Louise Michel

Leader of Paris Commune Partisans and Radical Anarchist Feminist

(1830 - 1905)

Description: Michel was a schoolteacher and active in the Paris Commune and the French Revolution of the 1870's -- both in looking after the wounded and fighting. She was transported to New Caledonia, but returned to France after the Communards were granted amnesty. She was much admired among the worker's movement. (From: Anarchy Archives)

Tags: anarchist, paris commune, red virgin of montmarte, feminist, siege of paris, french, parisian, speaker, revolutionary.

Quotes:

"...as I advanced in the tale I came to love reliving this time of struggle for freedom, which was my true existence, and I love losing myself in the memory of this." (From: "Memories of the Commune," by Louise Michel.)

"Now we go quiet; the fight has begun. There is a hill and I shout as I run forward: To Versailles! To Versailles! Razoua tosses me his sword to rally the men. We shake hands at the top; the sky is on fire, and no one has been wounded." (From: "Memories of the Commune," by Louise Michel.)
"One of the future revenges for the murder of Paris will be that of revealing the customary infamous betrayals of military reaction." (From: "Memories of the Commune," by Louise Michel.)

**Biography:**

**Louise Michel (1830-1905)** the French socialist heroine of the 1871 Paris Commune; pseudonym "Clémence."

Michel was a schoolteacher and active in the Paris Commune and the French Revolution of the 1870's -- both in looking after the wounded and fighting. She was transported to New Caledonia, but returned to France after the Communards were granted amnesty. She was much admired among the worker's movement.

Cite from *Encyclopedia Universalis*: Louise Michel was the daughter of a noble man and his servant; she grew up in the castle of her grandparents and got a liberal/progressive and good education (in the spirit of Voltaire) and became a schoolmaster. She refused to take an oath of allegiance to the emperor and opened a private school. She wrote poems and opposition journals; she frequented public meetings. In 1870 she took part with the French Commune on the barricades as an ambulance woman, and lead a revolution club. At the fall of the Commune she was deported (1871). Victor Hugo wrote a famous poem in her honor: "Viro Major."

She arrived in New Caledonia in 1873, where she tried to educate Canacs and support their revolt against colonization. After amnesty was granted, she returned to Paris in 1880. Capitalist newspapers gave her the name of "the red virgin" and depicted her in caricatures and words as ugly and masculine. She drew huge crowds in the meetings for the worker's movement, and was a tireless militant who held many conferences in France, England, Belgium and the Netherlands.

In 1881 she took part in the anarchist congress in London. After a demonstration against unemployment, she was sentenced to six years in jail, then pardoned. From 1881 to 1895 she lived in London, as head of a libertarian school. She returned to
France and her travels, dying in Marseilles. Her burial was the occasion of a large demonstration.

From : Anarchy Archives.

Chronology :

**March 15, 1830** : Louise Michel's Birth Day.

**January 10, 1905** : Louise Michel's Death Day.


Links :

• **Anarchy Archives: Louise Michel**
  [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/michel/michel.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/michel/michel.html)

• **Anarchist Library: Louise Michel**
  [https://theanarchistlibrary.org/category/author/louise-michel](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/category/author/louise-michel)

• **Wikipedia: Louise Michel**