

TALKS BY MRS. ROOSEVELT

June 2, 1937

Description: Eleanor Roosevelt and GWU student John P. Southmayd discuss peace in the world and the effects of war on citizens, unemployment and the economy.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt and John P. Southmayd

BARR:

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, speaking from Washington, D.C., and bringing you – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt! Tonight, Mrs. Roosevelt is going to discuss a subject that women are wondering about a lot just now – Peace in the World Today.

First, may I say a word for the Pond's Company, who are sponsoring these programs. I suppose you've known of Pond's Cold Cream ever since you can remember. Last week I paid a flying visit up to Clinton, Connecticut, the charming New England Town where the Pond's Company had its start way back in 1848, and where today it is making the millions of jarfuls of Pond's Cold Cream that we women want. Since 1848 – that's a long time to be serving the women of America and a long time to be still growing, isn't it? Don't you feel that the company that has a record for growth like that must be making a cold cream that really helps women's skin.

If you yourself aren't using Pond's Cold Cream, I wish you'd get a jar of it – tomorrow. Start using it regularly. See if Pond's Cold Cream won't do for your skin the wonderful things it's doing for millions of women all over the world.

And now I have the great privilege of presenting – Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt!

(8 MINUTES FROM MRS. ROOSEVELT

ENDING WITH INTRODUCTION OF VIRGINIA BARR)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening. Tonight I am very pleased to have with me in the studio a young man who is a Junior at George Washington University. His name is John P. Southmayd, and his home is in Great Falls, Montana.

Mr. Southmayd has joined me this evening to discuss the subject of Peace, a topic which he has spoken on often as a member of his college debating team.

I, of course, feel that the young men and women of his generation are a most important instrument in the achievement of Peace. I am interested in their point of view, what they think can be done to further this cause, and how they think they are going to do it.

Now, Mr. Southmayd, from your point of view what is the general attitude of the men of your age towards Peace?

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Well, I know plenty of thinking fellows who are red hot for peace, but unfortunately they're in the minority. I feel that most of the college men I know want peace, but we're baffled as to how we can insure it. I feel certain that if a war should come within our generation ninety-nine percent of us would go.

But, Mrs. Roosevelt, I'd be very much interested to know just what experiences in your life have given you your great interest in Peace.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

My interest has grown from my study of history, from my personal experience in this country during the World War, and from my travels after the War in Europe, and also the general world conditions which have existed since.

(OVER)

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

One of the things that will always remain in my mind is the pathetic funerals at Arlington Cemetery, when bodies of young Americans were sent home from the other side. Mothers,² alone, or accompanied by other members of the family, came from every part of this country to stand there beside the flag draped coffins in which their sons were lying.

Then in 1929, I took our two youngest boys to Europe, and before I left, my husband asked me to be sure they saw the battle fields. We did see them, and those acres and acres of white crosses in France were a mute appeal to all of us to do away with this kind of waste.

But Mr. Southmayd, war, of course, has made a great appeal to some young men from the point of view of adventure and excitement. How do you feel about that?

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

I'm not very romantic about war. You see, my father ~~is~~ was³ a veteran of two wars, the Spanish-American, and the World War. I was about two years old when he went to the world war. ~~He lost his eye-~~ And an injury received then cost him his eyesight.⁴ So you see, the tragedy of war has been brought home to me very strongly in a personal way.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I'm sure it has.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

But, Mrs. Roosevelt, what chance do you think there really is of settling the disputes and differences of nations peacefully?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think there is every chance if governments and peoples really determine to do so, and are honest with each other. And there is one trend in the world today that I think is helping those chances of avoiding war – that is the trend towards the abolition of secret treaties which the people of a nation do not know about and have not approved. I think the time has passed when a few individuals can decide that hundreds of thousands of men in a nation will go to war. Don't you feel that is true?

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Well, we'd like to know it's true – But now, in working for peace, we have peace conferences with people who talk its practical problems, we talk it over among ourselves, and we support peace movements. But what else can we do? I mean the student or the working man who never really gets near Congress.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

To begin with, every citizen can get near congress – He can contact his Congressman or Senator personally or through the mail. Those men are your representatives, and you can impress on them your desires concerning effective legislation for peace.

You can have a great influence for peace also by helping to form public opinion, by becoming better informed yourself, not only about your own country, but about foreign countries, and by encouraging people to realize that the desire for peace is not enough. There must also be the practical willingness to pay for peace in material ways.

For example, those who supported the Neutrality Act which passed Congress this winter showed that they were willing to sacrifice immediate profits for the greater gains of peace.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Do you think industrial conferences between nations have any effect for peace?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Certainly. Here in Washington last April there was a conference of the textile industries. In attendance were representatives of employers, employees and governments of many nations. The aim of that conference was to ~~lay out a program for the organization of the textile industries on an~~ point out the direction of actions ~~which might be taken by the~~⁶ international basis. ~~An agreement was reached, a program was laid out, and it is to be taken to a conference in Geneva.~~ Labor organizations which are now in conference in Geneva⁷. That to me is a very important step in the direction of bringing about a fuller understanding between nations.

Another positive approach, of course, was the Pan American Peace Conference in Buenos Aires last fall. Beside the definite accomplishments of that conference, I think the people of the nations represented there realize that there is a definite growth of good feeling building between the nations of this hemisphere. Then of course, there are other forces working to promote peace.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

What are they?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I think first I'd say better communications. The development in this line is making the whole world into one large community, instead of scattered isolated nations. An example of that, very vivid in my mind now is this establishment of a telephone service to China, the opening of which I attended a week or two ago.

Another force is improved education, which we can now offer to the average man. And another is youth's interest in peace.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

But, Mrs. Roosevelt, are you convinced all people want peace?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Yes, I am. People are the same the world over. They love their homes, their families and their friends. I am sure that in any war there is never any personal animosity between individual men.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

But, then how do you justify reconcile this idea of peace with⁸ the expenditures of large sums on our the⁹ Army and Navy with this idea of peace?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Unfortunately no nation, no matter how peace-loving, can disarm or reduce armaments until all the nations of the world agree to do the same thing. Even a peace loving nation must be prepared to defend itself adequately.

I do not think, however, that any nation should spend more than the amount needed to build up its defences to treaty strength. Last year, in spite of increased expenditures for the Army and Navy, we were spending only ten or eleven percent of the total cost of government on them. Most of the nations of the old world spent thirty and forty, and some even fifty percent of the government cost on their armies and navies.

And some of that ten or eleven percent we expended went for the improvement of rivers and harbors, some for flood control, for dams, inland water ways, and other purposes all of permanent values, and done under the supervision of Army engineers.

Furthermore we must take into consideration the fact that our standard of living for working men is so much higher, that more money is spent for actual wages. Therefore the total amount we get for money spent is not as much as in other countries.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, do you think that in the event of a war in some other part of the world, the United States could remain at peace?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

It might be possible for us to remain at peace, but it would be impossible for the United States to remain untouched by the effects of a major war elsewhere in the world. Our standard of living would undoubtedly suffer, because our trade would be affected. While we might be spared the loss in battle of our young men, and while we might be spared the destruction of our physical property, we would certainly suffer from the general destruction and depression which any major war would entail.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

We've had a lot of discussion on the unemployment problem, Mrs. Roosevelt, you don't think a war would help solve unemployment?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

No. In the World War there was practically no unemployment, of course, but that was only temporary. After the war was over, the unemployment was greater than ever. During war we take people

out of constructive work and put them into destructive work. The nation is employed making commodities that are destroyed. Our wealth goes into these enterprises. Then when the war is over, our men are out of jobs. There is no place for them, and no money to make a place.

But, now, Mr. Southmayd, before we continue with our questions, Virginia Barr has a word to say.

(INSERT MIDDLE COMMERCIAL)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR:

Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

At the Pond's Company's offices, we're all the time receiving letters from women all over America. Some, of course, ask for advice about their skin. And some are just the friendliest thank-you letters. Here's one I wish I could read all the way through. It's from a young woman who teaches in a college in Texas. She says, "Of course you tell only about society people in your advertising, but I think young business and professional women have to have attractive skins just as much". Then she goes on to say, "I have the thin kind of skin that's hard to keep nice, and I live in a dry sandy country – yet I never have a blemish and my skin stays just as smooth and fresh-looking! My one habit I always follow is to use Pond's Cold Cream 3 times a day! Thanks for giving us such a fine cream."

And now here's another – this time from a girl who lives on a farm in Illinois. She writes, "I am a farmer's daughter and now a farmer's wife, and believe me we need the best kind of skin care if we're to keep our good looks. I know there isn't a finer cream for our needs at any price than Pond's Cold Cream".

Well, there are two letters – one from a college teacher in Texas, the other from a farmer's wife in Illinois. And both give about the same experience. If you are finding it hard to keep your skin in good condition, then do follow the experience of these two women. Just clean and soften your skin with Pond's Cold Cream 2 or more times a day. Wipe off. Then pat in some more Pond's Cold Cream briskly to invigorate your skin. That's all. I believe you'll find your skin benefitting from the regular use of Pond's Cold Cream – just as surely as those two busy and attractive young women do.

(OVER)

MIDDLE COMMERCIAL

BARR: (Continued)

Now, again it's my honor to present Mrs. Roosevelt.

(MRS. ROOSEVELT RESUMES)

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Mr. Southmayd, there's a question I want to ask you. Just what do you think of student demonstrations for peace?

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

I don't have any objections to peaceful demonstrations for peace, but ~~it's been my impression that student strikes and walkouts have been sadly ineffective~~ are the [unclear]¹⁰. They don't accomplish anything. There's a right way and a wrong way to go after this thing, and I believe it's the moral obligation of every student to know the constructive way to help bring about peace.

What do you think, Mrs. Roosevelt, about the oaths some college students are taking, not to fight in any war?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I do not approve of taking oaths of any kind, until you know the circumstances under which you will have to redeem your promises. I think student oaths are unwise, because no young person knows what conditions may confront him at any given time. You can promise that you will do all within your power to preserve peace, and help bring it about. But you can never tell what position you may find yourself in. You may be practically pushed into an actual fight which you do not seek, but which you are obliged to accept.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

When men have most at stake in war, why are they less active in peace movements than women?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Men have been brought up in the tradition that to go to war is one of the manly virtues. To say that they are afraid to go has been considered an admission of physical cowardice, and few men have the courage to say they are afraid.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

— Mrs. Roosevelt, do you feel that we are thinking more about peace today, than people did — say — when you were my age?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

— Yes, I do. I think the world war left a greater number of people determined to see that their nation would do everything possible to avoid such a catastrophe again. The people of your generation are close enough to the great war to realize that it isn't just romance, such as it was in the days of King Arthur and his Knights, who went forth and pitted their strength and skill in equal combat against each other.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

— But what about the young people today who remember nothing of the war — the boys and girls of sixteen?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

— They, of course, did not know the horror, first hand, but in many cases there are still tangible associations that bring it to them. And then they are being educated to know that today war is a question of science, of economic resources, of fighting a largely invisible enemy.

— Physical prowess counts for little now. Even physical health and endurance is are¹¹ of very little value. Because now war is no longer a personal thing. It is a question of masses, not individuals.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Well, the United States wouldn't have been a nation but for a war — the Revolutionary War. Wasn't that worthwhile?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

At the time of the Revolutionary War, no one had any other conception of how to obtain freedom. War was the only method thought of. Today and in the future, there is at least the idea that oppressed nations might appeal to a group of nations and obtain freedom in some other way. I do not know that we have actually reached a point where this can be counted on, but we are at least thinking about it today.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

Do you think¹² What did the United States gained anything from the World War?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Perhaps certain individuals gained valuable experience, but I can see nothing of permanent value that came to us through the World War.

During the War, however, the work which I did in canteens and in connections with the Navy, gave me confidence that I could run my home and look after my children — and at the same time — do other work outside my home. And I have never been content since just to “keep house”.

I am sure there are thousands of other men and women like myself, who broadened their range of experience during the war. Many men in the service learned to read and write. Many benefitted from military discipline, and improved their physical condition. But those benefits can be had in other ways — and war is too high a price to pay for them.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

What do you think of such toys as revolvers and machine guns for children?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

I can see no harm in pistols or guns as toys when they will later be used for sport. If children are taught to use them properly, to learn to shoot is a grand thing. It trains the eye and the hand. But no child should be allowed to use a toy pistol or gun without being taught to use them in a sportsmanlike manner. I think too, that only people of self-control and self-discipline can be entrusted with such weapons even when they are toys.

A machine gun seems a most unnecessary toy. That is a weapon used only in war or in crime.

MR. SOUTHMAYD:

— Mrs. Roosevelt would you please give us your definition of patriotism?

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

— A good definition of patriotism is to love your country, its people and its institutions. It now also involves being a responsible citizen. And that responsibility requires an effort to express at home and abroad, the fact that your country desires to be a good neighbor to all countries in the world. To be a good neighbor, one must be unselfish, believe in justice, and have the enlightened conception that the good of the world as a whole means the good of every nation and of every individual.

(PAUSE)

And now, Mr. Southmayd and I must leave out discussion of peace. He has to return to his college to prepare for final examinations that are ahead of him, and I must catch a train for New York.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (Continued)

As you all must know, any questions or suggestions that you may want to send in, I shall be delighted to receive. And we shall do our best to include the most generally interesting in our remaining broadcasts. I have appreciated the letters you have sent, and I hope you will understand if I cannot acknowledge them all.

Next Wednesday evening, I am going to have with me here Mrs. Genevieve Forbes Herrick, and together we are going to tell you all a little more about the White House. This time – Entertaining – how we do it officially and informally.

Goodnight.

(CLOSING)

CLOSING COMMERCIAL

BARR:

The Pond's Company will bring you Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt again next Wednesday at this same time. She will answer some of the questions you have been asking about Entertaining at the White House-from the most formal to the most informal. And now, do remember to get your jar of Pond's Cold Cream and try the simple Pond's method so many women tell about.

This is Virginia Barr of the Pond's Company, wishing you "Goodnight!"

ANNOUNCER:

This is the National Broadcasting Company.

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Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

² The “,” is a handwritten interlineation.

³ This is a handwritten interlineation.

⁴ The words “And” through “eye” are a handwritten interlineation.

⁶ The words “point” through “the” are a handwritten interlineation.

⁷ The words “Labor” through “Geneva” are a handwritten interlineation.

⁸ The words “reconcile” through “with” are a handwritten interlineation.

⁹ This is a handwritten interlineation.

¹⁰ The words “are the [unclear]” are a handwritten interlineation.

¹¹ This is a handwritten interlineation.

¹² The words “What did” are a handwritten interlineation.