



## To the Memory of A.M. Lorentz de Haas

*30th September 1911 — 4th October 1967*

On October 4th, 1967, Dr. A. M. Lorentz de Haas, medical director of the Epilepsy Centre “Meer en Bosch”, Heemstede, died after a long illness.

Albert M. Lorentz de Haas was born on September 30th, 1911. His mother was the daughter of the famous Dutch physicist and Nobel prize winner Prof. H. A. Lorentz, his father was another Dutch physicist of international fame, Prof. W. J. de Haas. It is not surprising that the son was unusually intelligent. He finished secondary school before his 16th birthday, then, in preparation for his medical training, he studied chemistry for one year. In 1935 he qualified as an M.D. Before beginning to specialize in neuropsychiatry he was an intern in general surgery for some time and then made some voyages as a ship's surgeon. From 1937–1939 he was an intern in the Psychiatric University Hospital in Utrecht under Prof. H. C. Rümke and then continued his specialisation in the Neurological University Hospital of Amsterdam under Prof. B. Brouwer. Here, in 1943, he completed his thesis on the optic thalamus and cortical thalamic pathways in the rabbit. During the last years of the war and a few years afterwards he practised neuropsychiatry at Almelo, a town in the eastern part of Holland. But he gladly seized the opportunity to return to the university when Prof. A. Biemond, who succeeded Prof. Brouwer in 1947, asked him to become his collaborator and deputy director of the Neurological University Hospital. In the academic year 1951–1952 he went to the United States as a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation to work in clinical epilepsy and electroencephalography under Prof. W. G. Lennox at Harvard. With Dr. J. K. Merlis and Dr. C. Lombroso he worked in the hospital of the Veterans Administration in Framingham, Massachusetts, on: “Participation of the cortex in experimental reflex myoclonus”. These special studies in the field of epilepsy were done in preparation for his new function of medical director of the Alexander van der Leeuw Kliniek in Amsterdam, the neurological hospital belonging to the Dutch Society against Epilepsy.

In 1955 he succeeded Dr. B. Ch. Ledeboer as medical director of “Meer en Bosch” in Heemstede. Under his direction “Meer en Bosch”, which, since its foundation in 1882, had gradually become an important institution for the care and treatment of epileptic patients, was further developed into one of the leading epilepsy centres in the world. In particular mention should be made of the modern social workshop, which was opened in 1961, and of “De Cruquiushoeve”, a living community for over 500

severely handicapped epilepsy patients, which has been planned in the manner of a village surrounded by a number of residences each accommodating 12 patients, a recreation building, a church, a social workshop, a school and various smaller shops.

Besides the medical care of about 600 patients, who benefit by all modern developments in diagnosis and treatment, an active research programme was carried out by Lorentz de Haas and his collaborators on clinical, electrophysiological, pharmacological, biochemical and socio-medical aspects of epilepsy. For details reference is made to the bibliography.

Lorentz de Haas has served neurology in general and the fight against epilepsy in particular in other ways too: as an officer of the Netherlands Society of Psychiatry and Neurology (1951–1957), as vice-chairman and later as chairman of the Amsterdam Neurological Society (1953–1955), as a member of the executive committee of the Dutch branch of the International League against Epilepsy (1952–1957) and as its president (1957–1966). In 1961 he was elected as vice-president of the International League against Epilepsy and in 1965 he became president.

Lorentz de Haas was not only an excellent executive officer, but also an outstanding editor. As early as 1950 he became an editor of *Folia Psychiatrica, Neurologica et Neurochirurgica*, and in 1958 he became its managing editor. In this function he carried out a reorganisation of this journal which also involved the change into its present name *Psychiatria, Neurologia, Neurochirurgia*. It was only natural, when *Epilepsia* was transferred to Elsevier Publishing Company in Holland, that Lorentz de Haas should be invited to become managing editor of the new series of this journal. Till the last he fulfilled this difficult task with great skill, patience and perseverance. His command of the literature in the field of neuropsychiatry and particularly in that of all aspects of epilepsy was of great value for this function.

As a recognized authority in the field of epilepsy and thanks to his very good command of foreign languages, he was often invited as a speaker at national and international meetings and congresses. In discussions his voice always carried weight.

Lorentz de Haas not only possessed a brilliant intelligence and an excellent memory, but he also set himself very high standards in every respect, particularly in medical ethics. He was an individualist, but maintained very good relations with everyone who had the privilege of working under his direction, and also with many others in and outside his profession. He was both an aestheticist and an erudite man and he had a great knowledge of art and literature.

A shadow fell over the last years of his life because of the illness of his wife, who died only a few months before he himself became aware of the fact that the treatment for a malignant disease which he underwent in 1962 had not brought about the final cure. Even during these years he not only carried on his heavy obligations, but continued to promote further developments.

He has left an only son of nearly 10 years old. May this young boy's innate qualities and the affection of those to whom falls the heavy responsibility to replace his parents, help to guide him towards full maturation.

O. MAGNUS

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