

## OVER OUR COFFEE CUPS

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1941

Description: ER discusses civilian defense, German actions, and price controls.

Participants: ER

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

[Unknown speaker 2:] Get more out of your sport!

[Unknown speaker 3:] Get more fun!

[Unknown announcer:] Get more out of life with coffee. *The Pan-American Coffee Bureau*, representing seven good neighbor coffee-growing nations, presents Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's views on current events over our coffee cups. But just for a moment, let's hear how Hollywood's famous motion picture stars get more out of life with coffee. Bob Cobb, President of the famous Hollywood Brown Derby, dining mecca of the stars, has the answer. Here is what Bob writes us, and we quote--

[Unknown speaker 4:] The other night, I was sitting with Jerry Palona over Jerry's third cup of coffee and I asked Jerry, "Why is it all you motion picture people drink so much coffee?" Well, his answer was just this: "Bob," he said, "whether it's comedy like mine or really emotional acting, motion picture work takes plenty of energy. We people in motion pictures have learned that coffee actually gives us more energy, steadies our nerves, peps us up when we need pepping most." Well, sir, when Jerry told me that, I realized how right he was. For when business gets really strenuous, I find myself reaching for a cup of coffee to pep me up too.

[Unknown announcer:] Motion picture stars, successful businessmen like Bob Cobb, yes, men and women in business, in the professions in public life, are discovering they can get more out of life with coffee. Try a cup with your evening meal tonight. See how much more pleasure you get out of life. And now the *Pan-American Coffee Bureau's* news analyst is ready to give you over our coffee cups her weekly digest of world events. Mrs. Franklin D. -- (1:48) [recording jumps]

[ER:] Ladies and gentlemen, there is an extraordinary difference between the broadcast sent out from the German government and the attitude taken by the commanders of German ships. The German high command knows quite well what these German ships actually do and yet they take the trouble to tell their people that the American reports of the sinking should be regarded with the deepest skepticism. And they state that several American reports, which are as true today as the day they were made, have been proved untrue, and because of that they cast doubt on the report of German sinkings of any American ships. This savors somewhat of the attitude of fooling oneself and of telling people only what they would like to hear. All news that comes out of Germany today, whether it is private and confidential or whether it is sent out to the world, seems to be a mixture of wishful thinking on the one hand and on the other an attempt to terrify the world by showing how utterly without mercy or regard for human life is the German Fuhrer. How otherwise can we explain the reports of sending of numberless Jewish people from Berlin and other cities at an hour's notice, packed like cattle into trains with their destination either Poland or some part of occupied Russia. For the life of one German officer, fifty French people are shot, and the punishment for acts of rebellion against German rule in any country becomes more severe every day. The

man who orders these cruelties stood before the tomb of Napoleon, so the story runs, and as he turned away he remarked, "Napoleon failed in conquering the world, but I will succeed." I often wonder whether he had ever read a Russian folk story which has to do with Napoleon's attempted conquest of Russia. The story runs thus. Napoleon, because he had no pity, could cry out "Bonaparte! Bonaparte!" and the soldiers he had killed would rise up to fight for him. One day, however, he saw a young Russian lying wounded and the young soldier said, as Napoleon went by, "Tell me one thing, Napoleonder, why did you kill me?" and because the young Russian was not really a young peasant soldier but the archangel Ivan, the words he spoke haunted Napoleon. And though he pulled out his pistol and shot the soldier through the head, the words still seemed to follow him, repeated by all the young dead men who lay upon the ground around him. Napoleon could not sleep in his tent at night and when the battle came the next day his heart had become sore and for the first time he felt pity. On calling for the dead soldiers to come to the rescue, he found they had deserted him because the human emotion of pity had destroyed his power over them. So Napoleon and his army were routed. No man can count forever on being so completely dominated by his dream of power that god will not enter into his soul and make him feel pity. The day will come for the Fuhrer as surely as it came for Napoleon.

Here at home, our defense effort goes on apace, we read daily that new ships slide down the waves, new airplanes are turned out, and now the president has sent out a call to civilians to do their defense duty. He has proclaimed the time from November 11 to November 16 as Defense Week. November 11 is Armistice Day, and ordinarily we hold services thanking god for the peace that came on this day, and praying that war will never come to us again. This year, in addition to our usual services, and the decorations of the graves of the dead who fought in the last war, we will use the day as a reminder that liberty is always worth preserving and that defense for us means the preservation of the liberty we have and the continuation of our efforts to improve democracy at home and to make it possible for the rest of the world to enjoy the same freedom that we enjoy.

The civilian defense to which the President calls us is concerned with a great many sides of the life of our communities. Today, we are still primarily thinking about the rise in cost of living which is being felt more and more in every community. The low-income groups suffer most, for the percentage spent on foods grows greater. In other words, the smaller your income, the greater is the percent spent on food. Prices keep going up and yet the House hearings on the Emergency Price Control Bill have been carried on in a leisurely fashion during the better part of three months. In a war economy, a nation has to divert a great part of its resources and man power from the making of peacetime goods to the making of instruments for war or defense --planes, tanks, guns, battle ships, et cetera. We pay for this vast defense effort partly out of taxes, but to a greater degree the government borrows. There is plenty of worth in wages and profits in the hands of the people, but the amount that people can buy is limited by the fact that production is largely in defense materials, which the people cannot use in their daily lives. So they compete with their wages to purchase those civilian goods produced only by non-defense workers, which means the prices shoot up unless the government institutes some kind of price control. In ordinary times, when the price of an article starts to rise, manufacturers produce it in greater quantity and the price comes down. But in a crisis like this prices start rising on all sides. There cannot be greater quantities produced because industry's working practically at capacity on defense. More plants cannot be built, nor more machinery produced, because the materials needed to do this are used in the production of defense articles. So instead of stimulating more production as might have happened in peace time, speculation and hoarding begin, which results in taking supplies off the market, and prices go up. Workers attain higher wages. These wages are reflected in higher manufacturing costs and make the article bought by the people more costly and the vicious spiral in prices and rising wages has begun. We are still in the opening stages of the spiral in this country, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the cost of living on a national average has risen about ten percent since the war started in 1939. Most of this increase has taken place in the last few months. Wholesale prices have risen over 22 percent. You wonder

why this sharp rise in the wholesale price hasn't been reflected in the prices we pay in retail stores. That is partly due to the fact that the retailers have been selling off their stocks and haven't had to replenish yet. When they do in the course of the next few months, this cost will be reflected in retail prices unless some adjustments are made in the near future.

There are various ways of trying to check inflation. You can try to remove from people what excess money they have by taxation or by urging them to buy defense bonds. This latter suggestion, of course, will be of value in the future, because that money will be available for expenditure to stimulate private spending to start industry functioning on a peacetime production basis again. We can limit the amount and the terms on installment credit, but this method never seems to go far enough. And the method of volunteer cooperation to place ceilings on certain goods purchased by industry and produced by industry and trade does not seem either to completely control inflationary tendencies. So it would look as though the only thing that remains to be done is to pass some kind of legislation which will fix a ceiling for prices in an effort to be fair to buyers and sellers both. There is naturally an appeal made when prices are controlled to control wages, but it seems unfair on the whole to put human labor and commodities in the same category. The thirteenth amendment to the Constitution makes many people doubt whether doing so might not be in certain instances classed as involuntary bondage. It would seem to be better perhaps to protect the worker from a rising cost of living not only through control of the price of foodstuffs but through some kind of rent control, and then appeal to his democratic patriotism for a voluntary stabilizing agreement arrived at by the machinery instituted for collective bargaining. I've wanted for a long time to find a real instance where people bothered to lie to prove their own ideas, and lo and behold, a letter has just come to me from the Pacific coast which gives me my proof. My correspondent says that in practically every city he visited, stories had been told to the effect that the largest Jewish-owned department stores had discharged many American workers in order to provide jobs for Jewish refugees. No story could tend to create disunity more rapidly, and it is not true. It might be the time for a seasonal layoff, or any one of a number of reasons might make a drop in employment temporarily necessary. The Germans circulate a story like this to create a dislike of the Jews. I sometimes wonder if it would not be well to organize a committee called American Unity to explain that creating rifts between various groups is not the way to promote goodwill because sometimes it acts as a boomerang. (13:21)

[Unknown announcer:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. Now for the lady of the family, who no matter what her age or how hard her household duties are, wishes still to be considered amusing, charming and the life of every party, here's a tip from delightful and talented Anne Miller, the dancing star of the Columbia Picture *Go West, Young Lady*. Miss Miller writes us, and we quote,

[Anne Miller:] The other afternoon at our studio a charming lady from Des Moines and her husband were watching me go through a long rehearsal for one of my dance scenes. The lady asked me, "Miss Miller, how can you work so long and so hard and still look so cheerful and happy?" So of course, I told her my secret: "Mrs. Smith," I said, "Whenever I begin to feel fatigued or sort of run down, particularly in the evening, I always reach for a delicious cup of coffee. I find coffee peps me up, makes me feel like the proverbial million dollars!

[Unknown announcer:] Yes, that's the secret of Anne Miller's ever-sparkling personality. You can make it your secret too! Enjoy an extra cup of coffee with your evening meal tonight. See how much it peps you up, how much more fun you get out of life with the Americas' favorite drink: coffee. Get more out of life with coffee tonight. Next week at this same time, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt will be with us again to give us more of her fascinating observations on the world we live in. Do your part for national defense. Buy defense bonds and stamps now.

[Unknown announcer:] And don't forget that this is national donut month and coffee and Dough Boy Donuts are just one more way to get more out of life with coffee. This is the National Broadcasting Company.

[NBC chimes]

(15:00)

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