

## THE PAN-AMERICAN COFFEE BUREAU SERIES

November 16, 1941

Description: ER and George Hicks discuss isolationism, her trip to the Midwest, and poverty as a problem for national defense.

Participants: ER, George Hicks

---

[Unknown speaker 1:] Get more out of your work!

[Unknown speaker 2:] Get more fun!

[Unknown speaker 1:] Get more out of life with coffee.

[George Hicks:] The Pan-American Coffee Bureau, representing seven good neighbor coffee-growing nations, presents to you American families your Sunday evening visit with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the past week, Mrs. Roosevelt made another of her famous flying trips, this time into Ohio and Michigan--two great states in the heart of American's glorious middle-west. What sentiment did Mrs. Roosevelt find there about the present crisis in our international affairs? What are her answers to the middle-west isolationists? This evening, Mrs. Roosevelt has graciously consented to tell us. But first, Dan Seymour has a word from our sponsors, the Pan-American Coffee Bureau.

[Dan Seymour:] From the sunny hills of Latin America, up over the blue waters of the Gulf Stream in American ships, comes our good neighbors' greatest gift to the American way of living: coffee, the most popular drink in these United States. Why is coffee so popular? Because no other drink appeals so completely to the American taste. But there is more to coffee than taste alone. Leaders in American life, men and women who do things and do them successfully are making an even more important discovery about coffee. They're finding that coffee actually gives them more energy, actually steadies their nerves, helps them get more out of their work, helps them get more enjoyment out of their hours of relaxation. You too can do the same. Try an extra cup of coffee with your evening meal tonight. Try one with your lunch tomorrow. See how much more you get out of life with coffee.

[George Hicks:] And now, here's our gracious Sunday evening guest, ready to give us her observations on the world we live in: Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. As you have said, I was in Michigan and Ohio last week and it was a flying trip, Mr. Hicks, just as you called it.

[George Hicks:] Well in your brief talks with people in the middle-west, Mrs. Roosevelt, uh what reaction did you find to the problem of national defense?

[ER:] I was in Michigan and Ohio and I think this is probably one of the centers of strong America First sentiment. This, I believe, is partly because of the leadership and partly because, while they are a defense production center, they feel themselves far away from the coast and find it impossible to visualize any attack from Europe or Asia. It seems practically impossible from their point of view.

[George Hicks:] Uh you were telling me though that some people in that part of the country did take the threat to their security very seriously, even to the extent of publishing a Hitler invasion map of the middle-west.

[ER:] Yes, Mr. Hicks. Someone told me that there had been published in this area a rather interesting map, superimposing Russia on our own map, and showing that the German army's successful march toward Moscow would mean practically a march in this country reaching to Indianapolis, Indiana, with such cities as Cincinnati being wiped out on the way.

[George Hicks:] And what's the answer of the isolationists of Ohio and Michigan to this map, Mrs. Roosevelt?

[ER:] Their answer is probably that the German army did not have to cross an ocean to get to Russia and did not have to land in the face of opposition--all of which, I grant, adds to the difficulty of invasion and does give one a measure of security.

[George Hicks:] But, Mrs. Roosevelt, uh what would be your answer to those in the middle-west who feel themselves geographically secure from attack from Europe or Asia?

[ER:] Well, suppose we forget temporarily about the traditional way of fighting a war and think about the possibility of a new kind of war. Suppose Hitler is able to subdue the whole of Europe, including Great Britain. That would give him control of the seas and the ability to produce ships, both for war and for commerce, far beyond our own ability to do so. I've heard people ask why we cannot make peace with Hitler. Why can't we do business with Hitler? The answer is contained in a little book called "You Can't Do Business with Hitler," which everyone should read. If Hitler controls the seas, he can out-build us, and we need no further proof of his organizing ability. He would control as slaves a great number of people and he can undersell us. You do not have to land an army on our coasts. You can fly today and do more harm with bombs than any army could possibly do. Doubting Thomas, complacently secure, will say, "Where are our aeroplanes?" They will be out trying to defend our shores as the boys of the RAF are trying to defend England, and both sides will lose men and planes. If we cannot out-build and out-train the waves of men and machines that come over, we eventually goin-are going under.

[George Hicks:] Those are very serious and thought-provoking words, Mrs. Roosevelt. You believe then that every citizen, whether he lives on the east coast, on the west coast, or right in the center of this great country of ours, should face the same stern facts?

[ER:] Yes I do, Mr. Hicks. There are two possibilities every citizen should ponder, because they are the two things that all of us are up against today. First, we are either going to furnish material which makes it possible for nations now fighting Hitler to win out, regardless of what it costs us, or we're going to find ourselves eventually fighting alone with all the resources of Europe and Asia against us. Too great a sense of security has caused the downfall of many nations, and sometimes I wonder if we do not suffer in high places from too great a sense of security now, and too little realization of the sense of insecurity which prevails among certain of our people.

[George Hicks:] Uh you mean economic insecurity, Mrs. Roosevelt?

[ER:] Yes, those people may think that there is nothing worth risking their lives for, since it seems to them simply a transfer to a new bondage which may be better than the present one, and which they believe cannot be worse. That brings me to the second possibility I mentioned a moment ago. We are going to make our communities worth living in, through the work of volunteers in our civilian defense work. Or, if this work is not particularly glamorous and we cannot find volunteers who will take it seriously and put it through, then we are going to have groups of people who do not think our land is worth defending. That situation would give Hitler the most valuable ally he could possibly have.

[George Hicks:] Then, Mrs. Roosevelt, you believe a great factor in civilian defense must be increasing effort on the part of the individual community to see that its own people are taken care of, that there are

no persons in that community so under-privileged that they can see nothing in the American way of living to defend?

[ER:] Yes. Our federal agencies, which gather information on relief, report that in many parts of our great country, there are families lacking food, shelter, clothing, and many other things which we count as necessities for healthful and decent living, simply because the community has no money or too little money to provide needed general relief. Poverty breeds physical and mental disabilities, and finally, delinquency. While we have every reason to expect that the rising tide of employment will mean that people are able to pay for a better standard of living, it will not excuse us from doing the work which will educate them to take the best possible advantage of any change that may come in the employment picture. This must be done by the communities that are aware of the situations they face.

[George Hicks:] But Mrs. Roosevelt, haven't the relief agencies been counting on surplus commodities to help feed the unemployed?

[ER:] That's just it, Mr. Hicks. Those surplus commodities may disappear completely in the next year. [George Hicks: I see.] Then we shall have a very serious social situation. In thousands of cities, towns, and villages and country places, there are still families who are unable to get enough relief for even the barest necessities of life, if indeed they can get any relief at all. In fact, there is one great state where the relief workers are accustomed to stories which run something like this, "I am hungry and my kids are hungry. We haven't had anything but surplus for so long I am too weak to look for work, and I don't know if I could hold a job if I could get one. The flour and beans are good, but they just won't last us a month." And this state is no exception. This is truly a national problem of defense to be met in communities from coast to coast.

[George Hicks:] That's very serious indeed. Mrs. Roosevelt, we've had--we've received many letters, as we know you have, asking for more of those delightful stories of yours, uh like that story you told us last week about Princess Julianna and her little daughters. I know you've brought us another story or two from your trip. But first, just another few words about coffee.

[Dan Seymour:] One of the most amusing comedies to come out of Hollywood this year is Paramount's *Nothing but the Truth*, co-starring lovely Paulette Goddard and Bob Hope. And what has this to do with coffee? Precisely this: Miss Goddard tells us she is just one more of the leading Hollywood stars who have discovered how to get more out of life with coffee. To quote Paulette: "In the still gallery at Paramount the other day, they were taking publicity pictures of me to send to newspapers around the country. I had just finished working before the motion picture cameras and I was really pretty tired. Well, one of those still cameramen turned out to be a real friend in need. He showed up with a fine container of steaming, delicious coffee, and in a few minutes I was feeling fit as a fiddle. Really, there isn't anything that will take the place of a cup of coffee to cheer up a working girl when she's feeling tired." Why not take a tip from lovely and talented Paulette Goddard and the thousands of other successful Americans who are getting more out of life with coffee. Try drinking an extra cup for lunch, with the evening meal--yes, and whenever during the day or evening you feel the need of a pickup. See how much more you get out of life with coffee.

[George Hicks:] And now, Mrs. Roosevelt, we're waiting to hear those stories about your trip.

[ER:] Flying from New York City to Detroit the other day, we had an amusing pilot who passed word back to us that we were on flight eleven on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, that his license was one-eleven, and it was the eleventh year of his employment with the American Airlines. We were on route seven, he added, for the benefit of the superstitious who could feel that seven and eleven was a good combination. Altogether, the coincidences on eleven, I thought, were quite amusing.

Last week, I told you about those two little Dutch princesses. Well, the children of this country are certainly becoming conscious of their importance as citizens. Two small boys came to the door of our rooms at the hotel in Detroit, demanding to see me. Miss Thompson explained that I was busy and could not see them, and then the smaller one said: "But we belong to the American public too, and we want to see Mrs. Roosevelt." You can be sure Miss Thompson let them stay and made me stop and speak to them. [George Hicks laughs]

And now I would like you all to bear in mind the creed written by Stephen Vincent Benet for those who work in civilian defense.

[Recording skips from this point on. Transcription taken from a script at the George F. Hicks Papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society (Box three, Pan-American Coffee Bureau Radio Scripts)]

A voluntary pledge: I pledge myself as an American to the work of civilian defense.

I do so voluntarily, in faith and loyalty, because I believe in my country.

I believe in its freedom and its greatness, in the liberties I share with all Americans, in the way of life we, the people, have made here with our own laws and with our own hands.

I mean to defend those liberties and that way of life, with my own hands, here and now.

The task I am called upon to do may be small or large -- I mean to see that it gets done.

It may mean hard work and sacrifice -- I mean to see that it gets done.

I am neither soldier nor sailor but, as an American citizen, I take my place beside the armed forces of the nation, willing and ready as they are to protect the homes and the lives, the well-being and the freedom of my fellow citizens, to defend the country I love, to maintain its cause against all enemies and every danger.

And to this task I pledge my whole strength and my whole heart.

Now, Mr. Hicks, before I close, I want to call attention to the fact that the American Red Cross roll call is now going on and everyone who is not a member of the Red Cross will be given an opportunity to join, and those who are annual members can rejoin between the dates of November 11th and November 30th. Surely, there is no one who would not want to give this organization whatever support they can at this time when the Red Cross is sending help all over the world.

[George Hicks:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt, for your inspiring discussion of world events, for your charming stories, and thank you for speaking for that great institution, the American Red Cross. Uh next week, we understand Mrs. Roosevelt has invited to be her guest on this program Mr. Daniel G. Arnstein, who has just returned from China's lifeline, the Burma Road, where his recommendations for traffic control have already increased the flow of war supplies to China.

Until then, good evening, and don't forget that good night cup of coffee.

[Unknown announcer:] Do your part. Buy defense bonds and stamps.

[Unknown announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company.

[organ music]

[NBC chimes]

(14:47)

---

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)  
File(s): 46-5:27

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