she is at UCSD, Mitchison will deliver two colloquia and one public lecture. In the first colloquia, scheduled for 4 p.m. Monday, February 27, she will talk about her brother, J. B. S. Haldane, a well-known geneticist and Communist. In the second colloquia, scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday, March 1, she will read selected poems from her works. Both talks will be held in room 142 of the Third College Humanities Building.

The public lecture is scheduled for 8 p.m. Wednesday, February 29, in the International Center on the UCSD campus. She will talk on her life and her work covering a period of more than 80 years.

Mitchison is a woman of letters who has published novels, plays, short stories and poetry, some of which are treatises on the subjects of women, politics, civilization, revolution and war. Though always a recognized and published writer - even a famous writer during the 1920s and 1930s - Mitchison is currently enjoying renewed attention from two sectors of the British establishment: London-based feminists and Scottish academics.

Mitchison's major historical novel, "The Corn King and the Spring Queen," published in 1931, has been reissued this year by the Virago Press. Virago will reissue "Travel Light," first published in 1952, later this year and Pandora Press has commissioned her biography, scheduled for publication in 1985.

In Scotland, Mitchison has been named a major novelist of the Scottish Renaissance of the first half of this century. Her historical novel, "The Bull Calves," published in 1947, which is about her own 18th century Haldane family at Gleneagles, may be reissued this year as a project of the Scottish Arts Council. The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow conferred an honorary degree in literature on Mitchison last June.

Mitchison has lived in London, in Scotland, and in Africa and her writing has consistently reflected her cultural and political involvement. In the 1920s and 1930s she wrote historical novels and political treatises which chronicle her growing political commitment to the Labour Party left. As a socialist, she traveled to Russia with the Fabjan Society in 1931, and to Vienna immediately following the fascist overthrow of the socialism in 1933, and to the United States in 1934 where she organized sharecroppers in Arkansas. In Scotland during and after World War II, Mitchison turned to farming and herring fishing and participated in Scottish politics. She spent two decades as an elected member of the Argyll County Council and the Highland Panel.

Both Mitchison and her husband, G. R. Mitchison, stood for the Labour Party in the 1930s. Her husband was elected in the 1940s as a Labour member of Parliament and served until he was made a peer in the 1950s. Lord Mitchison died in 1970.

Mitchison continues to write. In the 1970s she published three memoirs; in 1978 she published a collection of poems, "The Cleansing of the Knife;" in 1982-83 she published two books: "What Do You Think Yourself?" a

selection of short stories linking the medieval past to the Scottish present and future, and "Not By Bread Alone," a novel speculating in science fiction about her brother.

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