Papers Rosa Manus
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PREFACE:

ROSETTE SUZANNE MANUS was born in 1861. Child of Jewish parents, living at Amsterdam, she grew up in the commercial centre of Holland, where her father was a well-known tobacco-trader.

Her was an old-fashioned family, consisting of 4 brothers and 3 sisters, ruled gently but severely by her father's firm personality, assisted by her mother's kindness and intelligence.

Life was not difficult for Rosette—"Rosa" as she was called, in those early days. The big house on the Kloveniersgracht at Amsterdam harboured a peaceful family, and Rosa, the eldest but one, liked mothering her young brothers and sisters.

A happy but well-disciplined life it was. Starting at 6 o'clock in the morning, the day was filled with lessons, with walks under the stern surveillance of an English or French nurse.

Her life started smoothly with no retarding influence on the development of her personality. When she reached adolescence, it soon became evident, that Rosa was not the usual type of girl. She was not satisfied with the life of luxury and pleasure, allotted to the young Amsterdam girl of good family in those days.

What she wanted in life, she had expressed in her childhood: independence, work like her brothers, the opportunity to help others through that work.

It was not in accordance with the ideas of her time nor with those of her parents. A girl of a good, well-to-do family did not earn money or go into public life. This was the cause of much difference of opinion with her father. Her plan to become a nurse was vetoed, and when Rosa wanted to fulfil her other aim: the running of a fashion-shop in the middle of Amsterdam, she had to give up the house, already rented for that purpose, and under protests and tears she had to abandon this second plan.
She succeeded, however, in finding an outlet for her energy. Her parents allowed her to do philanthropical work, so she helped with "Kindervoeding", a philanthropical institution, and soon became a member of the committee, and afterwards its President.

From then onwards things determining Rosa's life came in quick succession. She successively became a member of the committees of different philanthropical institutions. And in 1908 the first international Congress for women's suffrage was held in Amsterdam, which was to procure for Rosa her lifelong friendship with Mrs. Chapman Catt, its President, and was to enlist her in the struggle for the amelioration of the life of women.

Her first real work for that purpose was done in connection with the Dutch association for women's suffrage, in which she helped its secretary Johanna Aaber, daughter of an Amsterdam University Professor, and one of the most remarkable members of the Dutch Women's movement. Through her, she came in contact with Dr. Aletta Jacobs, the first woman-doctor in Holland. It was with Dr. Jacobs, that Rosa went in 1909 to the third international congress of women's suffrage, which this time was held in London. There she helped Mrs. Chapman Catt, and through her got to know all prominent members of the Conference. She also accompanied her to the festivities and receptions given by the London aristocracy in honour of the Conference.

This Congress brought to notice the many useful services, which Miss Manus could give to the International Alliance, of which committee she soon became a member, later its vice-President. It further strengthened the friendship with Anna Howard Shaw, one of the first women to take clerical orders; --with Minna Cauer and Marie Stritt, the German pioneers; --with Mrs Fawcett; --and last not least, with Mrs. Margery Corbett Ashby, the later President of the International Alliance, and with Dr. Mia Boissevein, one of the first Dutch woman-doctors.
in zoology.

With Mrs. Corbett Ashby she organised the many international Congresses of the Alliance, which as a rule were held every 3 years successively in Budapest (1913), Geneva (1920), Rome (1923), Paris (1926), Berlin (1929), Istanbul (1935), Copenhagen (1939). With Dr. Mia Boissevain, she propagated Women's suffrage in Amsterdam and Holland, and together they organised the big exhibition of 1913 "de Vrouw 1813-1913", which proved to be a great success.

Miss Manus spent an important part of her life on international affairs. The many Congresses, organised for the Alliance all over the world, her gift for languages, her ability to get on with people of different nationalities, ideas and standing, these qualities procured her friendships in almost every part of the world, and made her a welcome link, wherever this was needed. Thus she became the secretary of the Women's Disarmament Committee of International Organisations, which was founded at Geneva in 1932, on the occasion of the Disarmament Conference. The aim was to procure the signatures of thousands of women all over the world in order to make known women's will for peace, and to offer this tribute in the form of a petition to the Disarmament Conference. Eight million signatures were handed over by Miss Manus in the name of this committee in a plenary session of the Disarmament Conference on February 6, 1932.

Another appeal for her help in the international field was made by Lord Cecil in 1936, when he asked Miss Manus to become the organising secretary of a big peace-meeting, which was to be held at Brussels by the international peace organisations, the so-called "Rassemblement universel pour la Paix", of which Lord Cecil was to be the President.

These two occasions show that Miss Manus next to her aims as a feminist, had her ideas as a pacifist. As early as 1915 she organised together with Dr. Mia Boissevain and Dr. Aletta Jacobs an international peace-Con-
dress in the Hague. At the Congresses of the Alliance, she regularly presided its peace-committees.

An irony of fate, that she, who gave much time and energy to the preservation of peace, had not only to witness the most brutal war in history, but even became its victim.

Her international work did not prevent Miss Manus from keeping her interest for her work in Holland. For many years she was the President of the Amsterdam branch of the association for Women's Suffrage. At the same time she was a member of the Dutch "Vrouwenraad", another big women-organisation, which she often represented abroad.

Miss Manus also took the initiative in organising a bazaar in 1929 in order to raise funds for the Amsterdam branch of the Dutch "Vereeniging voor Staatsburgeressen". In 1930 she also organised the historical revue "de Vrouwenpiegel" for the benefit of the Alliance...

To sum up Miss Manus' work on more general social lines:
---Her organisation of the Amsterdam "Steuncomité", directly after the first worldwar in order to alleviate the suffering resulting from the 4 years' mobilisation...
---Her initiative in starting in 1933 the "Neutral Women's committee for refugees", in order to help the many German Jews, who fled the German Hitler-regime...
---Her help in organising the "Dutch electrical Association for Women" in 1932, an association which she considered in the interest of women, as the use of electrical instruments eases household-labour...
---Her work in organising in 1935 the "International archives for the Women's movement", a scientific centre for documentation founded in 1935 at Amsterdam, whereof she became the President---
---Her work—last not least— as a member of the committee of the Amsterdam Women's auxiliary corps, started in 1936...

If, again, we consider all these functions fulfilled in a perfect way for the general welfare, they testify to her
great organising talent, but still more for her remarkable personality.

For it was Miss Manus' character and personality above her gifts as an organiser, which have made her work such a success. Self-effacing, intent to help the general cause, straightforward, sympathetic... she was able to smooth out difficulties and animosities, where others failed. Her clear intellect, her ability to grasp difficult situations, her sympathy for mankind, made her an invaluable friend and collaborator, whose premature death is felt as an international loss.

Those who worked with her, have wished to describe this tactful, unselfish personality:

---Mrs Chapman Catt, first president of the International Alliance for Women's suffrage, who was the first to notice Miss Manus' special qualities, and worked and travelled with her on her 9 month's tour across the world.

---Mrs Corbett Ashby, second president of the International Alliance, with whom she organised as first vice-president the many international congresses, and travelled through Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

---Dr. Mia Boissevain, with whom she started her pioneer-work for Women's suffrage, and kept a lifelong friendship--

May these sketches contribute towards keeping a vivid memory of her, whose life was ruthlessly ended by German hands...