

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

May 11th, 1951

Description: The opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about the possibility of a world government. In the interview segment, ER's guest is Eddie Dowling, playwright, producer, director, and actor.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Elliott Roosevelt, Eddie Dowling

[ER:] This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking, Elliott and I are very happy to be able to bring you this program each day from my living room here in the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. I hope you find the program we've planned for today an interesting one. Elliott, will you tell us about it please?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mrs. Roosevelt's guest on today's program is someone you might know as co-star with Laurette Taylor in *The Glass Menagerie*. I know him in that role too, but I also think of him as a longtime friend of our family. He is Mr. Eddie Dowling. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce him shortly but now we're going to take a look at the mail. Even before that, listen to a message from our sponsors who make this recorded program possible. [Pause] Mother's chosen today for our discussion a letter from Mrs. Eve B. Taplinger of Philadelphia who has a question. She writes, "As one who greatly admires you and what you stand for, and who also respects your judgement, I have a question to ask you on a very vital subject. I'm a member of the United World Federalists. With my limited knowledge I feel that to date this organization has the only answer to the prevention of war between nations: world government with world law and a world army but a genuine world army. On several occasions, I've heard you express yourself in disagreement with the federalists, mainly, as I remember, because the time was not ripe for such an organization. In a recent article by Sir Benegal Rau he wrote, "If any individual organization or country can set in motion the right kind of idea, it may ultimately move the whole world." Do you not agree with him on that, and if you do, does it then not behoove us all to get behind the idea of world organization, even if at present it may appear unattainable. (2:20)

[ER:] Why, of course, anyone would agree uh that a great idea uh makes great changes in history. For instance, uh Christ's idea has made great changes in history, eh but uh when you suggest that there be created a world government, a world army, uh a world government uh which should be a government of law, my uh question in answer is how will you do it? Uh we have now the United Nations, which is the nearest thing to it. As I understand the objection of the World Federalists, while they are supporting the United Nations, is that it does not go far enough because it is a coming together of governments and not of peoples, and I believe that the idea as far as they formulated is that every nation should elect people to represent them in a world government. Uh now, and that world government should be set up with a supreme and all and two houses or whatever you choose, so forth. Well now, my practical answer is uh: What do you do with governments that uh do not wish to participate? There are--would be quite a few who would not uh-- we have just seen in Geneva a meeting held by a group that said they were holding a peoples' parliament.

And I think we sent three delegates from the state of either Tennessee or-- Tennessee, I think, who'd actually been elected or chosen-- I think they were elected by the people but they may have been chosen by the legislature. But anyway, uh they went and uh people came--people came from uh many nations but I don't think that what they did there has made a ripple, and the reason for that uh --and I doubt very much that it will make a ripple. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.]

Now it seems to me that um to set up a world government, to set up a world army, uh even to go one step further which uh is done in the pamphlet by Stringfellow Barr called "Let's Join the Human Race," and

say how you shall have the money to do -- and I think the first part of that pamphlet, "Let's Join the Human Race," is magnificent in stating the problem, as--which we face today, which is really the problem that two-thirds of the world is hungry. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] But when it comes to saying what he would set up and how he would do it, particularly how he would raise the money, he comes back to the old idea that we will sell peace bonds and that everybody will buy it. Well, then he will get back to exactly the same thing because the people who will buy it are the people who can buy it, and that's probably mostly the people in the United States and then you have a game -- the uh preponderant amount of money contributed by the United States. Now, how do you get people elected unless the government of the country--because you're not going to wipe out all-all government within countries when you have a world government, uh how do you get them elected unless the government uh chooses people and sets up a method of election? Having done that they have to have some connection with their own government.

[Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] So again you have people who perhaps are elected but who still have to have a connection with their own home government and I--it just doesn't seem to me to-to make any more sense than to take what you have today, which is drawing together the government representatives of sixty nations, and try to develop it uh and to, through the economic and social side of it, bring out the greater understanding and finally through this evolve [Elliott Roosevelt: Into a work of--] something nearer the--to a world government, but you're not going to wipe out -- [Elliott Roosevelt: Well--] no matter how you evolve the national governments you've got to have them within the country.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, and the-- you- your national uh feeling uh amongst people, for instance, the people of Yugoslavia, the people of the United States, uh if uh the World Federalists' plan were to be proposed it would be voted down by every country, because uh most people don't want to give up the-the uh national uh pride that they have in their own country at the present time.

[ER:] Well, patriotism of course is really nothing more than love of the bit of country that you know as yours. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And uh it's-it's, I suppose, a mother love translated into love of Mother Earth, the part of it that you happen to love. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yeah.] You may like several parts of your own country that way but it--you find it, I think, terribly difficult to wean people away from the love of a particular country. (8:13)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, of course, to my way of thinking what the United Nations is today and what its aims are as stated uh in the original charter, it uh it is trying to build to just what the World Federalists are talking about. [ER: Yes, but it will do more slowly.] Uh eventually it will have--it has to go slowly because it's a matter of education, it's a matter of having people rub elbows with each other and learn something about each other's problems. As you said, uh approximately three quarters of the Earth is today uh hungry and that's one of the basic problems. Well, it'll only be after the people of the uh non-hungry areas begin to realize that uh that those hungry people are just as much their responsibility as the people next door. That you--

[ER:] Of course, it really means, Elliott, uh that you have to have not only uh a distribution system but you have to have much better production and a-a much better understanding of the world's needs.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But, of course, I've always felt that an organization like the World Federalist Organization-- uh and incidentally it might be a very nice idea if we had somebody on this program from that organization. We could might -- maybe argue some of these points. Uh but I think that the World Federalists try to arrive at a-a-a nirvana or the perfect uh situation without taking into consideration human nature.

[ER:] Well, that would be my own criticism of it. [Both laugh]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I think that maybe uh you've given most of your answer to Mrs. Taplinger except for one question that she asks uh, and that is the direct one regarding the article by Sir Bengal Rau. Uh do you--

[ER:] The idea, well I think an idea is always worth an enormous amount.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, but uh do you feel that in the modern uh world the way that we're moving today that an individual can come forward with an idea and make a-a uh very vast change on the thinking of people? Do you think it's very easy?

[ER:] I don't really know, Elliott, you would have to have um something very um remarkable. Now, uh I do think that uh perhaps the idea that made, in recent times-- we're talking now about recent times, [Elliot Roosevelt: Yes.] that took hold of peoples' imagination more than any other was uh possibly the wording of the uh Atlantic Charter, when uh Mr. Churchill and Father put into words what most people uh were afraid of. I mean and-and said that uh these are the freedoms that people will have and if you had those freedoms most of your fears would be taken away. If you had freedom from want, freedom from aggression, and then added to that freedom of expression and freedom of religion, uh you would pretty well take away many of the things that today make people afraid. So it seems to me that that idea perhaps in modern times has been one that has made a great--had the greatest impact on people. (12:05)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, well, of course, uh it comes to my mind that probably the individual who has preached a philosophy of life and a way of uh of living that has had the most effect on the greatest number of people was probably Gandhi, but there again uh-uh certainly Gandhi's teachings were not accepted by all the people from all parts of the world.

[ER:] No, because he preached them for the troubles that assailed his own people, and he didn't uh even try to meet what assailed the lives of other people.

[Elliot Roosevelt:] That's right. Well, I'm afraid we'll have to go on, and I hope that this is a complete answer for Mrs. Taplinger.

[Break 12:53-13:07]

[ER:] It's a little bit like old times to have Mr. Eddie Dowling come to visit me today because he visited my husband and me on many occasions in Washington. It's awfully nice to see you.

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, I can't tell you. You know, of course, how nice it is for me because we've been friends so long, and, of course, the happiest memories of my life outside of my own mother and father and family were with you and your lovely family.

[ER:] Well now, let's start with the most recent play you've done and work backwards. I noticed in the paper that you've just completed *Angel in the Pawnshop* and closed.

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I was awfully sorry to see it close. I wish you'd seen it because I know it would have pleased you a lot and -- [ER: I got tickets for it then I got the grip and couldn't go.] [Eddie Dowling laughs] Oh, if you still have the tickets maybe I could get the actors to play it specially for you. [Eddie Dowling laughs] [ER: Oh no.] But it was really a lovely play, it had oh so much fantasy in it and warm humor and I thought very human, and we just missed being what I think might have been a very, very substantial hit if we'd have just had a little better break.

[ER:] That's too bad. Well, how many legitimate plays does this make for you? Do you remember or don't you know?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I don't know offhand the number, but it's been quite a lot. Uh I'd say perhaps up in the twenties.

[ER:] My, that's a lot of plays, isn't it? [Eddie Dowling laughs] Well, of the roles you played in the theatrical world--writer, producer, director, and star-- which have you liked the best?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I think really from an acting point perhaps *Here Come the Clowns* which was one of my greatest failures because I lost everything including Ray's fur pieces and her jewelry to keep it going [Eddie Dowling laughs]. [ER: Oh goodness!] Really, but I think that that was my best role.

[Philip] Barry's *Here Come the Clowns* which was about 1937.

[ER:] Well, you-you like better to be an actor than anything else?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I think so, yes I think so.

[ER:] That's the part of it you enjoy.

[Eddie Dowling:] We start, you know, don't we, very early acting.

[ER:] Uh so that you really felt that *Here Come the Clowns* was the most--was that the most satisfactory part you ever played?

[Eddie Dowling:] I think so, because it was uh so ahead of its time. Nobody believed at the time that there could be anybody like Hitler or Mussolini or the other awful men that have walked the Earth. You know they just couldn't believe it, because we were in such a prosperous time, and Mr. Roosevelt had been in office about three years, and everything was booming, you know, and everybody was making lots of money and all that sort of stuff, and they just couldn't believe that men like the protagonist in *Here Come the Clowns*, the villain in other words, could be like that. They thought it was farfetched but it wasn't long after [ER: No.] when Mr. Hitler began to pop and all the other things happened and it was too late for us.

[ER:] And we're still in it now. [Eddie Dowling: Yes.] Well now, what was the first legitimate play you did where you were producer and director and actor?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, it was *Here Come the Clowns* strange to say.

[ER:] *Here Come the Clowns* was the first one?

[Eddie Dowling:] Mhm, that was my first where I did all those things you know. I had produced a series of plays, I had done *Richard II* with Maurice Evans and Peggy Webster, and I had also done uh-uh *Shadow and Substance* with uh Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Sara Allgood and Julie Haydon. I had done several other very fine plays, but the first one where I did act and--and all those capacities--

[ER:] Where you did all the three [Eddie Dowling: Yes.] --where you did the three things: you were producer and director and the actor. [Eddie Dowling: Yes [unclear]] I don't see how any one person can manage to do that because it's such a tremendous job you have to-- may have to do a good deal of rewriting of the play and you may have to uh-uh--directing it anyway is something that you must have to

sort of sit back and look at from the outside, [Eddie Dowling: You know the old--] and then be an actor I don't know how you do that.

[Eddie Dowling:] I don't either really. [Eddie Dowling laughs] And the older I get really the more frightening it becomes. I think a great deal of it was done because of an--my early start. My first success in the theater I wrote myself. I was only just a kid and I hadn't any idea of how significant that was at the time. I thought just all you did was take some paper and a pencil and just put it down and I did, and it turned out very well. So that I didn't really realize until I got battling with it as the years go on, and we get older, just what that meant don't you know. It's that wonderful thing where you have no inhibitions; you just do the thing that's natural to all children and it succeeded for me. But when we begin taking things apart and we begin to get older and we begin to study and we begin to get out in more important circles, I guess they call it-- I don't know really; I've never been very important but I guess perhaps I would be--would uh tell about it. [ER: Mhm.] Then we realize -- then we begin to realize just how much how important these things were that did happen more or less accidentally, and but I got in that sort of groove, and I just went on doing four or five men's work. (17:50)

[ER:] And you certainly did [ER coughs]. Well now, let's take a brief look at those younger days you've just been talking about. When did you first know you were going to make a career out of the entertainment world?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, my parents hadn't any doubt, Mrs. Roosevelt, after the priest threw the holy water on me and I was baptized, I put on the greatest show they say of all my mother's seventeen children.

[Eddie Dowling laughs]

[ER:] Oh, you mean it started right then when you were baptized? [Eddie Dowling: Right then.] I see.

[ER laughs]

[Eddie Dowling:] I took right over right there.

[ER:] I love that.

[Eddie Dowling:] Yes, and she said -- you know as they grew up she had all these children, there were seventeen.

[ER:] There were seventeen children?

[Eddie Dowling:] There were seventeen. Yes. And I want to tell our audience just at this particular minute of a very wonderful thing that you did, you and Mr. Roosevelt. I've never had a chance really to thank you personally. I've meant to on many occasions when we'd met and I just never did. The night that she died she was eighty-one, and you and Mr. Roosevelt sent up there to Rhode Island the little village that she died in where she was born, the same farm my people settled there over two hundred years ago uh in Lime Rock, Rhode Island. The first night, uh following the old Catholic principle of waking the deceased, in came a White House car and there were eighty-one roses out of your gardens. And uh when she was buried two days later in the little cemetery in Berkley, Rhode Island, Roger Williams a very famous aviator, New England aviator, and all his squadron --they liked her so much we lived by the airport -- took those roses, and flew over her grave, and dropped them and in eighty-one rooms. Mrs. Roosevelt, in our little surrounding countryside up there, there is a rose that came out of your White House conservatories that's in books, bibles, and one thing or another they just-- [ER: They picked up--] They just picked them off the grave and they're there. Yes.

[ER:] I think that's a very lovely [Eddie Dowling: Yes. Yeah. Mhm.] thought, and I'm very glad that--

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, it's only one of the many things that uh I'd like the public to know about you. They-they've never seen that nice--well they've seen it, of course, but not in the proportion that we people who know you so well have. I said to your young lady yesterday -- when she asked me about coming today, I said I've never uh known her to make a mistake. I've heard her accused of making many, and I know that there are many who do think so, but if she ever did really make one it was from her heart and I mean that. [ER laughs]

[ER:] Well, that's a very nice thing for you to say, but I just gathered that you were picked out for the stage or the entertainment world from the time you were born practically. [Eddie Dowling: I think so.] So you always knew that was coming along. Well playwrights and producers, in fact everyone connected with the theater, are often faced with the problem of turning down a play that doesn't look like a money maker although the play itself might feel just right for some reason. Have you had to make any sacrifice in order to put on a play in which you believed?

[Eddie Dowling:] Yes, I have. I think nearly all of my plays, Mrs. Roosevelt, because I have a strange sort of taste. It's uh strange because it doesn't always result in overwhelming success at the box office. I'm not a very commercially minded person as far as the theater is concerned. I turned down *Happy Family*. That's running now for two years. I had *Three Men on a Horse*. That ran for three years, and didn't know enough to take it, you know? Sister Eileen, a girl in my office wrote it, and I let all those things get away uh, but I think the producing of a play or the acting of a play or the directing of a play with serious people of the theater is all a matter of taste really, just like one's clothes or one's music uh really. And so that I've made many sacrifices because when I start with a play, for example, like the--*The Glass Menagerie*. Uh I-I don't think I would have had the courage to do it if it hadn't been for Mrs. Dowling because everybody was agreed that it would be a great artistic failure, and I talked it over with her seriously because we were at a very low point uh financially at the time and she said, "Look you do it. If it's what you love you do it and we'll count the pennies afterward."

[ER:] That's wonderful. [Eddie Dowling: And, uh--] I think Mrs. Dowling must be a-a wonderful partner.

[Eddie Dowling:] Oh, she's a really remarkable person. She had a great experience with you, I wonder if you remember it. When you first went to the White House, I don't suppose there was one nice occasion that we didn't get an invitation to come, [ER: Mm.] and I was forever making apologizes to you about her not coming. And one day I said to her, "Now, Ray, I can't say no to Mrs. Roosevelt any more I mustn't. I've apologized for you a half a dozen or a dozen times and-and you know what will they think of me?" and she said, "Well I-I-- you just tell Mrs. Roosevelt that I know there's a million people want to come and that uh as-as her graciousness-- because of what you did or didn't do in a political sense--and you just tell that gracious lovely kindly woman for me that I'd feel all out of place. I wouldn't know anybody there, and just from my heart thank her for me, and tell her to please excuse me." Do you remember that?

[ER:] Yes, I do remember. And I think I remember saying that I didn't think she would feel out of place

[Both Laugh].

[Eddie Dowling:] Yeah, you did that's exactly what you said. [ER laughs] Exactly what you said. Exactly.

[ER:] Well, I've always tried to-to make people feel that the White House um is [Eddie Dowling: Was just a home really.] really belonged [Eddie Dowling: That's right.] to all the people, and that they-they should feel at home there because it-it does belong to the people of the United States, [Eddie Dowling: Oh yes.]

and that they should come there and they should see what kind of a life the people they've elected to represent them lead there and how they represent them. [Eddie Dowling: Well, it was certainly a home while you were there alright.] I used to feel -- when we had all those crowds coming into the White House, sometimes the poor ushers would say, "Oh there are so many people traipsing through the White House," and some of them complained and this and that. I used to say, "Well after all that's what [Eddie Dowling: It's their house.] makes them feel that the government belongs to them. They begin right here having an interest in it."

[Eddie Dowling:] How right that was, how right that was.

[ER:] Now, I think that's true, that it uh it's important to epitomize how you control your government by actually being in the house where the head of your government lives. Now, I'm sorry we have to stop for a minute and let our announcer have a word, and then we'll come right back.

[Eddie Dowling:] Good. (24:20)

[ER:] Now, I come back to the talk with Mr. Eddie Dowling, and uh I'm particularly uh glad uh to have a chance, because we were just talking about Mrs. Dowling, to ask you to tell something about your wife's career before and after she became Mrs. Eddie Dowling [Eddie Dowling laughs].

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I'm glad you know. We were married in Albany and you-you'll get a kick out of this. She was the success at that time. She was just a kid. She was a member of the famous Dooley family, the four Dooley's, and they were all very successful --all-stars, very young they became stars. And I was just a youngster starting out and didn't quite know what it was all about, but I broke into the act anyway, and got her away from her three brothers, and we sneaked up to Albany to get married. And she had come down from Rochester, and uh she had to go back to Syracuse from Albany, she had to be back in Syracuse that night to play. I was out of work at the time, so we got married, and I had fifty cents, and I took her down to the station and got her breakfast, and I remember ham and eggs in those days were thirty cents and coffee was five, and so I--her wedding breakfast was a thirty cent breakfast of ham and eggs and a cup of coffee. So she said to me, "What are you going to have?" and I said, "Well you know I'm so nervous I don't feel a bit hungry," and I hadn't eaten since early the day before. But she caught on right away that I was an actor you know, very early in the game, and she dipped all her toast in the yolk of the eggs and insisted that I eat them, and it finished up with me eating most of her breakfast, and when I put her on the train to go back to Syracuse to go to work with a play that night she shook hands, and I ran along the platform, and when I opened my hand there was a twenty dollar bill in it. So she began helping me very early [Both laugh].

[ER:] My goodness, that was really very wonderful. Well now, she's gone right on helping you.

[Eddie Dowling:] Oh yes, she's been the great inspiration behind it all, and I never could have done half of this stuff that I --such as it is that I have done if it hadn't been for her. Great faith and help, no doubt.

[ER:] Well, do you have any comments about playwriting in general or play writers? Uh that --have you discovered any new play writers lately?

[Eddie Dowling:] Yes I've- of course, you know I brought Tennessee Williams in first for the *Glass Menagerie*, and [William] Saroyan had all the success with me in *Time of Your Life* and *Hello Out There*, and I brought also Paul Vincent Carroll who wrote *Shadow and Substance* and *The White Steed*, and I--*Angel in the Pawn Shop* is a brand new playwright named A.B. Shiffirin, and I'm coming in with a new one next season a boy named Whitfield Cook, who's written a very wonderful play called *Human Being*, and I also have a new play by Saroyan called *The Violin Messiah*. So I've had perhaps more experience with young, new playwrights than anybody on the street--

[ER:] Young, new playwrights than most people have, yes. That must be awfully difficult that making up your mind whether you've really got someone who's got a-a gift or not. Well now, I want to switch a little, and talk a little about um something you and I know a little something about: politics. I know you worked towards my husband's gubernatorial--in my husband's gubernatorial campaigns of '28 and '30, and the presidential campaigns too, was head of the Democratic Committee for Stage and Screen Members? What do you think is the real contribution theatrical groups can make and have made to politics?

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I'm [ER coughs] I'm sure that you agree that they are the most attractive personalities that we have in the world we-- now you and I have lived that because it was in your husband's '28 campaign that people of the theater were first introduced into politics. And uh up to the coming of your husband, none of the politicians, none of the great leaders had the foresight to uh to uh realize just what these people did mean to the public, and they would have no part of it nationally or otherwise. And really it was your husband, uh God rest his soul, who was the first to recognize it and to make us important, as an important part of the machine in-in the working toward the election of a candidate. And so we went on as you know and and, uh '32 and '36 and then '40, and then the big crowd took over in the '44 campaign. Uh and I-I feel personally that uh we have lived, you and I, to see this television thing come in, and uh we know now that it's going to be a terrifically difficult job for anybody to win any office of any importance once the public get a look at him and can sit and study them, see them, uh and-and hear them. Don't you agree? (28:56)

[ER:] Oh, I think television's going to make a great deal of difficulty [Eddie Dowling: Oh, of course it is.] it's a wonderfully good thing, I think.

[Eddie Dowling:] A wonderful thing to sit there and they put the spotlight on these people, and oh my, I should say.

[ER:] But I also feel that it was um quite a wonderful thing for the theater to take its proper place, I mean theater people, because there's a great deal of idealism in people who are in the entertainment fields, and I think it gives them a chance to do something for their country which is what they want to do.

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, if -- uh your-your husband was remarkable as far as we were concerned. I remember right after he was elected, after they had gotten a first appropriation from Congress for--to help the poor and to do [ER: Oh, the Federal Theater.] the Federal Theater. I went to him one day and I said, "Mr. President you've taken care of everybody except my people," and he pulled on his long cigarette holding it on and he said, "Really Eddie what did I do?" And I said, "Well now, you've appropriated for this and for that and for all that other thing, and we people especially in the vaudeville theater have been hit harder than any other people that walk the Earth, because the talking pictures practically obliterated us! It's just we're out of business." And he said call Harry Hopkins in and he said, "Harry, you must get some money for the people of the theater," and then I repeated my story to Hopkins, and Harry said, "Well, Mr. President, we can't give them anything on this one because we've exhausted the appropriation, but we'll have to earmark something for the next." So I remember the president grabbed my hand and he said, "Now, Eddie, he's telling you the truth really we have. We have used it all up now, but there'll be a second appropriation very soon, and how much do you think would be a reasonable amount to start to do something for you folks?" And, of course, I had no idea. I'd never thought in terms of money like that, don't you know, and I had no idea so I said, "Well, I don't-I don't know." Well, he said, "Give a guess now so that we'll have something down here to go by." Well, I said, "I-I--Maybe a million dollars?" and he said, "Why Eddie when you think in terms of people, great people who are in need, a million dollars?" Well, he said that wouldn't be anything at all. So it wasn't long after they got the second appropriation that he sent for me and he had Hopkins there and he said, "Now Eddie we're starting you off with uh twenty-five million." So that's how the Federal Theater was founded.

[ER:] That's how the Federal Theater Project started [Eddie Dowling: That's how it started.] in 1935.

[Eddie Dowling:] That's right. That's exactly--

[ER:] I always had tremendous interest in the Federal Theater Project, because I think it brought the real theater to more people within their reach. They'd never had a chance to see real plays [Eddie Dowling: Oh, very true.] cause movies were cheaper. (31:35)

[Eddie Dowling:] He worried a great deal about it too, you know, [ER coughs] because there was a great deal of this red business that we're talking about now. Of course, when any moneys are appropriated for any purpose, uh the time and those in office and those responsible for that-that money, those appropriations, there's a very menacing thing, because we uh people, we democratic peoples, and uh particularly peoples like ourselves who have faith in one another, and we believe that these things are being done for be-for the best causes and all that. We-we-we take that so for granted and we do nothing about it uh that-that those other people with subversive ideas and all that sort of stuff they get in very easily. And I remember he sent for me once and he said, "Now this has come to my attention"--and, of course, you know Miss Flannigan was, you know, directing the theater. He said to me, "Eddie, tell me about this," because I was supposed to be National Supervisor, I never really worked at it very hard, my concern was getting the money, and I thought that and I, you know, I had done my job because I had to get out and work. So I said, "Well, I don't believe it." And we had quite a long talk about it. So he accepted what I told him that day as being pretty definite, and so it was dismissed. But then later he said to me, he checked with me oh some years afterward, and he said, "Eddie, I don't think that you had the complete story on that thing." And I would like to just tell your audience at this particular time, uh Mrs. Roosevelt, with all they read about him, and they're going to read I guess as long as we live and long after. There was one thing that he was terribly concerned about and that was any subversive foreign influence coming in here.

And anybody who thinks otherwise didn't know him. I'm as positive of that as I am that my mother's in heaven, because we discussed it at length many, many times. And uh-- which brings me to a point-- I knew you'd ask me the question later but it-it falls into the pattern of what we're talking about now. The last thing that Mr. Roosevelt said to Mr. [Maxim] Litvinov on the night of the recognition of Russia before the signing in the paper -- the final signing was, he said to Mr. Litvinov and Mr. [Boris] Skvirsky and Mr. [Alexander] Troyanovsky, the first ambassador appointed by Russia after the recognition. He said, "It's been brought to my attention, Mr. Litvinov, and gentlemen, that your government has executed in the last few weeks a hundred and fifty Catholic priests. The three men shrugged their shoulders and laughed and said that, like all other things of that nature, that it was greatly exaggerated. They didn't deny that some priests had been shot but they weren't shot as priests they were shot as politicians, and that instead of a hundred and fifty it had to be more like five. And I will always remember as long as I live that Mr. Roosevelt said, "Well I don't believe either that your government would be guilty of anything of that nature, and uh I will be a very, very disappointed man if I find later that I have made a mistake in this recognition. I know that we are the last great government that haven't recognized you, and I see that no reason why we should take a position of not recognizing you, knowing all these facts. I accept your story gentlemen, and I will be greatly disappointed if I find out that there is religious persecution." That was the last thing he said.

[ER:] That's very interesting, and uh I knew he felt that way and I remember his telling that but uh I'm glad to hear you tell it. Now, we only have a minute, and I want to ask you about the USO plans cause I know you're interested in those.

[Eddie Dowling:] Well, I worked in the last one. Of course, I haven't been active this time. I haven't been too well, I went through a great illness a couple of years ago, and so other folks are carrying on. But I do know that in the first one I went to Mr. Rockefeller one day again for an appropriation to start it for the

people of the theater, and he told me that they'd exhausted their first appropriations and he gave us his personal check for a huge amount, Mr. Roosevelt sent me by the way with General Osbourne. And I think he gave us his own personal check for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars to get them started. And then, of course, in the next appropriation he was paid off but they did a magnificent job in the first uh this last war.

[ER:] Well, I suppose you'll have to begin again. I always hate to see us having to um do the kind of thing that makes USO a necessity but I think now it is a necessity, [ER coughs] [Eddie Dowling: Yes. I'm afraid so.] And I'm sure you do your share, and I hate to say it but our time is come to an end. I've just enjoyed every minute of your visit with me.

[Eddie Dowling:] I wish I had longer to talk about your husband and yourself.

[ER:] Thank you.

(Break 36:18-36:28)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] 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. (36:42)

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