



# Manès Sperber – A Reliable Heretic

Video, color, 53 min.

Documentary by

Rudolf Isler

and Christian Labhart

original German version

«I parted ways with my teacher Alfred Adler and disassociated myself from Communism, but I never rejected everything. In all that was lost, I claimed for myself whatever had been, and remained, of value.»  
(Manès Sperber, 1905 – 1984)

The film is a retrospective of the life of the writer Manès Sperber who received the Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels for his main work, «Like a Tear in the Ocean» in 1983.

The two filmmakers travel through Europe, from Zablutow (Ukraine) to Vienna, Berlin, Zurich and Paris searching for traces left by the writer. The images in the film are accompanied by autobiographical texts of Sperber's and they lend a poetic-literary dimension to the film.

In interviews, Wolf Biermann, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer talk about the points of intersection between their own biographies and the work and thought of the man Manès Sperber. They discuss «Messianism», psychology, Communism, Totalitarianism and the Hippie movement. In addition, there are the personal reminiscences of the writer's son Dan Sperber as well as of a brother and sister who knew him privately during his time in Switzerland.

The 100th birthday of this great thinker provided the motivation to document his life and work through the dramatic events of the 20th century. He raised philosophical and political questions, which are still to this day of interest and importance.



Joschka Fischer



Dany Cohn-Bendit



Wolf Biermann

Manès Sperber was, of course, a radical leftist, a Communist; that should not be forgotten in spite of his rejection of Communism, in which he was also very radical.

Manès Sperber, as a sensitive human being, shows how it is possible to free oneself from a one-dimensional ideology. And therefore, I believe he has his place in the Pantheon of great humanists.

So this small Chassidic Jew from Galicia who is condemned from birth to wait for the Messiah notices that we have to free ourselves on our own, as sung in «The Internationale»: «To free ourselves from misery, only we ourselves can do...»

WRITTEN BY: Rudolf Isler and Christian Labhart

CINEMATOGRAPHY: Otmar Schmid

EDITING: Rainer Trinkler

SOUND: Dieter Lengacher (Magnetix)

MUSIC: Dimitri Schostakowitsch

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Filmkollektiv Zürich, in co-production with ORF (Austrian Television)

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