Broadcast for NBC

The death of President Roosevelt raises the question—what of Mrs. Roosevelt? What will be her future? In the past decade and a half she has become a personage in her own right.

She is an international figure. In fact she is something of a symbol. I've repeatedly realized how she has come to represent hope to people who are puzzled and confused. I've had instances of this in Africa, in Britain and on the continent.

To know her is to have doors opened to you. It has been very fortunate for me that before coming overseas I was a member of her press conference at the White House in Washington.

I'm constantly asked about her—especially by women. What is she really like they want to know.

I remember in the North African campaign I was invited into the home of a wealthy Moroccan. The wife of that household never went out. But she had a radio. She had listened to American broadcasts. She knew about Mrs. Roosevelt. She wanted to know more.

The Sultan of Morocco definitely believes in women staying at home. But his official representative confided that the one woman in the world whom he wished to meet was the woman whom all America knows stays at home the least.
"It is because she has a feeling for humanity," this man told me as we sat talking in the Sultan's palace in Rabat.

I was in Luxembourg the night that city was liberated. The electric lights were off but by candlelight I sat talking in a hotel cafe to some Luxembourgers.

I happened to mention that I had been presented to their sovereign, the Grand Duchess Charlotte, when she was the guest at one of Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences. At once they spoke with more interest. And they too asked what is Mrs. Roosevelt like?

There is not the criticism overseas of Mrs. Roosevelt that there is back home.

Over here they seem to see more clearly her interests in people. To them she represents compassion and kindliness.

Of course the more realistic recognize that she has made of the role of First Lady a position of considerable and varied power. But outside of fellow Americans I've never heard it said that she ought to stay at home and quit meddling.

The nearest to criticism I've heard came from an English newspaper woman that reporter told me that before Mrs. Roosevelt came to England in 1942 she had considered the idea of the wife of the President of the United States to travel about as she did on her own as undignified.

But after she had gone around England with her—dashing here and there to visit an American Red Cross club, to see a London air-raid shelter—she changed her mind. Mrs. Roosevelt is a woman of great dignity, she said.
Mrs. Roosevelt's amazing energy has always been a national wonder.

Once I got a hint as to the history of Mrs. Roosevelt's varied interests—her ability to ask detailed questions on her visits to mines, factories, hospitals.

At the time I was with her on a trip into Southern Illinois. She had visited an eye clinic. Her questions had been technical on how the organization operated.

"How do you know what to ask?" I asked.

She recalled that at the time when President Roosevelt was Governor of New York it was somewhat painful for him to get around. He coached her on what to look for, what questions to ask, and she inspected many state institutions for him.

Possibly for more than people at home realized she has been the eyes for the man who couldn't get around very easily although he has traveled more than any President in American history.

Mrs. Roosevelt believes in women going overseas to have a part in the war.

The nurses in forward hospitals, the red cross girls serving doughnuts at dawn to bomber crews back from a raid, the WACS who manned telephones during the V-bomb raids on London, the women who will have a part in war relief, the girls in the U.S.A. shows, they all know that war isn't glamorous. They see first hand the problems war brings.

And women, Mrs. Roosevelt believes, have an important role in the post war future.

That women will have a definite effect is born out by present events in France. This country is on the eve of local elections, it is the first time that French women will vote.
I've recently returned from the Riviera that pre-war playground of millionaires. But now there is hunger there. Butter, if you can get it, costs $24 a pound. There is only limited milk for babies.

There are radical murmurs. But from my own questioning and from a man whose job it is to take a sample of public opinion, indications are that it is the women who will be a swaying influence.

Mrs. Roosevelt never wanted the spotlight. She is really shy. I've seen her hands shake when she turned pages in a lecture. I know that when her voice goes off key she is battling stage-fright.

She has sometimes found the role of First Lady hampering. She never really could understand the furore raised when she was director of civilian defence. To her mind she was trying to do a job she thought should be done.

She doesn't like ceremony. In a recent letter she wrote she didn't know if anything would bring her overseas again or not. The time the President would probably want her to go she wrote would be if there ever was a meeting in England.

"And that is the time when I least want to go" she said, "although I can see that probably I should."

She didn't go to the Yalta conference. In her own words she said that Anna went because the President felt Mrs. Roosevelt could give the whole group too much worry. "They would think they had to pay a great deal of attention to me," she said.

But what of Mrs. Roosevelt's future? The spotlight as First Lady has moved away from her but my prediction is that wherever that meeting is she'll be an important influence as a private individual. She'll continue at top news.
I have seen a letter to Messrs. Perkins though I doubt if ever it is of any help.

Perkins -

I am giving this note of duty to Mrs. Ella Coven whom I have known for sometime.

If you can keep her in any way I shall be grateful
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt—help.

As I was a war indefinite employee of the Government I am one of those to be let out in the re-election of force and Mr. Caven is not well enough to continue working, so we resigned last week and I am using our bonds and leave money and retirement fund to go back to my baking—wholesale. I have an order to be delivered weekly from a large chain store. If we can get our retirement money within a month I will not
need to borrow. Congress passed a law just before the end of the session giving its approval to the payment in full. The personnel department at our office told us it would be eight or ten months before we got it.

My reason for writing you is to ask whether you will give me a letter to someone in Washington (I believe Mrs. Perkins is in Civil Service Commission) that I could use to find out whether they can facilitate the payment. I must open October 1st.

Thank you for any help you can give me.
70-11 108th St., Apt. 3E
Side cereal
Forest Hills
Evelyn Coven
Dear Mr. Cox,

I very much appreciate your letter and the kind things you say about me. Franklin and I are interested in your autobiography and poem.

Hope it is going well.
With every good wish.

Cox, James M.
Before Frank died he used to often ask me how my autobiography was coming on. He seemed greatly interested in it. After he passed away I found myself coming back recurrently to a great regret, which was that I did not let him see what I was saying about you. Here it is:

"And now a word about the much discussed Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the president. Not a great while ago I chanced to be in a room of a club adjoining one where a group of women were spending their afternoon at bridge. This was at Miami Beach, where we were awakened every morning by the reveille sounded by the buglers of the regiments of our military forces in training there. Everywhere were marching men, symbol of the strength and patriotism of a young America. Most people, including the great number of women in Red Cross work, were doing their utmost for the war. Here one in this club would hardly have known that a war was on. About the only thing under discussion was Eleanor Roosevelt. Silly rumors werehashed and rehashed and their silliness and falsehood grew with each recital. It was a buzzing, animated circle, and when the women had talked themselves out, I chanced to be walking by.

"What do you think of Eleanor Roosevelt?" some member of the group inquired. This is what I said: "I have known her for a great many years. She is a woman of inherent refinement and a great lover of humanity. If she were to come into this presence for half an hour, she would disarm every one of you and make you all ashamed of yourselves. She is not the person you have been discussing. We who view our times with smug complacency, believing that our civilization, since we ourselves are comfortable,
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92. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

without fault, know too little of what is going on in the dark places of life. She has found them and brought there the kindly touch of her hand and heart. Some of her projects may seem and may be impractical. But as long as she lives, she will continue her labors as a good Samaritan. If she were the wife of a mechanic, she would in that sphere be doing just what she is doing now. If she were the Queen of England, with all the inhibitions which royalty imposes, she would in that sphere be doing just what she is doing now. That is what I think about Eleanor Roosevelt."

All good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

J.M.E.

James H. Cox