

## MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

May 9, 1940

Description: Broadcast 1:15-1:30 PM over the NBC Red Network; ER discusses youth and youth organizations and the major problems of war and unemployment.

Participants: Ben Grauer, Eleanor Roosevelt, NBC Announcer

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(16:44)

[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*.

[Theme music 16:47-17:15]

[Ben Grauer:] All over America, that music means it's time for another visit with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. These programs which have already won a warm place in the hearts of millions of Americans are presented by the makers of SweetHeart Soap, one of America's favorites since 1890. Last Tuesday Mrs. Roosevelt joined us from Washington, DC. Today we are fortunate in having her right here with us in our New York studio. Ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good day, ladies and gentlemen. A great many people have asked me lately if I would give one talk on the question of the problems of youth and youth organizations. I'm very glad to do this because while we all know that there is no such thing as a youth problem by itself, there is, however, a keen desire on the part of many of us who come in contact with a great many young people to bring to the attention of the communities all over the country the fact that our whole economic problem affects youth. In a way, it is more urgent because when you are young, you are anxious to begin your life and you're more impatient than you are later on when some of it lies behind you, presumably with a certain amount of experience and achievement.

There are two major problems before us today: war and unemployment. War is continually spreading in the world around us and creates increasing anxiety in youth. The problem of unemployment bears to the greatest extent on youth and middle age. In middle life, if you lose a job, it is practically impossible to find another one. Youth, leaving school or college with no experience of actual work, finds it almost impossible to get the first job. There is no unemployment problem in the countries which are at war. There was a time when people believed that wars and disasters were necessary to rid the world of surplus populations which could not be supported. And so pestilence and famine and floods were looked upon as visitations sent by whatever gods they believed in because, in their infinite wisdom, they were making the problems of the rulers of the earth easier. We've come to believe, however, that man was given his intelligence to face these problems and to see if ways could not be found to meet them which did not require such infinite suffering. Under our democratic form of government, we've developed a people who are really desirous of finding methods by which difficulties can be settled without going to war. It is quite true that our concern has never been great enough. We make rather feeble attempts to find solutions to our internal problems without the use of force when they disrupt groups in our midst. But we have advanced in lip service at least, and that, I suppose, precedes real action. The change in the way that wars are waged has had a great effect also in the way people approach the idea, for war is now the

concern of a whole nation and may affect the whole nation and not be confined to an army fighting on any particular battlefield. (21:03)

We've done a much better job in convincing our young people that war is not a good way to solve the problems of civilization than any of us thought could be done, but this has been more successful in the countries where there is more personal liberty, and of course war, when it actually comes, does away with personal liberties very rapidly. Today, even in France and England, they are doing some things which remind one of the totalitarian governments now existing in other European countries. It is not surprising to find that young people are deeply confused by the whole world outlook. It is a disconcerting and confusing pattern and tends to make those of us who have temporary security think that we might turn inward upon ourselves and have as little to do with these perplexing world problems as possible. Yet I'm afraid that cannot be, for the world is growing closer and closer together. The young people themselves know this and they recognize that there are others like themselves who desire peace even in belligerent countries. They wish that sanity might return to the world. With sanity restored, they feel that young people everywhere might recognize the fact that there are problems to be solved and not sidestepped as was done in the twenties. In the meantime, we in this country are the only nation that can still face our economic problems and try to solve them. (22:52)

The first and most important to young and old is now unemployment and it will continue to be whenever peace comes. Almost everyone will concede that in this country, at least, we have the materials, and we have the manpower, and we have the knowledge of how to produce. Production, which used to be our great problem, is no longer a bugaboo. The strange thing called distribution is what seems to keep so many of our people, including numberless young people, in bondage to want and poverty. Most of us are not economists, we're not even powerful people with much money to spend or great influence, but we can turn to the solving of these problems. However, we, all of us, live in communities and in the aggregate it is we the people in our own communities who have the greatest power that exists in a democracy. If we have a desire to help youth or middle age or even old age, the thing to do is to start in our own communities and find out what the individual problems are. The getting together of all people who know the different elements which make up our community, making a real survey which gives the facts on unemployment, on the lack of recreational facilities, on unsatisfactory training. That is the prelude to the further survey to find out what the potential resources of the community are and what cooperation can be counted on to help in the solution of the problems. That will leave us with the real knowledge of what we must call upon the state and federal resources to do to help meet our local situations. But before I say anymore, I believe Mr. [Ben] Grauer has something to tell us. (25:02)

[Ben Grauer:] I have, Mrs. Roosevelt; it's a very important fact about SweetHeart Soap. Ladies, SweetHeart Soap is pure. Ask those who have made a study of beauty soaps, they know the truth and they can confirm this fact for you. Now, because SweetHeart Soap is pure, you can depend on it to be gentle to your skin. SweetHeart removes dirt and old cosmetics thoroughly because that's necessary for an attractive skin, but it also removes them gently, which is every bit as important. This wonderful purity of SweetHeart's must be the reason why it agrees with so many different types of skin, even with normally sensitive skin. You will be delighted too when you change to pure, delicately-fragranced SweetHeart Soap. We believe you'll say, "There's no other soap like it." And now, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt returns to the microphone.

[ER:] The American Youth Commission has published some very helpful pamphlets telling how to make a survey of a community, what are the things to find out, as regards youth, at least. I feel quite sure that we can find out in the same way about middle age and old age. My suggestion is to write to the American Youth Commission. Write to the youth organizations and ask their help to start out at once to do something in our communities.

Some people consider certain youth organizations are dangerous. If youth organizations were organized by the government for use as a weapon to enforce certain ideas, I think I would agree that they might prove dangerous, for we know today that both Hitler and Stalin depend largely on youth for the enforcement of their regimes. Youth organizations, however, which grow out of a desire in young people to help each other have great opportunities for good and very little chance of being used for any real harm--if they receive the sympathetic and helpful understanding of older people. It is true that groups such as communists and fascists may try to gain a hold over them, but that may happen in older groups as well. It seems to me that it is up to us who are older through the schools and civic organizations to make young people feel that they are needed in a democracy. This is the sanest defense against infiltration of alien ideas. If youth feel that they have a job to do and that a democracy can serve their needs, they will give with loyalty and enthusiasm. (28:01)

The dramatization of what democracy means is very important, however, for young and old, but perhaps even more necessary for young people. I have been telling stories to various groups about certain instance [incidents?] which have brought home to me about how valuable democracy seems to those who haven't had it. Some of us who've always lived in a democracy tend to forget what are its advantages and forget altogether what are our obligations as individuals under this form of government. Not very long ago, I was shaking hands with a group of refugees who were trying to find their place in a community, many of them working in ways which meant difficult readjustment, but they were happy to be here. Finally, one white-haired man stopped in front of me and said, "Years in an Austrian prison lie behind me. I'm thankful for this country. I need no longer be afraid." With that, he bowed and passed along.

One night, I was returning home from a dinner in New York City in a taxi cab. I dropped a friend at her house and was proceeding down to my apartment and gave my address to the driver. He turned to me and said, "You're Mrs. Roosevelt, aren't you? I'm going to tell my son that I took you home. Where I come from, I couldn't have gotten near enough to speak to anyone connected with the government without guards and police all about." He talked to me all the way home about what the government was doing and whether it was good or bad. He waited outside my door until I was safely inside because he alone had the responsibility of seeing me safely home. These things are what make democracy really valuable: that sense of equality, that knowledge that we're close to those we've placed in authority for a time, that we can participate in our government, that we can control it. This is what our young people must hold fast to and they can only do it if we help them and if we give them an opportunity to share with us in our responsibilities. (30:03)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, very possibly your skin is one in a million, but it's hardly possible that your bath and beauty needs are different from each of five million other people. And in the last two years alone, the change to SweetHeart Soap was made by over five million new users. Those five million people sought a gentle soap, a thorough soap, a soap with a lovely, mild fragrance. In other words, friends, those people wanted the very qualities that have made Sweetheart Soap a favorite for over half a century. So wisely, they too chose SweetHeart Soap. Why don't you look into this? See for yourself why, in this changing world, SweetHeart goes on year in and year out pleasing its old friends and attracting new ones. The price is only a few pennies for a big, delicately fragrant, oval cake. Get several cakes when you go shopping this very day. (30:57)

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt comes to call again next Tuesday, same time, same station. In the meantime, remember the product you hear about on these programs: SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. And don't forget to be at home next Tuesday when you'll again hear *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ben Grauer speaking.

[NBC Announcer:] This the National Broadcasting Company.

[NBC Chimes]

(31:32)

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The Eleanor Roosevelt Program