

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1951

Description: Recording quality is poor. Recording becomes inaudible after 18:45. In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about displaced persons in Europe. In the following segment, ER interviews author Joyce Kerry.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, and Joyce Kerry

---

[ER:] This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking. Our program is coming to you from my living room here at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. I'm very happy to have this little while with you each day and I hope you'll enjoy the guest we've invited to be with us today. And now for a moment, I'm going to turn the program over to Elliott. (0:24)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] A very distinguished British author, Joyce Kerry, believes that there's been a revolution among women in the last fifty years. A very profound revolution, which affects half the population. He is with uh Mrs. Roosevelt today to explain himself on this rather startling statement. We will meet Mr. Kerry just a little later on in the program. Mrs. Roosevelt and I now will have our usual discussion posed by a listener. Then we'll pause for just a minute so our announcer will-- can say a few words.

[Break 0:57-1:08]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Again, we're going to take the subject of one of mother's columns for our discussion. The matter of legislation on the issuance of visas to displaced persons. I think I'll just read the column and then we can uh I can ask you to expand on it and uh uh give us your views on this, because I think it's a very interesting problem.

"I discussed the Human Rights Covenant of the United Nations recently with James Simsarian, my State Department advisor on the Human Rights Commission. Later that day, we met with the representatives of non-governmental organizations. The room, which we ordinarily use for our delegation meetings of the General Assembly, seemed to me to shrink in size as more and more representatives of organizations crowded in until I felt sure we had sixty or seventy persons there. If only they could communicate their interest to the committee and Congress that will eventually have to consider the Covenant, it might help us greatly in skipping in sh-- in uh the kind of bill, which would be satisfactory to the Congress."

[ER:] It's shaping.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Shaping, shaping. There's an error in the- a typographical error.

"Most of us uh who have been interested in the United States attitude toward displaced persons have felt that the recent legislation passed in our Congress should be made clear to more people. It is important information, which should be especially known to people who are interested in bringing in family or friends from Europe. By this new legislation of ours, the deadline on the issuance of visas to displaced persons was extended for 6 months and now is December, the thirty-first, nineteen hundred and fifty-one. Second, the deadline for assurances required by displaced persons was set at July 31, 1951. Third, war orphans are now exempt from payment the visa and head taxes, as were displaced persons,

expellees, and displaced orphans. A sponsor in his assurances must promise a job at the prevailing wage rate in the community, and without displacing someone else from a job. The displaced person must be assured that he and his family will have adequate housing without displacing someone else, that he will not become a public charge, and finally that his sponsor will provide transportation from the port at which he debarked to the inland point where he is to be settled.”

“There are good reasons for this extension. For conditions in Europe made it almost impossible to cover 8,000 people who are entitled to be examined for visas. Expellees and persons of German ethnic origin and forced by the communists to flee from their homes in Eastern Europe are as displaced persons the victims of World War II and under the care of the International Refugee Organization. Nothing has changed in the matter of expellees since the date for their visas was already set at June 30, 1952.”

Uh, Mother, I'm interested in this column uh because uh I wonder if uh anything is being done- I understand there's what they call a hard-core of uh displaced persons still in Europe; the list largely takes care of uh of- of um-- [ER: No, this has nothing to do--] say it a thousand of them. (4:14)

[ER:] Well this has nothing to do with the hard core. The hard-core group was a group of people who for one reason or another could really not be uh accepted um as people who could earn their own living. For instance, and IRO has been trying- the International Refugee Organization has been trying very hard, not to leave anymore of those people than they think they are obliged to leave, uh in Germany, on the German economy, because the German people have enough to take care of as it is. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And what they've done is to try to and find um ways of making it at least acceptable to nations to take a portion of these people. For instance, Norway I think it is, has accepted several hundred blind people, and they will be taught and rehabilitated as far as it is possible to do. As in the International Refugee Organization in return, has helped Norway to build a new sanitarium, which will house not only these blind people from uh the displaced persons camp, but which will house some of the Norwegian blind and uh they uh undertake to care for these uh people from the displaced persons camp, and in return for the aid received in building this new uh building, this new center for the blind.

Now, in other places, people-- uh nations have accepted, governments have accepted to build for their people people in return for the building of a new sanitarium. They undertake to take care of them; either till they are cured or for the rest of their lives. Um, various arrangements of that kind have been entered into all over the world, and um member nations have undertaken uh to give care to different groups of people who ordinarily would not be accepted because nearly every case um a job has to be available for the person who is being accepted as he has to be able to take the job. (6:32)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Now, um, these are people for whom many governments can be provided uh they may someday but some of them will have to have rehabilitation first.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Was the United States in the forefront of those nations who are uh providing sanitariums and hospitals?

[ER:] As far as I know the United States has taken none of those uh hard-core people.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] None at all?

[ER:] I don't think so.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] No effort or agitation has been carried on here in the United States? to bring--(7:53)

[ER:] I haven't heard. I haven't heard of any.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Isn't that a very interesting uh commentary on the fact that we are taking able-bodied people uh but are not taking uh our proportionate share.

[ER:] Well, one of the complaints is that we did not um start taking people at all soon enough to get the best people, and that many countries that started sooner had a better pick than we had. And so that's one of the complaints we hear, but really it is our own fault because had we started sooner, we would have been on an even keel with every body else.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes.

[ER:] Um as far as the hard-core goes, I think the feeling has been um that we paid such a high percentage of what went into the International Refugee Organization um and we really there would be no incentive to us to take people to provide us with new buildings. And- and, therefore, uh it has been our policy generally not to accept uh this particular group of people because Congress would object uh to having um a group of people of this kind walk in to the country. They uh think that has been more or less the [unclear terms].

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm, mhm. Well uh, I still come back to the thought that this is a time for us here in this country in an attempt to discuss taking an interest in some of those fifty thousand hard-core people who cannot uh-- must have uh treatment and must be taken care of.

[ER:] Well I think one thing must be said: it'd be that even those who stayed in Germany, [unclear term], would be [unclear term] it could be able um um probably [unclear terms] have had friends, or relatives, or kind people provide them with care packages or uh something of that kind on an individual basis [unclear term] and um I had rather think course experience [unclear term] has made me realize that these people are sometimes very [unclear term] been through the various upheavals in Europe, I even get letters from some of them saying we are the best [unclear term] the first nation to [unclear term] the Communists [unclear terms] we've been through so many things for [unclear terms] year to go through another uh [unclear terms]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:][unclear term] Individuals who have spent [unclear term] and hard as it may seem, uh probably if war does come in Europe um, it would be easier for them um perhaps than for some of the other people, because they have been through so much that there would be resignation possible, where others will, will perhaps have no thanks of resignation.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. Now there's just one other point that I'd like to take up, and that's the question of the orphans, the war orphans, uh uh who are still over there. Uh do, do they get sent over here only when they have a sponsor who will take them in? (11:44)

[ER:] Yes, they would not be uh accepted.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] There is no organization [unclear term] (11:51) brings them up?

[ER:] [unclear term] (11:52) select groups, um brings them over um and then keeps them.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] In homes, and not in institutions?

[ER:] In homes- they won't keep them in institutions. I hope not. (12:03)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. So uh are all the orphans going to be taken care of and brought over here?

[ER:] Well, I think um that most of them are not brought over here, but I think that most of them are going to um different countries--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] [unclear terms].

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, thank you very much, I see that they want us to stop this part of the program so that our announcer can say a few words and then go forward with our interview of the day (12:33).

[Break]

[[ER:] Now we come back to my [unclear term] with the author Mr. Joyce Kerry [unclear term] and I would like to ask you Mr. Kerry, people have been having many reactions to your article, of uh, [Unclear terms] would you like to talk to me about it? (12:47)

[Joyce Kerry:] Perhaps [unclear terms] very interesting reactions [unclear term] about what I've said about this regiment that they've [unclear term] one uh lady in, in Boston has five children, uh told me she is considered quite shocking uh family. Even without the known affection of the family with style and focus, who has been doing [unclear term] um some of the principle, the ethical women that are [unclear term].

[ER:] What kinds of, of um jobs do they carry on? The wife?

[Joyce Kerry:] Uh one might say social jobs like the [unclear terms] that is of course great problem of [unclear terms] and it has been brought up a few times with great details now that uh uh [unclear term] of university age, um a chance for them to grow up. [Unclear term] with the age to help you to address the [unclear terms].

[ER:] [Unclear term] [laughs]

[Joyce Kerry:] [Unclear terms] just like that! She's a very good wife and uh [unclear terms].

[ER:] Uh is now, is it possible, uh what is, why is it um that they uh [unclear term] I've found in this country is especially [unclear term] twenty-three [unclear term] between a man's career- the husband's career- and a women's career, and [unclear term] man and question the [unclear term] uh that they [unclear term] that someone might have to be where they are [unclear term]. Um who shall [unclear term] the man or the, or the woman?

[Joyce Kerry:] Perhaps that that's when all the problems of the [unclear term] begins to [unclear term] of course. [Unclear term] it's very difficult to [unclear term]. I've [unclear term] give advice to my nieces: [unclear terms].

[ER:] Perhaps that would be [unclear term] um that um, um that it's bad for uh for women to be under that kind of strain that they have to not be uh physical capacity to carry that strain [unclear term] that's when the [unclear term] uh they should not uh try and uh, um carry on a career the same time that they're having children. What do have you found uh at this time?

[Joyce Kerry:] If that, if that's, that's well, that's a problem for them. If [unclear terms] standardization and uh they have to try purposes that are obviously [unclear term]. Now do you really think, that suppose-

-

[ER:] [Unclear term] the problem may really be time because [unclear term] if wives are supposed to be [unclear term]--

[Joyce Kerry:] Yes?

[ER:] Uh, pass at jobs she was expected to take from [unclear term] jobs, now a woman, if she has a job, and [unclear term], must take [unclear term] um about her exact job and [unclear term].

[Joyce Kerry:] Oh God, yes. But I think uh listen, I think that the [unclear term] more must be done perhaps be done, for say, about uh [unclear terms] to look up to a young lady of the pride and [unclear terms]. I think modern politics would have [unclear term].

[ER:] I think that [unclear term] again by um, um a vast waste of uh, [unclear terms]. (17:31)

[Joyce Kerry:] That'd be very good! That's a very good idea--

[ER:] [Unclear terms]

[Joyce Kerry:] The publics wouldn't match [unclear term] break value. Of course the people [unclear term]

[ER:] [unclear term] (17:54)

[Joyce Kerry:] Responsibility. Make the people [unclear term] responsibility [unclear term].

[ER:] Yes. [Unclear term] uh, young, competent women who have children, yes uh, should have to give up their careers to have [unclear term]. (18:04)

[Joyce Kerry:] They must give up their career?

[ER:] Yes. The um, the mothers, not at least um [unclear term] are [unclear term] elites who [unclear term] and uh see, the poor [unclear terms] perfect explanation here. [Unclear term] separates for the end, for the experience of being [unclear term] their children.

[Joyce Kerry:] Well, I think it's true, I think its [unclear term] -- (18:30)

[ER:] Should they be [unclear term] with them now?

[Joyce Kerry:] [unclear term] (18:33)

[ER:] Perhaps an [unclear term] or something like that?

[Joyce Kerry:] Mhm. [unclear terms] heard or never read about it.

Transcription: pre-2015  
First edit: unknown  
Final edit: unknown

NOTE: Recording becomes inaudible at 18:34.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project