

THE ANNA AND ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

November 10th, 1948 (air date)

Description: From Hollywood, Anna discusses Armistice Day. From Paris, ER talks to UN Secretary General Trygve Halvdan Lie. Later, Anna talks about National Cat Week and the time she spent living in the White House.

Participants: ER, Anna Roosevelt, John Nelson, Trygve Halvdan Lie

[John Nelson:] From Paris and Hollywood, the American Broadcasting Company by Transcription brings you Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt.

[Anna Roosevelt:] Thank you, John Nelson. Good morning, we'll hear from Mother in Paris in a few minutes, but first, since tomorrow is Armistice Day, the anniversary of the end of World War I, like many others I'm thinking thoughts of war and peace. And if you have a child, as I have, who's gloating over a day away from school work, you're also trying to tell him why this is a thoughtful holiday. It isn't easy with a boy of nine, but as the years go by the full meaning of Armistice Day will sink in. Now time was when Armistice Day was a shining occasion, a day of thankfulness though one of sadness too in memory of those who were killed or wounded in the war. Still it was a day to observe with noble speeches the anniversary, as we thought, of the end of the war to end wars. But so much has happened since then, first in those days the people in this country weren't yet ready to join the League of Nations so we tried for twenty-five years to keep our noses out of other nations' business. Then, to our horror, we found ourselves in an even more terrible war. At the end of World War II however, we were more realistic, realized that nations had to work together if we were to have a lasting peace. Now, our problem is to keep this realism always on our minds, not to become cynical and say, "Why bother? Another war is inevitable, the thing to do is to strike now and get it over with." The glibsters who talk like that are, thank goodness, way in the minority. And we know, of course, they are referring to Russia and to the fact that as far as we know we alone have the atomic bomb. But it's important to remember that the people of the world are sick and tired of war. In China, in Greece, in Palestine the blood still flows, but in all these places, surely the people must be sick and tired of the violence of war. The strongest thoughts in the minds of all the world's people today is, "God forbid an atomic war, a war of annihilation."

Russian leaders too seem to realize that their people don't want any more war, for foreign minister Molotov in his last big speech said that the Soviet Union is solidly against any attempt at aggression and war-incendiarism. The trouble with Mr. Molotov is that he indulges in so much double-talk. His words are comforting, but actually they mean little unless Russia will join with the other nations in opening its doors to armament inspection. And like all double-talk, it's confusing, to the Russian people as well as to us, when Mr. Molotov says in one breath that the election of President Truman shows a great majority of Americans are opposed to aggression and then turns right around and says that the United States is trying to unleash another war. After all, remember Mr. Molotov that the United States cannot go to war without the consent of the people, duly expressed through Congress. A sensible man named Bonar Law [Andrew Bonar Law, 1858-1923] once said, "There is no such thing as an inevitable war, if war comes it will be through failure of human wisdom." So, our Armistice Day celebration brings entirely new thoughts than it did in 1918. New thoughts, brave thoughts, and above all, necessary thoughts in this atomic age. These thoughts are all part and parcel of what's going on in Paris at the United Nations meeting. So now to my mother in France, interviewing Mr. Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations and a very important gentleman. Shortwave from the Palais de Chaillot, site of the United Nations meeting in Paris. (4:21)

[ER:] Mr. Lie, could you tell us something about the UN permanent headquarters now being built in New York?

[Trygve Lie:] Uh as you know, Mrs. Roosevelt, the old buildings have been cleared away between the Forty-Second street and the Forty-Seventh street and the contractors are now digging for a foundation. We had to wait, I'm sorry to say, until your Congress approved the sixty-five million dollar interest-free loan at a special session last summer. But I really hope that we can move into the new, permanent home sometime in 1950 or early in '51. The final plans for it--forty-story Secretariat office building and for General Assembly will be ready in a few weeks. Then we can start the building.

[ER:] That's very encouraging for those of us who find driving out to Lake Success rather a long drive. If the permanent headquarters will not be ready until 1950, where will the assembly meet next year, Mr. Lie?

[Trygve Lie:] Well, the '49 assembly can meet at Flushing and at Lake Success as the '46 and '47 did--assemblies did and the special session last spring. The United Nations has a lease on the Sperry Factory Building at Lake Success, where our offices and committee rooms are, that is good until '51 and Mayor

[William] O'Dwyer of New York has agreed to let us have the New York City building on the World's Fairground at Flushing whenever we need it for assembly sessions. (6:11)

[ER:] Well, that's very uh kind of the mayor, uh and also uh I hope that the mayor is taking an interest in the approaches to the new assembly building for the new United Nations building and the people of the city of New York, it seems to me that that is part of the whole idea of making the United Nations a world center. Don't you think so?

[Trygve Lie:] Oh yes, and I think our building in New York will be very nice and fine, monumental, that people from all the world will like to come there.

[ER:] Well, why don't we turn to something else, Mr. Lie? When do you think the present session of the General assembly will end? [ER laughs] That's important to us.

[Trygve Lie:] And it's a very difficult question to answer. Well, the target date is for December the eighth. The Secretariat will do his best to meet that deadline, but you know even better than I do that the—that it depends most of all on the delegates to make their speeches and cast their votes. I must admit that I get impatient sometimes, just as everybody else does, with our long debates, but then I think about the parliament of my own home country, back in Oslo, and about other parliaments too, and even the United States Congress [Trygve Lie and ER laugh] and have to come to the conclusion that the United Nations assembly compares pretty well with them.

[ER:] Perhaps you're right, though I get impatient too sometimes. How do you feel about the progress of the assembly in general?

[Trygve Lie:] Mrs. Roosevelt, I'm sure you know how I feel about the United Nations; it is the greatest force for peace and against war in the world today. There've been many bitter disputes at this assembly and it is too early to say how much it is going to accomplish in terms of definite decisions, but it's already evident that the assembly is acting as a moderating influence upon all the parties, no matter how violent the words may be; in other words, it is working the direction of peace just as it always has done since the first day we met in London not quite three years ago.

[ER:] Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary General Lie. I appreciate your taking the time from your busy schedule to come and tell the people of the United States something about our greatest bulwark against war. And now, back to Anna in Hollywood. (9:05)

[Anna Roosevelt:] Thanks, Mother, and thank you, Mr. Lie. It's a far cry from Paris and the United Nations to cats in the United States, but with so many cats lording it over so many households it's only natural, I suppose, that we should celebrate a national cat week, and we're in the middle of it right now. Cat Week happens to be the idea of a fifteen year old Columbus, Ohio school boy named John Newton. He lost his own pet, Fluffy, when he was eleven; somebody filled Fluffy with buckshot. In Fluffy's memory, young John managed to get launched the idea of a week dedicated to cats. You know, I can sympathize with the way John Newton felt when he lost Fluffy, my own nine-year-old felt badly too, when we first moved to Los Angeles from Phoenix. Our own cat, Arizona, was strictly alley, but much beloved. After all, he'd been born in the bottom drawer of my dresser. So, in moving I went to lots of trouble to get a crate and bring the cat with us. Sad to say through, the change from a house in the country to an apartment in a new city was too much for kitty's piece of mind; Arizona disappeared on the third day and we haven't seen a hair of him since.

[John Nelson:] Anna, you wouldn't want another cat to take Arizona's place, would you? (10:27)

[Anna Roosevelt:] No thanks, John! Not in an apartment. Now, I'd like to tell you a story about the White House. Most visitors to Washington, DC immediately pay a call on their Congressman to ask for a pass to the beautiful and historic old mansion. A few back, I can remember being asked, "What does it feel like to live in the White House?" The answer is it gives you an even--even greater reverence than you ever had before, not only for the house itself, but for the great Americans who've lived in it. But, right now the news about the White House is temporarily disappointing to those who may be planning a visit there. The news is that the old House is being closed to visitors immediately. The White House is deemed to be a firetrap, the greatest in the nation, especially the second floor. I remember that Father worried too about the fire danger, probably because of Father's difficulties in moving about in a hurry due to polio, he was more concerned than most people about the dangers of fire. This second floor, as it happens, is the one with the main bedrooms. It has a formal parlor too and a lovely oval shaped room, which my father and President Truman used as a private study. And this second floor is the only private family part of the White House. Here a president's wife can have things her own way, at least to a certain extent. For instance, she can stick a few pieces of her own favorite furniture around and she can do such things as Mother did when she changed a room at one end of the big hall from a beflowered and beplanted conservatory into a sitting room. Mother did this because she was able to put good sturdy furniture into it, most of which, incidentally, she found in the White House attic. She needed furniture like this to withstand the onslaughts of her husky tall sons and the bevy of grandchildren which continued to increase in number while she and Father lived there. Anyway, the White House is well worth the most precious care because it is honored by all Americans as a house which has seen and heard history.

[John Nelson:] Anna, I've never visited the White House, but I intend to and everyone who can should.

[Anna Roosevelt:] Well John, speaking of our American heritage, today is the 173rd birthday of an American fighting man: the United States Marine. Marine Corps birthdays always remind me of my youngest brother John's birthday. When he was born, my father was assistant secretary of the Navy, and that day the Marine Corps sent over to father an honorary commission as a second lieutenant in the US Marine Corps for his newborn son. A day or so later, there arrived a silver loving cup inscribed to John. Well, John grew up with a will of his own and went into the Navy, but he still cherishes his silver Marine cup, and his older brother Jimmy kept the family record clear by serving as a Marine in World War II. By the way, when I paid my first visit to the Navy hospital at Corona to see my son Buzz who there with polio, the marine who guarded the gate greeted me with none of the usual formality. I wondered at his

friendliness until he explained, "I feel as though I know you, you see, I served in the Marine Corps with your brother."

[John Nelson:] Well as a Navy man myself, I too extend congratulations to the United States Marines on their 173rd birthday.

[Anna Roosevelt:] And so, I'm sure, do all of us. And now in closing I'd like to tell you about something I saw the other day. It was a homemade sign in front of a house and it said, "Puppies for sale: the only way in the world you can buy love."

[John Nelson:] Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt are brought to you three times each week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at this same time. Transcribed by the American Broadcasting Company in Hollywood and in Paris, France. Be with us again Friday for another in this series of programs. This is ABC, the American Broadcasting Company.

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