

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In this segment, ER discusses a Soviet law that denies exit visas for women married to foreign men.

Participants: ER

(0:06)

[ER:] Thank you Anna. Today I want to talk a little about a question that was up in the General Assembly this week, and I don't think that a great many women really understand uh the significance of that question. It dealt with Soviet wives. It had its origin in the fact that um a son of an ex-ambassador to Chile eh had married a Russian woman and when his father left and he wanted to go with his father, the government of the USSR refused to give his wife an exit permit. So she could not leave with her husband. Her husband has had to stay in Russia and a great many people are worried-ed about their real safety there. Quite aside from the fact that life is--can't be very happy for two young people who cannot go together to the husband's own home and start their future lives. Now this started uh in Committee Six during the meeting in Paris and there, there was an argument which was carried on at length between the Soviet government and the satellite states supporting them, um and several of the other governments because of course the United States and the United Kingdom supported Chile. And they supported Chile because we and the United Kingdom had had certain difficulties uh in regard to some of our soldiers who had married Russian women when they'd been stationed there in Russia. And um there are cases in which American women have married Russian husbands, and they have later wanted to come to this country. And up to um some two years ago, occasionally an exit visa was granted. But um beginning about two years ago oh uh the exit visas were stopped. Uh at first the marriages uh were not contrary to Soviet law. There was no law in the Soviet Union which forbade a Soviet citizen from marrying a foreigner. Lately they've passed a law which does forbid this, but all of the cases of our soldiers came before this law was passed. So they are marriages which are recognized by us as valid marriages. Now we, in speaking in favor of the Chilean protest--because that's all it can be, we can only protest what the USSR has done, say that it's a violation of human rights and hope that they will change the policy--and the United States, in making their protest, did state that in admitting foreigners certain uh qualifications would be demanded. For instance we cannot admit people who have certain diseases. We cannot admit people who have um in anyway shown um moral turpitude or some kind of um criminal offense in their past. We can um however say that we will try to do everything to expedite wives of our citizens. We also have a law now which makes anybody who advocates the overthrow of government in this country inadmissible. But we did say that we would try to do all we could to get the wives of American citizens into this country. And I think we made a pretty good case because the vote was a fairly large vote in favor of-of the resolution accepted by the Sixth Committee eh urging the USSR to change their policy. And now back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood.

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Transcription: Melissa Melvin
First Edit: Anna Karditzas
Final Edit: Christy Regenhardt