

MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

July 23, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30 over the NBC Red Network. ER discusses the scope of the US defense program, democracy and her support for university national service.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Grauer, NBC Announcer

(46:36)

[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program* presented by the makers of SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 46:42-47:09]

[Ben Grauer:] It's Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's time. Today Mrs. Roosevelt will speak to us from her home in Hyde Park where we will join her in just a moment. These programs come to you with the compliments of SweetHeart Soap, the luxury soap that now offers you an amazing saving. Listen for the details a little later. And now, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good day, ladies and gentlemen. I was reading a little pamphlet the other night written by a young man, I imagine; he might still be in college. At least that would seem possible, because his address is New Haven, Connecticut. The pamphlet is called You and I and from each page arises a protest against the foolishness and futility of war, its wastefulness, and its real insanity. Somehow, as I read the daily newspaper headlines, which are now reporting that one man is demanding of a great nation that it yield to him or else face annihilation and death, I cannot help but join in the revolt which this young man feels against the apparent helplessness which we as individuals labor under. Yet, I cannot see how his remedy can be carried out. This young writer insists that the question of doing away with war cannot be left to the leaders of the nations of the world. They must be settled, these questions, by you and me and the other fellow. He suggests that if we get together and find out that we wha--that we think and that we feel alike then, we will discover that life means the same thing for all the people of the world. Then the futility of war will be all the more obvious. The difficulty with this suggestion is that before we can get together, someone will have to be strong enough to suggest that every nation set aside the implements of war. Someone will have to be strong enough to insist that all the countries must decide how their essential materials, which are the basis of their security and life, can be acquired and distributed. (49:24)

In the meantime, it seems to me that we cannot allow ourselves to be swallowed up or beaten by the nation which, at the moment, has at its command an almost unlimited force of arms. The dictator is the triumph of material power, but it remains for the democracies to prove that they can accomplish something more, something which we will be willing to work with our neighbors to achieve because it is based on spiritual power and allows us as individuals to use our best gifts for the cooperative good. Something which will give us strength and force, and at the same time, keep this force from being wholly destructive. It seems to me that as long as the other fellow has a big stick, we must have one bigger. For us that means a two-ocean navy, a great many planes, a larger army that can really patrol our borders, tanks, guns, and ammunition. In other words, it means a marshaling of our skill for mass production in the interests of being as safe as mechanization can make us. This new use of our genius for production should soon make us the equal in power of any army or any nation even though that army and that nation understand the use and production of machines. (50:50)

This program is necessary for defense, necessary for the saving of life, but in itself, it is not sufficient as a well-rounded defense program. We have had many situations in the past few years which have made some people doubt whether democracy could live and meet the problems of the modern world where the machine holds sway. Democracy is an idea, a form of government based on the theory that men really want to see other men happy, contented, and free. Some people forget that and, in some degree, have adopted the philosophy of the dictators because they do not have the faith that democracies can act swiftly and that democratic peoples are willing to make sacrifices for their national welfare. If we will only grant the need for meeting the dictators on their own ground, and if we will remember the whole problem which we face, then I am sure that the democracies are going to be stronger. We must face the bad situations in our country, however, because out of them grows our weakness.

I think I'll tell you a story of one situation that I happen to have come in contact with. In one part of our country, people are miserable. There is no work, they do not know where to find enough to eat and to clothe themselves with. I met a young woman, whom I know, one day walking down the side of the hill with two children and her young husband. Another child had been in that family when last I'd seen them, and so I asked after the baby only to be told that the baby was dead after two weeks' illness with no medical care because there was no way in which they could obtain it. So little food, no medical care; what can we hope will come from conditions such as these? We must develop the good there is in human beings. Therefore our defense program must go far beyond our military requirements. It must be of such a character that it makes life more worth living in every community throughout this nation. It must be good enough so that everyone will be willing to work with his neighbor to achieve it. In doing this work, we will gain a real understanding of democracy which is a fundamental need for our defenses. But before I go on, I believe our announcer has something to tell us. (53:35)

[Ben Grauer:] Indeed I have, Mrs. Roosevelt. Friends, perhaps you've been wondering whether or not you should try SweetHeart Soap. Well, its makers are so sure you'll like and enjoy and go right on using SweetHeart that here's the amazing invitation offer they make you now today: for just one penny, we want you to have a full size cake of SweetHeart Soap when you buy three cakes at the regular low price. Ask your dealer for three cakes of pure, delicately fragrant SweetHeart Soap with your order for today, and he'll send you an extra full size cake and charge you only one penny more. Why friends, SweetHeart's big penny sale actually saves you nearly twenty-five percent in cash. Remember the name: SweetHeart Soap, at the top of today's shopping list. And now, it is again my pleasure to welcome Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt back to the microphone. (54:32)

[ER:] I think that we require a program of universal service, universal national service. I think it must first become part of the vision of the women and the young people of the country. Men have so long moved in traditional ways that new visions are harder for them to accept. We have been striving during the years of the depression to bring more security to the life of the individual in the community. [ER clears throat.] We have not always succeeded, partly because people lack the realization of the necessity for any change, and partly because they were unwilling to pay the price which improvement in any community life demands. If, however, the women and the young people of a nation decide that the democratic idea has not only never been fully understood, but that it--that there has never be real service from the people of the nation to put the democratic idea into practice, then they will spread this knowledge among all the people 'til it is understood and the vision may come to the whole people. Then they will decide that in their defense program, a new way of democratic life may open up before us. We may begin to achieve some of the objectives which our rapid advance in material ways during the machine age has temporarily obscured for us.

Many people already accept the idea of universal service. The reason I am interested in seeing such a program in this nation is because I know how hard it is to sustain a voluntary service. I would

make this service universal simply because a knowledge of human nature leads me to believe that, for most of us, the thing we do not have to do will be laid aside to wait a more convenient time. It is no lack of patriotism. We mean to serve, we want to serve, but tomorrow seems more convenient than today. We also know that in a universal program everyone takes part on the same level with everybody else, and that is good for us in a democracy. We stand on our own feet with no advantages of birth, or background, or education, or material wealth. What we do, we must do because of our own personal qualities and abilities and this may be an experience for many people which they will never forget. (57:34)

I am opposed to a military training service program alone on the ground that it really does not occupy anyone sufficiently, nor does it give one much which is of value for everyday living. I am quite willing to accept the fact that we must have military training in order to meet the possibility of war, but I believe that more can be accomplished, for the good of all of us, in a more rounded service program. Every young man should have some military training, but in a training period everyone should also acquire a skill which will be of use not only in war, but also in such emergencies as fire or flood, and even in the normal course of earning a living in a peaceful world. For the older people, I would of course have a shorter period of training, adapted to their past experiences and their abilities. The girls should be trained differently, but for just as long a time as the boys. Girls and older people should take training primarily to mobilize the nation along all possible lines and to do the work which will really improve the life of the community. Think of how we could improve health, education, and the government service as well as the service of volunteer organizations, the qualities of character and of discipline which would be developed would be useful in times of emergency and also for everyday living. I can see ahead a people more physically fit, more mentally alert, more understanding of what they want to preserve and develop in their nation. I can see young and old equally awakened to the realization that in order for democracy to give equally to all it must get equally from all. So mobilized, our people would be truly invincible. (59:30)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, it's foolish to buy something just because it's a bargain, but when a high quality product--one you know is high quality--is offered you at a dramatic saving, it's time to buy all you can carry home, and that's the kind of offer we make you right now. One penny now buys a full size cake of SweetHeart Soap with every three at the regular moderate price. Pure, delicately fragrant SweetHeart Soap, with its fifty-year record of purity that is your promise of gentle cleansing, of delicate fragrance. A full size cake of SweetHeart Soap is yours for a penny today when you buy just three cakes at the regular low price. Don't delay. Order SweetHeart Soap, the soap that agrees with your skin, in the sensational one cent sale today. And remember, the more you buy, the more you save.

[Theme music 1:00:26-1:00:42]

[Ben Grauer:] [music continues softly] And this concludes another friendly visit with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt. You are invited to be with us again next Thursday at this time when Mrs. Roosevelt again comes to call and discuss topics of interest to her countless friends. Meantime, remember the sensational opportunity now offered by SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin. So it's goodbye until next Thursday when you'll again hear [music crescendos, cut] *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*. This is Ben Grauer speaking.

[NBC Announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company.

[NBC Chimes]

(01:01:26)

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