

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about the kinds of gifts that ER and FDR received when they were in the White House. In the interview segment, ER discusses the developing Cold War in Western Europe and the Marshall Plan with former Premier of France Paul Reynaud.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Paul Reynaud

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[ER:] How do you do? This is Eleanor Roosevelt. Every Monday through Friday, my son Elliott and I have the opportunity to visit with you here in my living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. Each day it is our desire to bring interesting guests that we are hopeful you will enjoy meeting. Elliott, will you tell our listeners today's plans?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] France is a traditional friend to most of us in the United States. When one of its favorite citizens visits this country, we are proud and happy to present him to our radio audience. Mrs. Roosevelt's guest today is Monsieur Paul Reynaud, former Premier of France. Mother will introduce him a little later on. But first she's going to do some reminiscing about White House days. As soon as we've heard from the sponsors who make this recorded program possible, we'll turn back the clock to Washington a few years ago, and a very unusual but very nice problem she faced there.

[Break 1:03-1:16]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, the other day someone asked me a question that I decided would make an interesting topic for us to discuss. The question was, "What gifts can a President of the United States keep for himself, and how is this determined?" What are some of the most interesting ones that Father received?

[ER:] He can't keep anything for himself. He can um uh accept uh gifts for the government, and what happened in Father's case was that uh he gave to the government many things that uh were presented. He always-he always had to say that he could not accept a personal gift, but he accepted it for the government, and then gave it to the government. [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] And many of the things that were given when he was president um were put in the library at Hyde Park because that was government property. If it had not been, he could of course not have put it into the library.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well now do you mean that-- uh for instance, uh Father used to receive Christmas presents. I remember under the Christmas tree [ER: Oh well I was -- ] at Christmas time there were thousands of presents [ER: Oh, well but those were not from -- ] from people all over the world.

[ER:] Those were not from foreign um -- largely, those were not foreign government presents. Those were individual presents uh to him by other individuals either in this country, or [Elliott Roosevelt: Well-sometimes friends abroad.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well supposing uh Winston Churchill as Prime Minister of uh Great Britain, uh had sent him a-uh personal Christmas present, [Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap] maybe a-a wallet or something--

[ER:] Well if he sent it as Prime Minister of Great Britain it could only have been accepted for the government. But if he sent it as Winston Churchill-ill and it was some rather small personal thing, it could be accepted. Now, Winston Churchill uh gave him some-some paintings of his own. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] Um but those were personal gifts.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well let me ask you uh-uh what do you do? Do you tell -- uh do you say, "Dear Winston, did you send this as in your capacity as Prime Minister or did you send it as my old and true friend?" (3:38)

[ER:] No, it's perfectly well understood-ood. That uh through diplomatic circles it's usually asked of-of the Secretary of State if it would be possible uh to present something to -- Now as a matter of fact, sometimes what they did was to not present a thing to Franklin but to present it to his wife. Now your wife is allowed to receive things. But Franklin uh would almost always -- not always, but almost always immediately say, "Now darling of course you won't ever use this." So we just put it in the library and it would go to the government without any further question. [laughs] [Elliott Roosevelt: Well --] There is, at present time in the library, um a tiara uh and heavy bracelets [Elliott Roosevelt: I remember it well. I was present.] such as I can -- um I took one look at them when Franklin brought them home as a gift to me and I said, "Are these going to the government?" and he said, "Yes, without any question." [laughs]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] That-that was a gift that the Sultan of Morocco gave to Father at the time of the Casablanca conference. And I remember the wonderful time that we had deciding how you would look at the first official function at the White House with a bejeweled and golden tiara on your head. [ER: It weighed a ton!] Weighing about fifteen pounds. [laughs] But uh-uh what about all of the uh the-the gifts that came from just ordinary citizens around the United States [ER: Well that's quite different.] that Father had never heard uh -- [ER: That's quite different.] had never met before?

[ER:] Those are accepted and thanked for and um unless there is a string tied to them, uh they are um kept. But he gave nearly all those to the library at Hyde Park. [Elliott Roosevelt: Well now I'm think -- [laughs]] Occasionally, [Elliott Roosevelt: I'm thinking of -- ] we learned -- I better tell you right away, [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] we learned that both gifts sent to Father and gifts sent to me should be kept. Because occasionally people sent them as gifts and then they got hard up and they wanted to be paid for them, or they wanted to have them back again. And if you had given them to the government, you couldn't give them back, and occasionally I had things which uh were not, from my point of view, government uh desirably -- desirable for the government. And-and I uh would give them to a charitable sale or something of that kind.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Like a quilted counterpane [ER: Exactly.] or something like that.

[ER:] And if it was very beautiful, I would of course have given it to the government. But if it -- if I thought the government had enough samples then I didn't give it to the government, and I might give it to a church sale or something of that kind. Now on one occasion, before I learned um I did give one to a sale and then had to pay the lady fifty dollars for her work because she want -- said she'd fallen on hard times and would like to sell it for fifty dollars though she had intended to give it to me. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] Now after that we kept everything in bins. They were marked by the month and we had a room surrounded with those and we kept them for at least a year. I can't remember now, there is a limitation, you see, and we kept them as long as the limitation [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] would run. And Father -- well the same thing with Father's things. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yeah.] And that way uh we could return them if the person desired to have them returned, or if we felt we couldn't afford to pay the price uh or didn't uh-weren't-didn't want to pay the price.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well now, uh -- wasn't it uh-wasn't it rather difficult to uh determine -- for instance, in one case that I remember, uh Father brought back a gift from the President of Brazil which was the largest aquamarine I've ever seen, uh which was from the President and his wife as a gift to you. Uh and I believe at same time, you got a gift from somebody else of a tremendous tea service --

[ER:] A silver Brazilian tea service from Madame [Darci] Vargas. [Elliott Roosevelt: from Madame Vargas.] And the-the stone was out of his -- uh, their or his collection which was a very fine collection of aquamarines. I took one look at that and asked Father if it could be cut up for the different girls in different sizes and he said, "No!" with horror, that that would ruin it. And uh I tried again to find out if I could do it after Father had died-ied, but um the people I took it to said, "No it couldn't possibly be done."

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well not only that, but I-I understand that uh you wanted to create a scholarship fund uh-b-through the sale of it for the exchange of students with Braz-with the government of Brazil.

[ER:] Well, that was one of the ideas that I thought might be done in memory of Father, because he had never collected uh stones and I hardly thought it would uh be the type of thing that would mean much in the library. But I did find that um the Brazilian government would like to have it in the library, so I put it in the library and it's there now. And strange to say-ay, though Father had no other collections of stones uh people are very much interested in it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well uh you keep mentioning the library, and uh -- which belongs to the government and is located at Hyde Park, uh where all of these various gifts [ER: It always has belonged to the government.] are on exhibition. I think it would be uh interesting if we could uh remember between us some of the more interesting gifts that Father did receive. I, for instance, remember a-a magnificent uh-um dagger and sword that he received from the [ER: Oh it was a beautiful one.] from the uh from Ibn Saud of Arabia [ER: Saudi Arabia]. And uh that was a bejeweled uh-uh trophy which --

[ER:] That's-that's on exhibition and I see people looking at it. There are of course now in the library -- there are those lo-um rather-rather gay and gaudy, but still very fine, uh embroideries from the Dalai Lama. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] Which hang at one end, and then uh there are -- there is a most beautiful Persian -- old Persian rug on the floor of his study. Which, the Shah explained to me, had so many knots to the inch that in the early days when they made that they had to use little children working on those rugs because only their little fingers could possibly have knotted that number of knots to the inch of-of the threads. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And of course they don't make them anymore because they don't now under the law have child labor of that kind, but uh --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well I think-I think some of the more amusing uh gifts that Father received he let it be known uh because of his press conferences being held in his office and executive mans-in the executive offices. [ER: Things he had on his desk.] The things he had on his desk like his uh his miniature pig collection and his collection of donkeys --

[ER:] Well that of course was in his bed room. Very largely --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] No he still had the -- you see, he was very- [ER: Did he have some -- ] he was very smart, you see, he put a few pigs on his desk and some of the m-uh donkeys and elephants and stuff like that, and then he would -- as everybody sent them in through the fact getting around that he collected these items, he'd uh make the bigger collection in his bedroom.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]

[ER:] Well, his pigs were always on the mantelpiece in his bedroom, but um -- and I would add to the pigs of every kind wherever I went. But uh do you remember the-the elephant that occasionally had to be cleaned, and every time it was cleaned it shrank a little? [Elliot Roosevelt: Yes.] Oh, with each election it grew smaller. [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] That was one of my favorites on his desk because by the last election it had almost disappeared.

[Elliott Roosevelt and ER laugh]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I hope that it was no reflection on the Republican Party.

[ER:] Oh no, oh no.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I see that our time is running out, and we have to get on to another part of the program, so I'm afraid we can't discuss this subject any longer.

[Break 12:23-12:29]

[ER:] How do you do. This is Eleanor Roosevelt. Every Monday through Friday, my son Elliott and I have the opportunity to visit with you here in my living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. Each day it is our desire to bring interesting guests that we are hopeful you will enjoy meeting. Elliott, will you tell our listeners today's plans?

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[Break 13:16-13:26]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mrs. Roosevelt and I are very honored today to have a distinguished guest from France to discuss the world situation. Mother, will you introduce your guest to our listeners?

[ER:] With great pleasure, Elliott. My guest is the former Premier of France, Monsieur Paul Reynaud. Monsieur Reynaud has been visiting the United States to deliver a series of addresses throughout the major cities of our country, in connection with the observance of Brotherhood Week. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Monsieur Paul Reynaud.

[Paul Reynaud:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] First, Monsieur Reynaud, I would like to know what cities you visited while you've been here! I know you covered a great many.

[Paul Reynaud:] A great many. Twenty cities from uh Atlanta to Duluth, from El Paso to Seattle, from Denver to Washington, uh and from Chicago to uh say Birmingham.

[ER:] My goodness, and twenty cities, that is a great many to make. Well now, you did it uh because you were co-honorary chairman of World Brotherhood Week for Europe, [Paul Reynaud: Yes.] weren't you? So you did it in the interest of World Brotherhood? [Paul Reynaud: Yes, exactly.] I think that was a very wonderful thing to do. Well, that being one of your interests, sir, could you tell me a little about the European state of mind at the present time?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well it has been said here, and it is said, I'm afraid, that the Western Europeans have lost their will of fighting. There's no doubt that uh those poor peoples of Europe -- Western Europe -- who have been invaded twice in two decades, who have been bled by two world wars, who have seen their hostages shot, their houses uh destroyed, their cities ruined; there is no doubt that when they learned a few month ago that on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, there were one hundred and seventy-five armed divisions, and on their side only ten divisions, there is no doubt that those people received a new blow. But there is no doubt that they have -- they suffered from an inferiority complex. But give them arms and you'll see their uh will of fighting rise again, you'll see uh their inferiority complex vanish, and the proof is that the French officers and soldiers in Indochina fight in the-very heavy odds. As you know, we are losing many uh soldiers and men -- eh we are losing-have been losing for five years now each year a whole class of sol-of officers of our military school. It means that uh the will of fighting exists always in France.

[ER:] Well, this um modern warfare uh of course is so different from anything that really was thought of before World War I, we thought then that defenses of certain kinds were essential, and now we know that modern war is a war fought by everybody. No-no army alone is sufficient. And you feel um -- I-I understand very well the feeling of the people of Europe who have been through so much. But you feel that given uh materials um -- and also, I imagine, given help to reestablish a way of life that is valuable to them, uh there will be an effort made to keep themselves free, because that is after all what this means.

[Paul Reynaud:] Well I can -- uh I-I give you facts-uh facts Mrs. Roosevelt on these points? Eh, as you know, before the war we had under arms seven hundred and fifteen thousand men in France. In two months we'll have more than that. It will be the most important army of Western Europe. And as to the labor effort for making arms, I can tell you that twenty percent of all the French industrial workers work now uh to make arms. So our effort uh has begun, we have voted in the parliament eh laws eh creating new taxes for the new military expenses, and the -- prolonging the uh duration of a military service.

[ER:] Well now, Monsieur Reynaud, to those of us who have known Europe -- and I have known Europe for many, many years, and I have a great affection for France. But I think many of us um wonder if one of the things that will not have to happen in Europe is not just the industrial rehabilitation that had to come about as a result of destruction after this war, but if there will not have to be a re-sturding of the conditions under which um particularly the labor part of the population live for a great many generations, and a change -- even an investment of a certain percentage in that change -- in conditions of um uh the people?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well, I know that uh many people here think that uh, in France, uh we don't pay taxes. I'm sorry to say that uh we pay very heavy taxes. The-the question is, to raise the standard of living of a whole nation, and more I-I can say of the middle class than on the working class -- Uh, the question is to uh increase the productivity. It has been increased, uh thanks to the Marshall Plan, to the generous aid of our American friends; the industrial production in France is now at levels of 25 percent higher than before the war. So you see, the effort has been very great and the standard of living of the workers is much better now than it was a few years ago.

[ER:] Among our labor leaders who are on advisory committees, however, I have heard it said that while that um is a remarkable effort -- and was essential at the beginning because without that you couldn't do anything else -- but that now they felt that uh more should be done in the way of housing. Now, I was very much interested in the um effort that had been made when we were there in 1948 in the restoration of houses in Amiens. Eh but when I was there last summer and drove in from Luxembourg, I thought there were still villages that looked as though destruct-very little change had come about since the destruction. Um I wonder if there will be a way of improving that housing condition now that your production is getting on its feet.

[Paul Reynaud:] It is quite true. Uh of course we had first to restore our roads, our railways, our plants, uh-uh and uh we -- during the first year, the construction was rather slow. It was much better last year, but when you were in France unfortunately now the making of arms is an unfavorable condition to increase the uh the reconstruction of houses. It's in private houses uh the effort must be made -- The construction of priv-uh-private houses. But uh you have to choose between battles and uh rifles.

[ER:] Mhm. That um-that is always a very difficult choice, I find. Um now in France, you have had a rather large elected Communist Party, haven't you?

[Paul Reynaud:] Yes, much too large. The last ele-lections uh four years and a half ago gave uh 27 percent that were the Communist Party. Bus-but you must not be mistaken; the good majority of those who vote Communist do it uh to tell the government that they are not satisfied. When a man uh lives in a underground because his houses has not been rebuilt, he wants to tell the government that he wants a change.

[ER:] Well that-that is exactly what I was trying uh to-to point out in the housing question that I asked you. The communists do uh gain from that, don't they?

[Paul Reynaud:] Yes, certainly, but uh they have gained, they-they are the joining sharply now. And the proof that the communists -- uh the Communist Party is losing uh comes from the fact that the daily circulation of the communist paper, *L'Humanité*, has fallen back by two-thirds since the uh the pre-years. That's a fact.

[ER:] Well, the increase in uh the security of the farmer and the worker is about the best insurance against communism, isn't it?

[Paul Reynaud:] I think so.

[ER:] Well, that's um that's one of the things uh I hope uh we all will learn. And now, I'm sorry to say that for a few minutes we have to let our announcer speak and then we will come right back to this interview.

[Break 24:57-24:04]

[ER:] Now we will resume our interview with Monsieur Paul Reynaud. And uh the first question I want to ask you, sir, um is whether in uh the past um twenty years there haven't come about very great changes in the security that is available for the lower middle class, and the workers in France as a whole? What measures have come about?

[Paul Reynaud:] Very important, and I -- you could say for the whole middle class. And it's uh going up every year. Whereas uh -- a gre-very great effort has been done. And I daresay that uh in the-the beginning of the war, in January '49, I was finance minister. And I put an application the -- what we call the "family code." *Le code de la Famille*. And since then uh other measures have been taken and the result, for instance on one point, is that the birthrate in France now is higher than in any other Western uh nation. French women have more children now than the Italian or the Spanish women; it's an entirely new fact, as you see.

[ER:] Well now what uh-what were the measures you provided for?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well uh, the great advantages for those who have uh-uh more than two children, for instance. And uh the security-social security uh of all kinds. Pensions for old people, and uh for people

who suffered accidents in their work, all kind of uh risks are c-now covered by the social security, as we call it.

[ER:] Have you done anything about medical care for [Paul Reynaud: Oh yes.] those who cannot afford [Paul Reynaud: Oh yes.] to pay the high prices?

[Paul Reynaud:] It's something very important, and uh the -- it's very heavy for the social security, but I think it's very important because uh eh very often the French peasants called the doctor only when they were dying. And uh I think it's a very important fact from a social point of view uh, the measures taken on that point.

[ER:] You have now made it possible for uh um for medical care to be available to great classes of the-of the uh worker and-and farmer group, haven't you?

[Paul Reynaud:] Y-yes, even for very small diseases.

[ER:] That's very good, and how about children?

[Paul Reynaud:] Children too. Uh children are protected by the fact that uh the taxes are less heavy when you have uh more than two children, and that uh you are the mother receives every year a num-a certain amount of money proportional to the number of children.

[ER:] Yes. Well that-uh that would encourage the birth rate, of course. [Paul Reynaud: Yes, it did.] And uh now what uh -- are old age pensions uh really adequate?

[Paul Reynaud:] Yeah, they are rather feeble, I must say the uh pensions for the old people. We-oh I thought was done more for in favor of children than uh old age people.

[ER:] Than old age. Mhm. But they are uh a help anyway.

[Paul Reynaud:] Oh yes, oh yes, certainly.

[ER:] And um uh what do you do in the case of uh the death of a father, for instance, do you have any-any uh arrangement by which the mother gets a pension for the children?

[Paul Reynaud:] Yes, uh there's uh-there are dispositions of that kind.

[ER:] There are dispositions of that kind. Well you are really, then, beginning on a comprehensive -- a social security program, uh which has developed to a certain extent, and are you continuing uh to study what should be done in the future? [Paul Reynaud: Yes, but I -- ] I realize that when you build an army you cannot at the same time increase your burdens for social security, but um you can make the studies and be prepared for future advances along those lines.

[Paul Reynaud:] Yes, I must say that we are very advanced on that point, and that uh one of the consequences -- they are very good consequences, I'm uh entirely in favor of them -- but I must say that from another uh side, eh it's a heavy burden for the uh prices uh French prices of our industry. And we may become the industry if we go too-too far too quick. But uh I'm ent-entirely in favor of that accusation.

[ER:] Have uh you had to undertake any measures um of price control, or don't you have to do anything of that sort?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well we have to do it, because uh you can't have uh wages control without prices control. [ER: mm.] And uh-I'm afraid that uh if we want to escape inflation which is a great question everywhere, even in your great country, we'd had to take measures.

[ER:] I see. Well now um I wonder what your impression is, since you've been in this country some time and, um -- what is your impression of the whole international situation at present?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well many people ask me, from Seattle to Atlanta, "Do you believe that we will have a war this year?" My answer was, "I do not know." [Elliott Roosevelt chuckles] Nobody knows on this side of the Iron Curtain. But as a matter of fact, certainly it is dangerous to ask the-the question, are negotiations going to wait till we are ready? But as a matter of fact, they have waited up to now. For what reasons, we do not know. Fear of the atom bomb, fear of internal difficulties -- we do not know. If the reasons why the Russians have waited up to now continue to prevail, during two years we'll be saved. You and us, that's what my-my answer.

[ER:] I wonder whether you would agree with me that um as you read the uh statements of Lenin and Stalin, uh you get the feeling that those statements were written in a world which has now disappeared. Uh for instance, I read one the other day in which it was said that um they would be continually attacked, they must always be ready for attack, and they would fight a hundred times but the hundred and first time, they would win. Well now, it looks to me as though in the world we now live in, that the power of mass destruction has grown so much that to envisage fighting a hundred times is nonsense. And uh when the whole objective, as stated by-- in all these writings is that it does not matter if a few people die because in the end if communism is established, the mass of people will be happy. But there won't be any masses of people if they fight a hundred times or more. They'll be gone; there won't be any masses of people! So I wonder if it ever s-occurs to you that all these things were written for a world that doesn't any longer exist.

[Paul Reynaud:] I think-I don't uh think now uh-one-one hundred and one uh wars, but uh one war. Uh an allied general in Berlin told me the following story. He asked to a uh Russian marshal uh about the question of war and peace. He said to him, uh "Russian marshal, you know that if you attack us you'd receive upon your heads the stock of the atom bombs of our American friends." And the answer of the Russian marshal was this, "It is quite possible, but remember this: in the matter of occupation, Germans are children. If we occupy your country during three month, you would not recognize it. And I think that uh-this is true, and the danger is that those men wish to have uh the commu-communist tide from uh Vladivostok of the Pacific to Brest on the Atlantic, destroying the whole Western civilization in Europe. That would be of an immense uh consequence uh for the future, because the comparison between uh Western Europe and uh Russia will be mortal for the uh Soviet Regime, and that's the reason why there is an Iron Curtain.

[ER:] Mm. 'Course. That's quite easy to understand. Well now, you've just had a cabinet crisis uh in France. Uh, how do you feel about that, Monsieur Reynaud?

[Paul Reynaud:] Well I think that uh, the electoral question is very important -- the electoral reform. and I am uh entirely in favor of the bill of the uh [René] Pleven government. I think uh that uh this crisis does not mean that--does not mean at all any change in our external policy or in our military policy. The other day, I said uh to a friend in Washington who asked me about the uh-this question, I told him, "Let me remind you of the answer which former Prime Minister [Louis] Barthou uh made to [Arthur] Henderson in Geneva at the League of Nations: What do you like better, a country which changes his government

from time to time but never changes its policy, or a country which never changes its government but which-which changes its policy?"

[ER:] [laughs] That's very nice. Well now I'm sorry, our time has come to an end, and I want to thank you so warmly for having come to talk to us today.

[Paul Reynaud:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[Break 36:21-36:28]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] This is an-a civil defense message for you intended to give you instruction on what to do in case of a-an air raid in your area. Protect yourself; follow ten civil defense commandments. One: go to a basement or shelter if you hear a siren. Two: in a sneak attack, lie under a bed, table, or desk. Three: if caught outdoors during a sneak attack, fall near the curb face down. Four: cover the exposed parts of your body. Five: if you are not sheltered, close your eyes. Six: keep away from windows. Seven: don't try to reach your schoolchildren. Teachers are trained to care for them. Eight: don't use your telephone. Nine: after an attack, if you are in the blast area, take off your clothes and bathe with strong soap. Ten: don't use food or water exposed to radiation. And now it's time to close the program and to remind you that you've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program, which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time. And this is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all good day.

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Transcription: Emily Whaley  
First Edit: Jay Fondin  
Final Edit: Andreas Meyris