

Troldspejlet

Medlemsblad for Karin Michaëlis Selskabet nr. 28 – december 2016

07.12. 2016

Kære medlemmer

Som det fremgik af sidste medlemsbrev, vil styrelsen gerne gøre noget for at fastholde medlemmerne og få tilgang af nye, også selv om det er vanskeligt at samle foreningens medlemmer fysisk. Vi er ikke nået til ende med overvejelserne, men vi fik et godt input af Solveig Czeskleba-Dupont, som frit refereret siger: gør ”Troldspejlet” til vores forsamlingshus. Troldspejlet har været præget af mere eller mindre forkromede artikler. Dem vil vi ikke undvære; men hvor ville det være dejligt også med mindre akademiske, mere umiddelbare og personlige notitser f.eks.: ”Derfor har jeg lige læst Lotte Ligeglad for tredje gang”, ”Jeg holdt et foredrag om ”Den farlige Alder” for en gruppe kvinder – nu skal I høre nogle reaktioner.” Randersmafiaen synes, at det lyder som en god idé, og efterlyser bidrag af den slags. Lad ”Troldspejlet” blive selskabets omdrejningspunkt! Igangsættende kunne Kirsten Klitgårds idé også være: Hvilket billede tegnes af Karin Michaëlis i ”Frem for alt frihed: Festskrift for Lars Hedegaard”, i John Chr. Jørgensen: ”Brænd mine Breve”, i Dorthé Chakravartys: ”Jo, Carlsbergfruen...” og i Martin Zerlangs: ”1914”?

Vi har reserveret Literaturhaus til vores årsmøde den 18.03. kl. 13 for styrelsesmedlemmer og kl. 14 for os alle. I skal nok få en officiel indkaldelse.

I forbindelse med medlemstilbagegang og ovennævnte problem har vi drøftet at ændre fundatsen. Vi vil gerne nedsætte antallet af styrelsesmedlemmer til 5, alle vælges for et år. Vi vil fremsætte et konkret forslag til ændringen på årsmødet. Forslaget kommer ud samtidig med en officiel indkaldelse, og i samme forbindelse får I et eksemplar af den gældende fundats fra 2006. Forslag til ændringer skal ifølge denne være styrelsen i hænde senest 20.02. Fundatsændringer skal godkendes af 2/3 af de fremmødte på årsmødet.

Der er to indlæg i dette 28. nummer af Troldspejlet. Kirsten Klitgård fortæller om Karin Michaëlis’ huse, og Merete von Eyben har anmeldt den oversatte og reviderede biografi. Årets gave. De mange billeder i Kirstens artikel gør, at vi frygter, at det bliver noget makværk, hvis I printer artiklen ud. Det behøver I heller ikke. Vi får lavet nogle profudprintninger, som I får, når vi ses til årsmødet. De der ikke kan komme til årsmødet, kan rekvirere et eksemplar ved mail til kekas@mail.dk

Glædelig jul og et godt nytår til os alle og husk: Der er slagtilbud på ”Den grønne Ø. Karin Michaëlis’ asyl”.

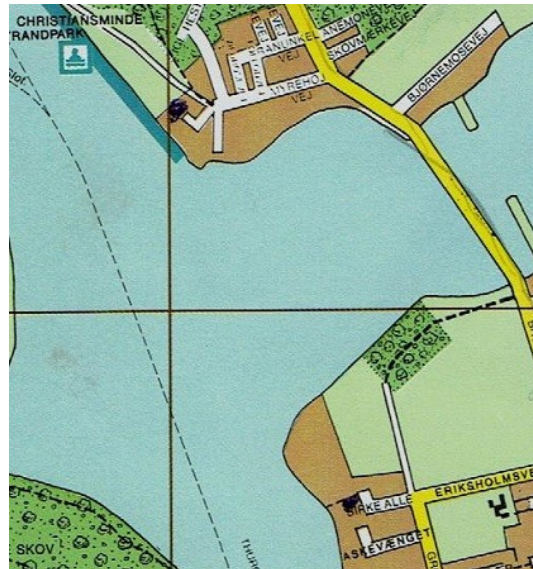
Keld Sørensen

Kirsten Klitgård: Velkommen indenfor – Karin Michaëlis' huse

Inden Karin og Sophus Michælis byggede TORELORE, havde de fået en forkærlighed for området ved at bo i to somre (1905 og 1906) i et lejet hus ved Svendborg. Det var Taos søster Hedevig og hendes mand, jernbaneinspektør Carl Beyer, som havde fundet det lille hus til dem. Det lå nær stranden i rigmanden *Sophus Webers* meget store frugtplantage i Gl. Hesthave, ikke langt fra hans værft, hvor der byggedes fine lystbåde.

Olufshuset lå her >>
Værftet lå på pynten >>

Torelore >>>>>>>



I "Farlige Famlen" beskriver Karin Michaëlis landlivets glæder og fortæller, at hun og Tao ordentligt tog for sig af æblerne og også opfordrede deres gæster til at forsyne sig. Huset, der af nogle kaldtes OLUFSHUSET, findes ikke mere, men det lå lige ved siden af et rødt murstenshus, SKOVFOGEDHUSET, der stadig kan ses fra den sti hen imod Christiansminde, som man kan komme ind på fra Myrehøjvej (den første vej til venstre, når man kommer fra Thurø over dæmningen).

De besluttede sig til at bygge hus på Thurø, og i løbet af 1906 blev TORELORE bygget på Birke Allé (matrikel 31k).

Sophus fik skøde på huset 27.6.1907. Ved skilsmissen fik Karin adkomst til det (19.10.1911), og 3.3.1921 fik hun desuden skøde på matrikel 31v.

I 1938 solgte hun ejendommen til plantageejner Niels Rasmussen Nielsen, og han solgte den videre allerede året efter til amtslæge Aage Malthesen (skøde 18.08.1939).

At Tom Kristensen kom til at bo i Torelore, skyldtes, at hans femte hustru, Ingeborg "Bosse" Kristensen, købte huset (skøde 11.09.1951).

(billeder af Torelore findes i adskillige bøger, men hvad det indre angår: se nedenfor)

I sommeren 1931 købte Karin Michaëlis huset GULDFUGLEN, Bergmannsvej 64, med den tanke, at det kunne fungere som sommerbolig for søsteren Alma og hendes mand Joost Dahlerup. Hun var længe om at opgive tanken, men solgte det omsider igen i 1937.



Guldfuglen

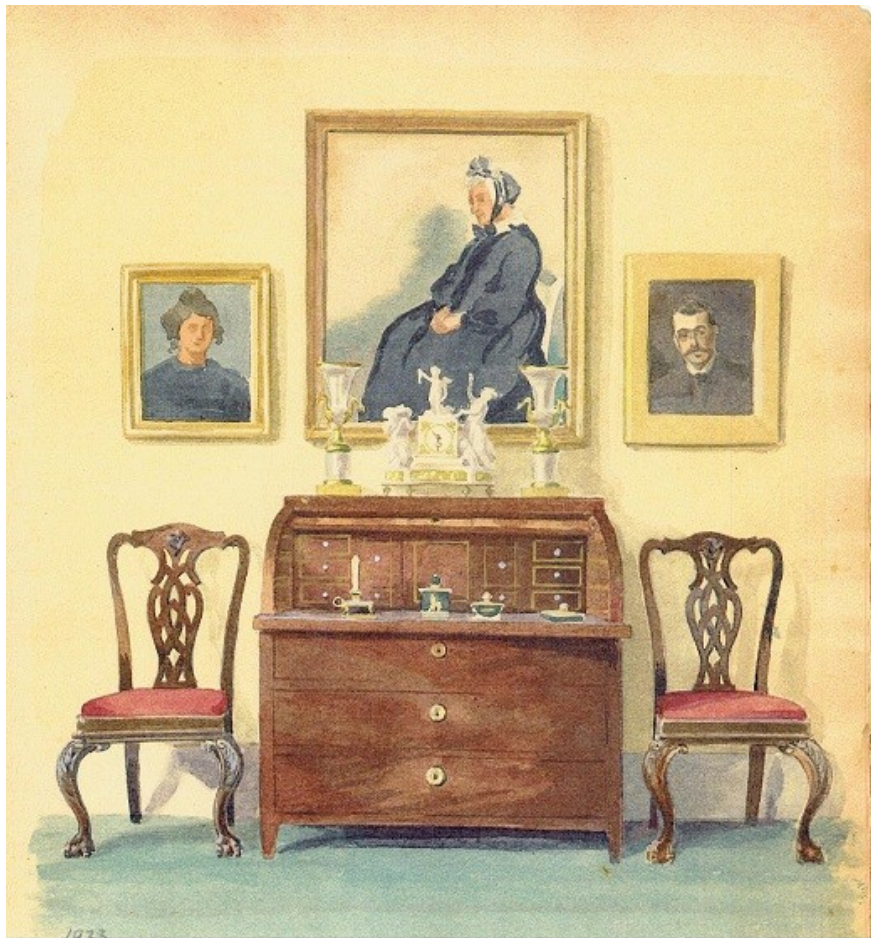
I mellemtiden havde hun købt den store villa BERGMANNHUS på Bergmannsvej nr. 70 (skøde 22.04.1933), som blev hendes bolig på Thurø, indtil hun i 1947 flyttede til København. Hun kom kun til at bo i den omkring halvdelen af de 15 år, hun ejede den, inden hun solgte den til bestyrer Karl Stender (skøde 29.05.1948), der indrettede den som rekreationshjem.

Fra hun rejste til USA i april 1939 i den hensigt at holde foredrag, skrive artikler og besøge Alma og hendes familie, og til hun vendte hjem i juli 1946, blev huset passet på bedste måde af hendes trofaste venner på Thurø.



Under et ophold hos Karin Michaëlis i 1933 tegnede MARIE HJULER Bergmannhus - både ude- og indefra.





På det nederste billede findes der tre malerier.

Til venstre ses Karin Michaëlis malet af KARL SCHOU.

Det befinder sig í Randers Stadsarkiv og ses her på et foto fra arkivet.



Karl Schou: Karin Michaëlis



K. Dydyshko: Sine Brøndum

Karin Michaëlis' mor Nielsine Brøndum blev i 1930 malet af den russiske maler KONSTANTIN DYDYSCHKO (Kaunas, Litauen 1876 – København 1932).

Jeg har ikke fundet maler eller afbildet person for billedet til højre, men gætter på, at det forestiller Sophus Michaëlis.

På billedet fra den store stue ses på bagvæggen et maleri af et hus i en have. Det er signeret Niels Hansen 1925. På venstre siden ses Kirsten Kjærs maleri af ægtemanden Frode Nielsen. Hvem den banjospillende kvinde til højre er, og hvem der har malet hende, bliver foreløbig gætværk.

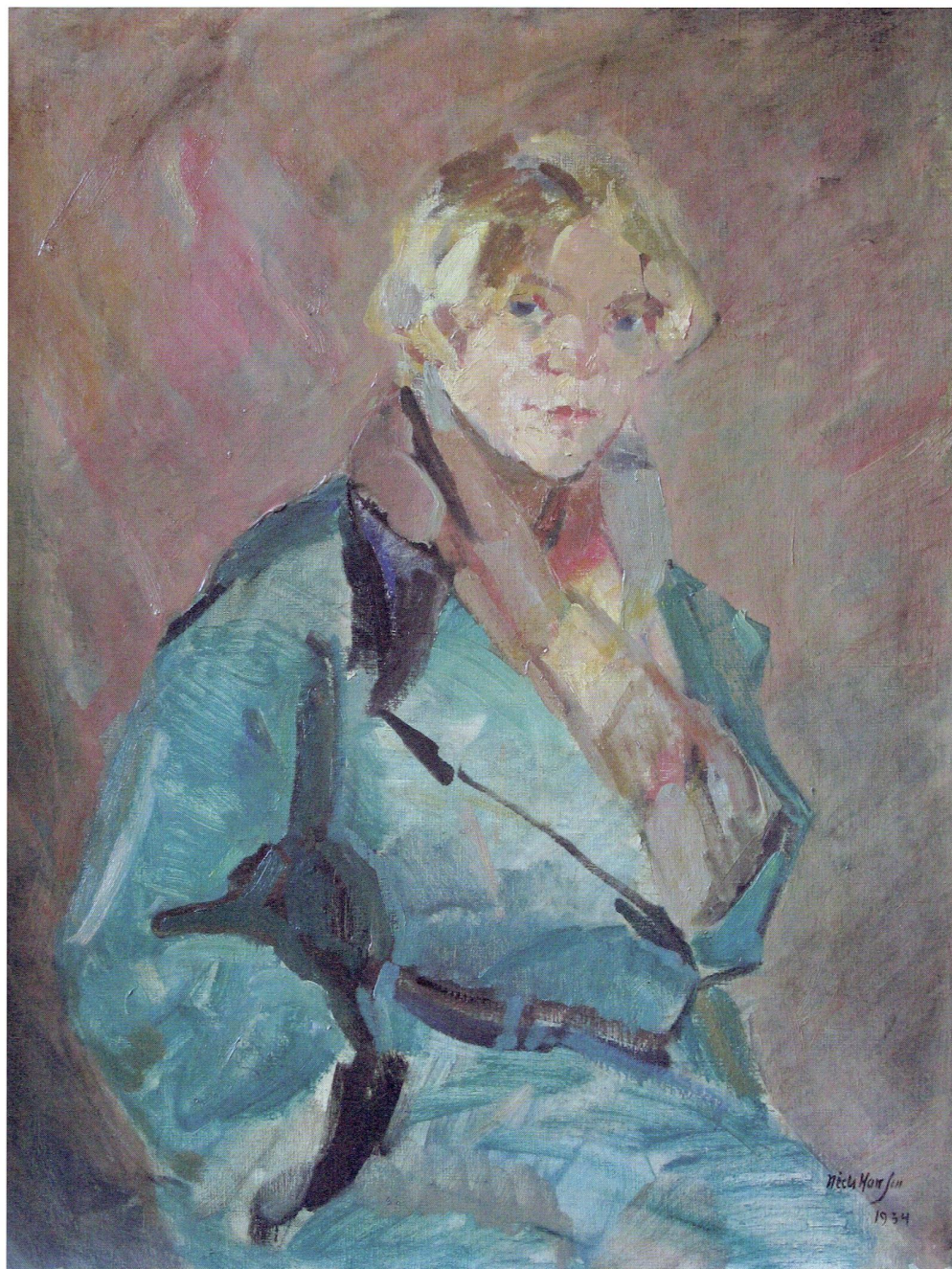
På et sort-hvidt foto, antagelig fra Torelore, hænger de tre billeder også side om side.



Et andet kvindeportræt finder vi over sekretærmøblet her:



Det genfindes i Jan Horskjærs bog fra 2012: *Maleren Nielsen Hansen*, og her får vi både modellens navn, maleren Anne Marie Telmányi, årstallet 1934 og oplysning om, at det ikke blev ved maleriet. Anne Marie Telmányi var datter af Carl Nielsen og hans kone Anne Marie Carl Nielsen. Hun var 1918 - 1936 gift med den ungarske violinist Emil Telmányi.



På en mellemvæg hænger dette maleri, hvis ophavsmand ikke kendes.



Skulle nogen kunne opklare det, er det velkomment.

Et enkelt eller flere malerier kunne evt. være malet af Karin Michaëlis selv, som i 1919 havde deltaget i et malerkursus hos maleren Johannes Itten uden for Wien.

Pudsigt nok skrev Karin Michaëlis (i et udateret brev) til sin oversætter Mathilde Mann:

Jeg er begyndt at male og da jeg vistnok har meget Talent gør jeg rivende Fremskridt og skal udstille snarest. Det morer mig uhyre, men krænker mig at jeg ikke ogsaa er født med straks at kunne alt det tekniske, for Eksempel male det umulige – en lys Nattehimmel.

Dette dejlige kinesiske vægtæppe var blevet hjembragt af Sophus Michaëlis, da han i 1910 var i Kina. Ved skilsmissen havde han fået det, men efter hans død 1932 overlod hans enke det til Karin Michaëlis.



Beverley Driver Eddy blev for adskillige år siden kontaktet af en Brecht-kender, som ledte efter et foto af et kinesisk vægtæppe, som Karin Michaëlis havde haft, og som havde gjort et stort indtryk på Brecht og havde præget hans opfattelse af kinesisk kunst. Han sendte Beverley en meget dårlig gengivelse og spurgte, om hun kendte en bedre. Han ville gerne bringe billedet i en bog, men Beverley kunne desværre ikke hjælpe ham. Da jeg i foråret sendte hende dette foto, skrev hun tilbage, at det netop havde drejet sig om dette tæppe.

Bo Tao Michaëlis mente i sin artikel i Politiken 16.9.2006 "Karin og Sophus", som er gengivet i *Skriftens vagabond*, at vægtæppet nu skulle hænge i Brechtmuseet i Berlin, men det kender de ikke noget til dernede.

Note: Billedet af "Guldfuglen" er fra Thurø Lokalhistoriske Arkiv, mens Karl Schou-portrættet og de sort-hvide fotos findes i Randers Stadsarkivs samling.

De fire farvebilleder af Marie Hjuler er kopieret efter originalerne i Randers Stadsarkiv (format ca. 37 cm x 28 cm).

Merete von Eybens anmeldelse af *HJERTETS KALEJDOSKOP*

Scandinavian Studies, Volume 86, Number 4, Winter 2014, University of Illinois Press

Beverley Driver Eddy. *Hjertets kalejdoskop: En biografi om Karin Michaëlis*. Trans. Kirsten Klitgård. Copenhagen: Karin Michaëlis Selskabet, 2013. Pp. 442.

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It is good news indeed that a biography of the Danish writer Karin Michaëlis (1872–1950) has finally been published in her own country, thanks to Karin Michaëlis Selskabet. But it is both bittersweet and ironic that it took an American scholar, professor emerita of German literature Beverley Driver Eddy, to write it. Driver Eddy wrote the first comprehensive biography of Michaëlis, *Karin Michaëlis: Kaleidoskop des Herzens. Eine Biographie* (Edition Praesens, 2003) after having gone to the trouble of learning to read Danish. The present volume is an updated and extended version of that earlier work, competently translated into Danish by Kirsten Klitgård.

Michaëlis was arguably one of the best-known Danish writers and quite possibly the most popular and widely read European woman writer of her time as well, thanks largely to her controversial 1910 novel *Den farlige Alder* (Gyldendal; *The Dangerous Age*, Northwestern University Press, 1991). As Driver Eddy points out, no other writer since Hans Christian Andersen had been as internationally recognized and admired as Michaëlis was during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to her popularity as a writer, Michaëlis was also a moral icon, who never shied away from speaking out against humanitarian and political injustice. She tirelessly supported those who fought such injustice, frequently donating most of her considerable earnings to the causes and people in whom she believed. She came to the aid of starving Austrian children during the First World War, placing as many of them as she could with Danish families. On the eve of the Second World War, she helped Jewish refugees, many of whom, including Bertolt Brecht and his family, she housed and fed, landing her on Hitler's most wanted list, thus endangering her own life. This also meant that she lost her main income, which came from book

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sales in German-speaking countries, and ultimately was forced into exile in the United States until the war was over.

Michaëlis was also a sought-after lecturer in Europe. She once remarked that the only European countries where she had not given a speech were Greece and Portugal. That part of her career followed in the wake of the publication of *Den farlige Alder*, which dealt frankly with such taboo subjects as menopause and older women's sexuality, scandalizing and intriguing readers all over Europe, who came to listen to her in droves.

Some German booksellers even offered caricatures of her for sale. But women worshipped her for her insights into the female psyche and her down-to-earth advocacy of feminist causes. By the 1920s, she would take up such controversial subjects as compassionate euthanasia, unmarried women's right to have children, birth control, and a different and more liberal way of educating children, as exemplified in *Glædens Skole* (Gyldendal, 1914; *School of Joy*), which was inspired by her friendship with Eugenia Schwarzwald and her philosophy of education. In addition to these activities, which meant that she was continually travelling all over Europe, she produced a steady stream of novels and newspaper articles. All of her books were translated into German, in addition to many other languages, and her articles appeared in Danish as well as German-language newspapers and magazines. But as Driver Eddy points out, in spite of her involvement with political issues, Michaëlis's outlook was not particularly political. She was first and foremost a humanitarian who wanted to rectify poverty, persecution, and injustice wherever she encountered it. Michaëlis had a quirky and at times overly trusting, not to say naïve, side to her personality, which led some people to take advantage of her. The steady stream of refugees from Nazi Germany who came to stay with her on Thurø, the small Danish island where she had settled and acquired several houses, received free board and lodging. Although residents were expected to help run her unofficial refugee camp by doing chores, quite a few of them shirked that responsibility and took advantage of her generosity. Yet that never deterred Michaëlis from reaching out to those in trouble. She was also concerned about animal welfare, to the point of being obsessed with it. Just as a person who was persecuted for political reasons could count on her support, so, too, could animals suffering abuse, a recurrent motif in several of her works. Driver Eddy covers Michaëlis's dual identity as prolific author and humanitarian icon in great detail from cradle to grave, understandably with the emphasis on Michaëlis the person and her spectacular life. Michaëlis was something of an ugly duckling—she was squat in build and also suffered from strabismus. Driver Eddy provides an excellent introduction

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to Michaëlis's oeuvre, arguing that the author's personality is intricately intertwined with the topics she explored in her stories. Driver Eddy's theory is that Michaëlis should be believed when she stated that all her books contained aspects of herself; but she also cautions that Michaëlis was a consummate liar, who was always ready to sacrifice facts for the sake of telling a good story. In the semi-autobiographical *Træet paa Godt og Ondt* (Jespersen; *The Tree of Good and Evil*), published in five volumes between 1929 and 1939, Michaëlis states explicitly that the protagonist is not her, and although much of it is based on Michaëlis's own life, it is not a reliable biographical source. Like Karen Blixen, Michaëlis is first and foremost a superb storyteller. *Træet paa Godt og Ondt* finally brought her

the kind of recognition in Denmark that had for so long eluded her after her first two successes, *Barnet* (Jespersen, 1902; *The Child Andrea*, Elder, 1904) and *Lillemor* (Gyldendal, 1902), both published the same year in Denmark and Germany, and shortly afterward translated into a number of other languages. While writing *Træet paa Godt og Ondt*, Michaëlis also embarked on a project for children, the six Bibi books (Jespersen, 1929–1939; *Bibi: A Little Danish Girl*, Doubleday, 1927), earning her a loyal and passionate following among children all over Europe. These books were inspired by Eugenia Schwarzwald's progressive philosophy as seen through the eyes of, and lived by, the little Danish girl Bibi and her friends.

A fascinating aspect of this biography is the extent to which it is a veritable Who's Who of famous and important cultural and political people of the interwar years, thus covering not only Michaëlis's own life and career, but providing an intimate and valuable cultural history of Europe. Michaëlis was friends with, and admired by, such people as Albert Einstein, Bertolt Brecht, Emma Goldman, Rainer Maria Rilke, Thomas Mann, Carson McCullers, and André Malraux, among many others, who regarded her as an equal in terms of the quality of her books, her stature as a writer, and her collaboration in support of humanitarian causes. In Denmark, however, she was more likely to be met with ridicule than with the respect and acceptance she was accorded abroad. As Driver Eddy notes, while the conservative Danish papers published caricatures and degrading verses about her, abroad she was regarded on a par with Selma Lagerlöf and Sigrid Undset, representing Danish women writers in the way that Lagerlöf and Undset represented Sweden and Norway, respectively. In 1934, *Politiken*, the Danish daily that employed Michaëlis as a regular contributor, sent her to the Soviet Union as a correspondent. Although Michaëlis's friendship with Emma Goldman had made her critical of communism, she soon fell in love with everything she saw on her trip.

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After meeting with Lenin's widow, Nadesja Krupskaja, she was convinced that the Soviet Union represented the philosophy she had outlined in her utopian children's book *Den grønne Ø* (Jespersen, 1936; *Emerald Isle*) and was determined not to see any of its faults. That kind of emotional and seemingly naïve approach worked beautifully in the Bibi books, but could be hazardous in real life. Bibi and her friends travel all over Europe, thus providing both cultural and geographical information in a format that children can relate to and learn from without feeling any academic pressure. After Michaëlis met Einstein in 1929, for instance, she has Bibi visit him in Bibi's store *Rejse* (Jespersen, 1930; *Bibi's Journey*), where she learns about his theory of relativity, which she then explains to readers in childish but perfectly adequate and understandable terms.

Michaëlis wound up spending the Second World War in the United States, escaping Europe just before the Nazis caught up with her. By

then, she was in her late sixties, in poor health, and cut off from the income her books had provided. She had the support of the German expatriate community, which included such figures as Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, Arnold Schönberg, and Brecht and his family. But the meager funds they could raise to help her were not enough, and she had to work odd jobs such as translating books and film scripts. Success as a writer in the United States eluded her, and when she finally returned to Denmark in 1946, she had been largely forgotten by Danish readers. She was awarded the Christian X Frihedsmedalje (Christian X's Medal of Freedom) by the Danish king, but that did not alleviate her need for a regular income, and she was forced to sell her property on Thurø in order to survive. She became yet another casualty of the severe postwar housing shortage, eventually moving into a small apartment in central Copenhagen. She worked tirelessly on another memoir, *Vidunderlige Verden* (Gyldendal, 1948–1950; *The Wonderful World*), but died before she could finish Volume 3.

The way Michaëlis's funeral played out finally illustrated Danish indifference to her, which stands in contrast to the love and respect she had enjoyed abroad. The daily paper *Social-Demokraten* reported that the chapel was far from full, and not many prominent people attended. A representative for *Forfatterforeningen* (the Danish Authors' Association) mentioned in his eulogy that like Hans Christian Andersen, she was different and was thus *nøflet* (bullied), although outside of Denmark, she was truly famous. The German actress Ruth Berlau expressed the same sentiment in an article in the journal *Aufbau*, in which she calls Michaëlis a Danish Hans Christian Andersen, who nevertheless had to die in exile in her own country.

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When my book, *Det farlige liv: En bog om Karin Michaëlis* (Tiderne Skifter, 2006), was published, the year Karin Michaëlis Selskabet was founded, public libraries reported a renewed interest in Michaëlis's books and had to take them out of storage to satisfy patron demand. With the publication of Driver Eddy's authoritative and indispensable biography, *Hjertets kalejdoskop*, interest in Michaëlis's life and work is bound to pick up further and accord her the recognition she so richly deserves. It is eminently readable and difficult to put down because the story of Michaëlis's life is as dramatic and spellbinding as her most intricate stories, all of which Driver Eddy anchors with solid scholarship.

Merete von Eyben