

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

November 15th, 1948 (catalog date)

Description: From Hollywood, Anna Roosevelt talks about world events including the birth of Prince Charles of England and Hideki Tojo's death sentence. From London, ER talks about her trip to London and the unveiling of an FDR memorial there. Anna reads a letter from a listener thanking Anna and ER for their new radio program.

Participants: ER, Anna Roosevelt, John Nelson

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

[Anna Roosevelt:] Good morning and thank you, John Nelson. We'll hear from my travelling mother in a few minutes, this time from London. But first a few words about people, their arrivals and departures. There's a newcomer to the world scene this morning, one whose long anticipated arrival is being heralded with widespread rejoicing. A birth is always an exciting and happy event, and the apparent delight of so many British people over this particular birth makes it especially so. Crowds cheered all over England when word came that Elizabeth had a seven pound six ounce son, and England a potential king. The wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten last year was a traditional romantic ending of the fairy tales. Today comes the chapter the fairy tales never get around to, so a hearty welcome to a notable arrival. And there's a departure forecast for the near future, that of Hideki Tojo, one-time premier of Japan. The man they call "the Razor", who ordered the attack on Pearl Harbor. Tojo tried to commit suicide shortly after the war, but blood plasma donated by an American sergeant who fought on New Guinea and in the Philippines kept him alive. Now, an eleven-nation tribunal in Tokyo has sentenced him to death by hanging for crimes against humanity. So soon, the once powerful Tojo will bow out. In the realm of international politics there's a re-arrival. General Charles De Gaulle is a man once again to be reckoned with now that his militant anti-communist party, the Rally of the French People, emerges as the strongest single party in France. But in Lyon, France, another French military hero, one with whom de Gaulle often disagreed, lies gravely ill: the old fighter of the North African campaigns, General Henri Giraud. Arrived in America from England is the very reverend doctor Hewlett Johnson, the man whose friendliness towards Russia and Communism has earned him the name the "Red Dean of Canterbury". The Red Dean will make a six-week speaking tour of this country. His purpose, he says, is to sell us peace and understanding. And departing today from the arena of public life is the beloved veteran statesman, William Lyon Mackenzie King of Canada, who is resigning formally as Prime Minister today after a record twenty one and a half years of service. A personal recollection of Mr. King in a few minutes, but now by short wave radio telephone, let's hear Mother's first hand impressions of two memorable events as transcribed earlier in London.

[ER:] Thank you, Anna. I've had a most eventful, memorable weekend in England where I'm broadcasting today from the imposing quarters of the British Broadcasting Corporation in the heart of London. I came over to England with your son and my grandson, [Curtis] Buzz [Roosevelt], and my secretary Malvina Thompson for two very special occasions: first, the unveiling of the memorial to my husband in Westminster Abbey on Friday afternoon, and then on Saturday, a trip to Oxford to receive an honorary degree from the university. From Paris we took the night train which is ferried across the English Channel and arrived in London Friday morning. There we were met at the station by two old friends, Sir Campbell Stuart and Lady Reading, who made us most welcome in their lovely home on Smith Square. In the late morning, they--we drove to Grosvenor Square to see again Sir William Reed

Dick's fine statue of my husband and show it to my grandson. S-It's set in the midst of a broad expanse of lawn where the barrage balloons were moored during the war. Surrounding the park-like square are the old houses where lived John Adams, the first American minister to Great Britain, and Walter Hines Page, US Ambassador to England during the First World War. And our American Embassies and office buildings are there now, which together with the statue make Grosvenor Square seem almost like a little piece of the United States set down in the midst of London. Here they often call it the forty-ninth state. At the base of the statue, there's a small bouquet of red carnations, since the other Armistice Day flowers had just been removed. I always feel a sense of gratitude to the unknown people who so simply but kindly remember my husband over here. Later in the afternoon we drove to Westminster Abbey for the unveiling of the tablet.

The Dean of Westminster offered us prayer and then Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Mr. Winston Churchill unveiled the American flag which covered the tablet. The ceremony was brief but impressive, and the ancient grandeur of the Abbey and the presence of so many old friends who knew my husband who shared his war time trials and anxiety made it a moving scene. It was a great and unique honor for my husband's memory, since he is the first head of a foreign leader to be enshrined among so many of England's great statesmen, poets, and artists. It forges another bond of respect and affection between our two countries at a time when such goodwill is all too scant among nations. The following day, Saturday, we drove with Sir Campbell Stuart and Lady Reading to Oxford where I received the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Laws from that historic university. We had a most pleasant trip down as the weather was sunny most of the sixty-mile drive, permitting us to see the green English countryside at its best. The degree was conferred in a simple, impressive ceremony at Sheldonian Theatre in the heart of this ancient and beautiful university town. We filed into the old hall, preceded by officials of the university in their traditional gowns and I was presented by the public orator, who spoke in Latin. The Chancellor then conferred the degree upon me, after which I made a brief speech. In my reply I spoke of some things which concerned me so much that I would like to repeat them now on this broadcast. I said, "We haven't yet found a way whereby the great nation, which shuts her people away from the rest of the world and whose government acts through decrees instead of through the democratic processes familiar to us, can be brought to cooperation with other parts of the world where people move freely, are allowed to make their own observations and decisions, and have some control over their own government and its actions when they choose to exercise them. It is difficult not to be suspicious of areas which are closed, and naturally the government of these nations must be fearful of free contacts with other nations.

This is really the major problem that our people are facing at this time. And the solution of it spells for the future peace or chaos in the world." Following the ceremony I was honored by the women students of Oxford at a tea in Lady Margaret Hall, after which we dined with Sir Campbell Stuart on the way back to London. As we passed Buckingham Palace, the streets were still crowded with people awaiting the birth of Princess Elizabeth's baby. Perhaps the fact that old hatreds and wars can give way to the friendship which exists between Great Britain and the United States today offers hope that someday we may enjoy a similar friendship with nations from which we are now separated by fear and distrust. And now back to you, my daughter Anna, in Hollywood. (9:10)

[Anna Roosevelt:] Thank you, Mother. It's really wonderful to be able to visit with you such historic and beautiful spots as Oxford and Westminster Abbey. And thanks to Mrs. Helen O'Toole of New Bedford, Massachusetts for the letter she wrote me the other day about this program. Mrs. O'Toole writes, "We women appreciate especially having the world come in to us while we are working at home." Well that in a nutshell is just what we hope to do. As I mentioned earlier, William Lyon Mackenzie King is resigning today as Prime Minister of Canada. A short while ago *Time Magazine* remarked that Mr. King is to the Canadian people what my father was to the people in this country. That is, people either loved him wholeheartedly or hated him just as thoroughly. I can't personally vouch for that statement but I can vouch for the fact that there was the strongest personal attachment between the two men. During the last year of Father's life I can remember telling him that Mr. King was coming to Washington and asking him

if Mr. King would stay with us at the White House. "Of course," answered Father, then he paused and remarked reflectively, "He's a grand person to have around. We always have lots to talk about and he's so restful all night almost like an old shoe you wouldn't part with for the world. When's he coming? Send him a wire." May Mr. King's retirement bring him contented enjoyment with the knowledge that his accomplishments are many and that he is loved for himself as well as for them.

[John Nelson:] I'm sure you're right about that Anna, and I found your personal recollections of Mr. King very interesting. But do you mind if I ask you a personal question?

[Anna Roosevelt:] Go right ahead John.

[John Nelson:] Well it's just this, you're now sort of a veteran broadcaster of one week. Tell us how do you like it?

[Anna Roosevelt:] You know that's just what one of my old newspaper cronies asked me the other day. He especially wanted to know if broadcasting scares me. I like it fine, I answered, but it definitely has its scaring aspects. For instance, how would you feel if you didn't know radio signals and suddenly while you were talking into the mic you became aware that the man sitting across the table from you was looking daggers at you and passing the side of his hand across his throat in that well known throat-slitting gesture. The first time it happened to me I just stared in amazement and almost forgot to go on talking. How was I to guess that in everyday radio parlance it simply meant that my time was up and that my friend John Nelson was only trying to tell me calmly to shut up. For some unknown reason that's the only signal that my friendly helpers at the ABC studios forgot to tell me about. They did tell me that if they begin to twirl their index finger around as a small boy would if he were playing round in his mother's bowl of mixed cookie dough that this is a signal for me to talk faster. And they told me that if I saw a pair of hands pretending to pull taffy candy that I was not to talk so fast. Believe me, that cold and peculiar looking metal contraption called a mic is definitely scaring. It seems so impersonal you can't make it laugh no matter how hard you try. This bothered me so much at first that I told John I would talk directly to him and try to forget the mic. And that I wanted him to be sure and look interested all the time, to look sad when he should and to laugh when he should. He's pretty good at it too, but once in a while his eyes will wonder to that big old clock on the wall and I realize he has more to do than just listen attentively to me. At the moment, by the way, John Nelson is looking at me most attentively but with a definite frown of worry as to what I'm going to say next. Don't worry, John, I won't give away any more secrets.

[John Nelson:] That isn't a frown Anna, it's merely a look of intense concentration; as an old mic hand, I've been really enjoying your new fresh opinions.

[Anna Roosevelt:] Here's something even fresher, John: designers' forecast of the kind of hats we'll be buying next spring: hats with wider brims, small ones with huge taffeta bows sweeping down over the right ear. But the best news is that most of them will be priced between five and fifteen dollars. Unfortunately, helpful hints on hats just aren't in my line. I don't wear them. I have nothing against them, but most of them seem too frilly to me.

[John Nelson:] Anna, I view with alarm this hatless trend -- when women stop wearing hats what will men make jokes about? Uh don't answer that.

[Anna Roosevelt:] I have only one more thing to say today, and that is to repeat the neat answer given by Mrs. George Bernard Shaw when the Irish sage once asked her if she didn't agree that men's judgment is superior to women's. "Of course dear," answered Mrs. Shaw, "After all, you married me and I you."

[John Nelson:] Each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at this same time ABC brings you Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt, who spoke from London by shortwave radio telephone, was transcribed earlier. This program has come to you from London and Hollywood, and this is ABC the American Broadcasting Company.

Transcribed from holdings at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)

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Transcription: Emily Whaley

First edit: Anna Karditzas

Final edit: Christy Regenhardt

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project