

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 12, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about labor unions role in the defense mobilization drive in Washington, D.C. In the interview segment, ER's guest is poet, author, and television star Louis Untermeyer.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Louis Untermeyer

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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:] There are few people with claims to fame in as many fields as Mr. Louis Untermeyer. He is author, editor, lecturer, poet, critic, and television star. He's our guest today and Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce him a little later on in the program. First though we have some mail to go over and a message to be heard from the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

[Break 0:47-0:54]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother I have a letter here from a young lady in Suffern, New York and she has a very short question for you. She writes uh, "Do you think it was fair or even patriotic for the United Labor Policy Committee, representing all important unions except the United Mine Workers, to cut loose from all direct participation in the defense mobilization drive as they did in Washington a short time ago?"

[ER:] Well I don't know uh what the objective of that action was. I imagine that they have felt that in the set up they had only been called in on relatively unimportant levels and that they could not participate and either make a good contribution or uh uh in fact take part unless they were really taken in to the policy making uh level and uh I imagined that there is great deal of difficulty eh in getting that um accomplished and that their feeling is that to accept responsibility when you don't have the opportunity to really participate in making the plans is uh an almost impossible situation to be placed in because your own people are going to hold you responsible.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But I thought that uh Mr. Wilson had invited uh Mr. Reuther first and uh Mr. George Meany and uh various other top labor leaders to be his top assistant a number one assistant representing labor and that uh none of them have accepted so far--(3:03)

[ER:] Well I don't know, I've said at the beginning of this that I was not familiar with exactly what had happened. I suppose inviting you to be uh an assistant, unless with that position goes uh a great deal of integration into the policy making, it might not uh-- it might be apparent responsibility without real opportunity to come in on the decisions and therefore until I knew more about it I couldn't say whether I approved or disapproved-[Elliott Roosevelt: Uh-huh] of what they were trying to do. I can't believe that labor--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Of course when they withdrew they made the statement that they felt that the imposing of uh of uh wage controls uh without the full uh imposing of uh [ER and Elliott simultaneously:

price] controls was an unfair policy and that they felt that was what the policy was and that's why they withdrew. (4:08)

[ER:] Well that's of course perfectly possible and might easily be. I don't again know uh what are the reasons. I don't think any of us have been told what is the background of reasoning that prevents the roll back of prices. I know that prices uh probably couldn't be rolled back um unless you took the month of last May when your wholesale and all prices were more or less in uh conjunction with each other-- [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] Um but uh otherwise you have to stay at the late date of December which is what uh they had taken but um I don't really know why you couldn't have rolled back to last May and made the adjustments for the small business perhaps that would have suffered or wherever it was gone into finding out who was going to be heard-- [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] and how we could be helped. But uh I-I don't feel that I know enough about the arguments. My only criticism would be that perhaps we the public haven't been told enough to know. I have great faith in the labor leaders and I don't think they would do an unpatriotic thing unless they felt they were pushed into a position where they could do nothing else. Now it took a long while for uh anybody to wake up to the fact that they ought to be included at all and that can't have had a very good effect upon them and so perhaps--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] You mean uh that in the inception of the plan uh of defense mobilization that President Truman didn't include the uh Labor Policy Committee--?

[ER:] Well it's-- I think if you will go back to the newspapers which is my only source of information uh that in the first and original uh things that have happened right along the line you'll see a great many more names of um industrialists and no labor leader names in the uh early days. Now labor has come in lately--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] You mean, you mean in this present emergency?

[ER:] Yes and uh uh I think uh I don't believe--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well that is a widespread criticism that is made of President Truman that he enjoyed labor support but did not turn to labor for advice--

ER interrupts: Well I don't--

[ER:] I don't think it's President Truman's fault uh I think it's the people who advise him. What's Mr. Steelman doing that he doesn't see to it? That uh labor uh is included.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But isn't Mr. Truman ultimately responsible for the advisors who are around him?

[ER:] Surely the top-- surely the top is always ultimately responsible but uh he's blamed and uh I suppose perhaps sometimes praised for what is really the work of other people. But in this particular case I think he's taking the blame for what other people might very well have avoided.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Shortsightedness on the part of others. Well that uh--this question brings up something uh to my mind which I would like to hear more about. Uh we heard uh great resounding speeches made uh not only by President Truman but by all of the congressional leaders of both parties saying that this time we're going to take the profit out of war. And I can't see that by either rollbacks or wage controls or any of the moves that are being made that they're doing one blessed thing to uh cut out an enormous profit being made by all war contract holders. (8:10)

[ER:] I-I quite agree on that and I-I think that it should be done and uh it probably would need someone who had great experience um in the business field to do it--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But what interests me Mummy is that uh uh the people are asked through higher taxes reaching down to the lowest income level to uh tighten their belts, to make sacrifices at times like this. Uh true, they do put on surplus profits taxes, but we all know that the uh statements of profits as reported by the--by major industry throughout the land of those who are uh in the uh defense uh program manufacturing for defense that those people show profits each--each time there's a war that is absolutely fantastic in relation to the actual dollars invested by the public in those companies because they use government money to open these plants and to do this job. It isn't their money.

[ER:] Oh yes, I've already heard that the kind of contracts that are being drawn this time uh practically leave--put no risk on the contractor. They're all uh the government [unclear term] at all.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] There isn't any risk for the contractor. Now in a case like that uh where profits are made inordinately in proportion to the invested dollar--

[ER:] Well of course there is an old desire and that is that there should be a ceiling on profits, but the trouble has always been when they argued that that they said unless there was uh an incentive you would not get the maximum of production.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But you've taken the incentive away from the individual. The individual can't make money today.

[ER:] That's quite true. I- I would agree with you and personally I would think that you could set a profit at such uh--set a ceiling which would make it [unclear term]--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] At a good level, at a high level--

[ER:] A high level--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] At a high level in proportion to the dollars invested. But why should the--should the--these corporations be permitted to--to take out uh profits when the individual has no opportunity to do the same?

[ER:] I think that's quite true. I-I- I'm not going to argue with you on that. I think it's true.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] All right, well in other words uh in direct answer to this question, you feel that uh--

[ER:] That I don't know enough to say eh uh--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] For sure--

[ER:] Whether--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Your feeling is that the government has not informed the public sufficiently as to--

[ER:] Yes and I also feel that fundamentally labor is very close to the people and without question labor is patriotic and has always been. And that I would like to know more before I really felt that labor in its present action was doing something which was fundamentally unpatriotic.

[Elliott]: Right. I think that answers the question and I think we will now--[ER Coughs] uh go on to another part of the program and we will hear from our announcer now.

[Break 11:39-11:43]

[ER:] In these days of general world unrest in our struggle for a peaceful world we are apt, not without reason, to forget an important side of life: the cultural side. So today I am happy to have as my guest an authority on this subject. I am pleased to introduce to you Mr. Louis Untermeyer.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Uh, thank you Mrs. Roosevelt and Mr. Louis Untermeyer is very pleased and very honored to be so introduced.

[ER:] First I'd like to ask you a question. Most persons, except students of the subject, feel that the old world offers the best in culture, music, art and literature, poetry and so on. Do you think that America has progressed and has a definite place of our own now?

[Louis Untermeyer:] I do indeed, Mrs. Roosevelt. In fact, I would take issue with the verb in that first sentence that the old world offers the best in culture. I think the old world offered uh the best in culture. I think the torch of empire, or should I say the torch of culture has progressed to this side of the Atlantic and that Europe is no longer the model or the incubating place for our various American cultures.

[ER:] Well I think that's a very encouraging thing to hear said. It wouldn't have been said a few years ago I don't think.

[Louis Untermeyer:] That's quite right. This is a rather recent declaration of cultural independence.

[ER:] That's very interesting. That means, I imagine, that our audience for all the arts has greatly improved and so I come to a second question. Do you think that the cultural side of education is being given the attention it should in our schools today because what you've just said leads one to feel that it is being given a good deal of attention. (13:43)

[Louis Untermeyer:] I hate to keep on being affirmative and I wish I could be the devil's advocate and make it a more interesting discussion, but I'm afraid that that is true. I think again, a generation ago it would not be true. American literature was an appendage, a kind of vermiform appendix which you could easily cut out which was at the end of an English course. But today we do lay stress on what America has produced and, more importantly, is producing.

[ER:] Well that's interesting. And is that the same in music and in the drama and in the uh-- in art and so forth?

[Louis Untermeyer:] I think it is-it is precisely the same. I think that today we are very proud of our heritage, short-lived though it may be in-in comparison to the world's history, and I think we have progressed at an enormously rapid rate and I think today we are recognizing these various contributions to world culture which began by being regional and then become national and I hope will very shortly become international.

[ER:] Well now uh I'm interested in this because I'm old enough to remember the day when really America uh had no stars in almost any field, music or the arts of any kind, and that had not first been discovered in Europe.

[Louis Untermeyer:] That is quite right, Mrs. Roosevelt. We had to go abroad for our clothing. Uh "Made in Europe" was stamped on every salvage, sel-selvage, is it selvage or salvage? I guess it's selvage.

[ER:] Salvage.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Uh, uh we salvaged our clothes in Europe as it were. And I remember that "made in Germany," "made in Paris," that was the sign o- of the best in clothing or toys or whatever you will and it is only recently that it has come the other way. Today musicians are listening to American music. Quite, quite the contrary you will find in the music of even people like uh Stravinsky and Shostakovich, if I may mention a Russian. [ER laughs]

[ER:] You may.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Uh and uh the famous French six are listening to American music in all of its different phases from pure folk music to jazz.

[ER:] I think that's very interesting.

[Louis Untermeyer:] And very true.

[ER:] Well now who among American authors, composers, and poets do you consider are the ones that will live in the cultural world? Become one of the classics?

[Louis Untermeyer:] Can we keep that to living authors? Because if we go back into--

[ER:] Oh yes.

[Louis Untermeyer:] our recent past we'll have such a struggle between Emerson and Longfellow--

[ER:] Yes.

[Louis Untermeyer:] and uh Emily Dickinson. Let's keep it to the living poets.

[ER:] Yes let's keep it to them.

[Louis Untermeyer:] I should say that I could pick out two in each field that definitely are classics today and will be classics for a long, long time to come. In the field of prose, in fiction, I certainly think Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, one of whom just received the uh Nobel Prize award, will live for a great many years in American fiction. I think that in music, two opposite uh people like--and I'm gonna mention two very curiously--mention--well I said living. Gershwin and Rogers. Gershwin is dead and therefore--but recently dead and his spirit so lives in American music that it's going to influence it I think forever. And the other of course is Dick Rogers, a living, young composer, still young, who brought the spirit of Oklahoma uh right into our own music and made it something for everybody to sing. You can't think of a beautiful morning without thinking of Dick Rogers' music.

[ER makes an affirmative sound]

[Louis Untermeyer:] And in poetry I think of course our two great poets are two living poets, Robert Frost and Carl Sandberg, both representing entirely different types of writing, types of thinking: the brawny Midwest and the great granite New England soil. Don't you agree with me, Mrs. Roosevelt?

[ER:] Yes I agree with you very--

[Louis Untermeyer:] One of us ought to stop dis--stop agreeing!

[ER:] Yes, isn't it awful that we say--? Well, suppose you tell me uh in each of these cases why you feel that they are going to live and become one of classics because as you look back, or as I look back because um I'm quite ancient now though they don't like me to say so. Oh I can remember that some of the things that we still call classics uh have become what I call uh books on the shelf. You want to have them there and you pick out bits here and there to read now and then. But they are not read by young people the way uh they were read when I was young. You take uh some of Dickens, some of Thackeray, some of Scott. Uh they are still classics but they are not read by the young in the way they were--

[Louis Untermeyer:] They're shelf classics--

[ER:] They're shelf classics.

[Louis Untermeyer:] rather than bedside classics.

[ER:] Well now what about these writers and composers and poets that you've mentioned? Uh is that what they will become do you think? Or will they remain uh a part of everyday life and-and used by the young?

[Louis Untermeyer:] Well the role of a prophet is always very simple because nobody will be around a hundred years to check up on me. [ER laughs] And I don't have my crystal ball with me but I would say there is a great difference between those classics that you mentioned and those of today. The classics that you mentioned-- Scott, Dickens, Thackeray--all wrote voluminous books, great long books. And we had time; we had a great deal of leisure. Uh we didn't have the pace uh which we live today. Our pace is a not only rapid but syncopated. It is broken up. We have many calls, many duties, and there are many competitions against reading. Not only the movies, the stage, uh radio, uh and television. Uh today we read in snatches, very few of us unless we are invalided uh have time to sit down and read a well-known three-decker. These books that I mentioned take into account the American tempo, our greatly increased speed. The Hemingways, the Faulkners, they write with a new awareness of the way we speak and the way we think. Now it is very possible that fifty or a hundred years from now our speech may be, may degenerate into be a monosyllable. In fact we may not speak. We may let our instruments, our machines do all the talking. [ER laughs] One television set may reply to another. [ER laughs] Uh the human element may be gone entirely. But I think as long as we have a human element, we will have spokesmen like Hemingway, Faulkner, Gershwin, Frost, Sandberg, and they speak for us because they speak our language. That's the other point. I think that Scott, Dickens, Thackeray--you mentioned Englishmen of another era. They--they don't speak our language. The young, the young read them, they find them stilted, they find them artificial--

[ER:] Yes, and the descriptions were long even when I was young.

[Louis Untermeyer:] [Louis Untermeyer laughs]: Yeah, I remember. I used to skip those too.

[ER:] [ER laughs] I think that that's uh-uh that's perhaps uh a true criticism. But we have some Americans that the young don't read anymore. For instance I find very few of my young people read Cooper.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Uh that's true. And I think again with some justice. I think Cooper theatricalized our Indians. I think that he overdramatized it so that even another great American such as Mark Twain came along and wrote a very devastating criticism of Cooper as being what we would call today "phony." Uh, very high class phony, but not truly representative. Yet another lengthy American by the name of Herman Melville has been discovered and rediscovered by the young, so that today *Moby Dick* stands as one of the great classics not only of our country but all countries. (21:40)

[ER:] Yes I think that's true. What would you say about uh Willa Cather for instance?

[Louis Untermeyer:] Well I think Willa Cather is one who will demand some leisure, some sensitivity. She is not rapid reading but very, very rewarding reading. For those who are sensitive and have a degree of intensity, and understand feminine psychology, I think she's an extraordinarily fine writer.

[ER:] Well there are some things that she has written that I think are the best descriptions of different parts of this country--

[Louis Untermeyer:] Indeed.

[ER:] that almost anyone has written.

[Louis Untermeyer:] She is--

[ER:] Now I agree with you. They are slow movement but they are uh in a way very different from the descriptions of uh Scott days for instance.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Right.

[ER:] They are much more uh really speaking of the country.

[Louis Untermeyer:] I agree 100 percent.

[ER:] You do? [ER Laughs] It's dreadful the way we agree. {Louis Untermeyer: [unclear] terrible.} Now in a very few minutes, um in fact right away, we have to uh let our announcer have a few words and then we'll come right back and continue this conversation.

[Break 22:51-22:56]

[ER:] Now we will go on uh with our talk with Mr. Louis Untermeyer. I'm sorry that we haven't been able to disagree as yet but nevertheless uh I hope that it's going to be very interesting. Now what I would like to have you do if you will is to go back and trace some of the background of the growth of the arts in this country.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Well, let-let's take music for instance. In the past every boy who showed any sign of musical ability to compose or play was immediately shipped to Europe. That is if his parents could afford it or could get some money together. Some friends, relatives, or subsidize the boy or girl. Send him to some Paris conservatory or some German salon where he would learn how to play and how to compose, and he came back and of course he composed in the style of Europe, in the dead style of Europe I might say. He didn't compose as much as he decomposed. Uh, bad joke. But nevertheless--

[ER:] Yes

[Louis Untermeyer:] I mean there was that repetition of what he had learned. So he brought back with him, not an original talent, but an adapted talent. Now all the time we had in America a great reservoir of native music, but it was scorned as being trivial, coarse, vulgar--you know vulgar in the sense of vulgus, the common people. We had a great reservoir of cowboy songs, folk songs, back wood songs. I remember if I am not misinformed that one of your late husband's great favorites was "Home on the Range."

[ER:] Yes.

[Louis Untermeyer:] That was scorned. I mean that's just a commonplace hillbilly tune--

[ER:] And he loved "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

[Louis Untermeyer:] Right. Now what have we in our time discovered? That this is the native reservoir. The repository of great music is always the folk music. Brahms, Beethoven, Haiden, all the rest of them went direct to the--what was the peasantry of Europe to discover these native rhythms and native tunes and then glorified them. Our composers are beginning to do that. Steven Foster is now recognized as a kind of an unschooled Schubert. We recognize it. We play him. Gershwin took the rhythms right out of the honkytonks and the levies and the riverfronts and made an American music. And as I said before, today the Europeans listen to that and say, "Now they've produced something native." And the same happened in poetry, in literature. We stopped aping, we stopped mimicking what we thought was good abroad and discovered our own soil and I think I once said somewhere, "You don't discover your own soul until you discover your own soil," and we have discovered our soil.

[ER:] Well I- I, I think you're, you're very right in that and I think it's a wonderful thing that has happened because uh you can't really by copying ever produce anything that is worthwhile. Copying is--

[Louis Untermeyer:] You make excellent imitations. Very slick, very smooth. But they're not the real thing. (25:56)

[ER:] No. Well now I know, Mr. Untermeyer, that you're with the Decca Records Firm here in New York and I'd just like to know what you, a poet, are doing there? [ER Laughs]

[Louis Untermeyer:] You mean apart from drawing my salary?

[ER:] [ER laughs]: Apart from drawing your salary.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Well, it is this part of the thing that we are talking about. I do not uh supervise Mr. Bing Crosby and I am not one of the Andrews sisters.

[ER laughs]

[Louis Untermeyer:] Uh I'm not there at those jazz sessions. But there is a side of Decca which is the cultural side. Which is the extension and the [unclear term] of the idea of putting America into records, into talking books just as a publisher will publish a volume. In other words we are exploring these folklores, these folk tunes, and in the drama. For instance we have just done, partly with my supervision, a complete recording of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. So those can be heard in the various speeds and we are doing that uh beginning with *Oklahoma*. We first put on *Porgy and Bess*, *Oklahoma*, uh things like that which we believe are the equivalent of European music, European opera. We think our operas will not be full of arias and great coloraturas but will be simple, direct expressions like *Porgy and Bess* and that is part of our program: to enlarge the frontiers of American culture.

[ER:] So that it reaches a great many more people than it otherwise--

[Louis Untermeyer:] That's right--

[ER:] than it might otherwise might ever--

[Louis Untermeyer:] That's right. People who can't come to New York or Chicago. People who never go to the theater. Maybe people who can't afford to go to the theater. Here are the living words with the original casts of these great plays and these great musical comedies, which I call American operas, right in your own home.

[ER:] Well now have you published books in the same way?

[Louis Untermeyer:] We have published albums I'd say. Uh uh we are also publishing booklets that go with us explaining the background. For instance we've done *The Medium* with a full libretto so that the person may read and listen at the same time.

[ER:] And are you doing um for instance um I don't suppose that you ever pick out uh for instance things that can be read dramatically and have-have been read out of books?

[Louis Untermeyer:] We go a little further than that, Mrs. Roosevelt. We have tried that. We have found that a reading of a book is apt to be dull, it's apt to be one voice, and it's apt to be [unclear] monotonous. We have pushed it a little further. We've dramatized it. Uh we've dramatized *Moby Dick*, for instance of which I spoke, and Mr. [Charles] Laughton takes the principle part. We've dramatized *Treasure Island* and we've had Charles Mitchell do that. Another--we've done *Alice and Wonderland* with Ginger Rogers, that sort of thing. To take a great book and make it live with the words of the author but in many different voices.

[ER:] Now that must mean a lot to young people who perhaps uh now in this age where they're so accustomed to listening and not to--

[Louis Untermeyer:] That's right, that's right.

[ER:] uh, not to taking much trouble about it. They must get an interest which perhaps leads to reading afterwards.

[Louis Untermeyer:] That's what we hope. We hope, as these are going to be used in schools, for, for boys and girls who have let's say a blockage or obstacle to the printed page.

[ER:] Yes.

[Louis Untermeyer:] We think that these will not defeat the book but they will supplement the book. Once having seen that it isn't so difficult to listen to and it's rather rewarding maybe they will go back and read the book with new interest, so we believe. That's part of the program at Decca.

[ER:] [unclear] I think that's very interesting. Well now there are a great many people who can't understand uh and therefore don't like poetry. Eh I uh I must say that I've always loved poetry and I've always loved hearing it read aloud when it was well read, it's horrible when it's badly read. But uh I think that two things you get some-sometimes in reading aloud a certain appreciation of-of what you're reading which you didn't get when you read it to yourself uh originally. But um is there any way that we can bring uh more enjoyment of poetry uh to people who don't seem to have it naturally?

[Louis Untermeyer:] Well I thought for a moment we could have our first quarrel, Mrs. Roosevelt. Uh I was going to say I didn't always love poetry. I-I hated it. I hated it because I think I was taught it badly and I think that often in the past, of course it's no longer true now, poetry was taught by meter, by scansion, by memory as a punishment-- "learn fifty lines of Shakespeare!" [ER: hmm.] Uh the result is that many of us turned against poetry because it was a lesson. It was something that you had to memorize.

Something that you had to do like a problem in physics or a Euclid. But when I found that we could be free of iambics and trochaic pen-pan--I can't even pronounce it now. I found that by reading it as a communication that a poet--let's not call him a poet because a poet always connotes a comic, weakly figure or something with long hair and abstract, difficult language. When we get away from the idea that poetry is something precious, something obscure and read it just as a communication--Robert Frost is a farmer. He's a teacher. He's the best friend I have I would say, which is true. And Robert Frost has many many interesting things to say. The fact that he chooses to tell them in what we call poetry, or verse, or has endings of rhyme is to me irrelevant. If you'll forget that and just think that here is a man who has had a lot of experiences and a great many of emotions and he wants to tell you something. He wants out of the rich reservoir of his experience he has something to say, and I think if you will put aside--I don't mean you of course--if we will put aside our prejudices against form and meter and scansion and read it just as we'd read a piece of prose the rhymes would come in beautifully, the rhythms would be unconscious, and we will get a great communication. Remember Walt Whitman said, "To have great art we must have great audiences too." And we have those great audiences today and I think we are beginning to read poetry again with the awareness that somebody is trying to tell us something.

[ER:] And now, now I think we are going to come to our first quarrel because I want to make a confession. There is much modern poetry that I cannot read at all because I can't understand what it means.

[Louis Untermeyer:] I'm afraid that quarrel is already over. Of course there's much modern poetry which I don't understand either. There are, there are many manifestations in all modern art which I neither understand nor love, but if I can be again the excuser for those it's this: that in every art like every science you're continually experimenting. How far, how much further can we push the limits of this art? How-how can we experiment? How much have we the right to experiment? And I'd say the artist has a right to experiment just as the scientist has a right to take many retorts and tubes and finally throw them away. I think a great deal of this modern art will be thrown away.

[ER:] You do?

[Louis Untermeyer:] Yes.

[ER:] Both in, both uh in the field of uh music and painting and uh--

[Louis Untermeyer:] Oh yes, yes, I do indeed.

[ER:] I had a long explanation of some of the modern uh third dimension uh art last summer by a gentleman who has great appreciation for it uh but after the explanation was over I still was unable to understand it.

[Louis Untermeyer:] "Does it please you?" is, is going to be the last analysis. What do I want around me? This may be a wonderful chair but I'm very uncomfortable sitting in it.

[ER:] Well now and then of course uh I can see that uh certain lines uh have uh have beauty or, or are striking in some way but uh I'm afraid perhaps I haven't yet developed to the point of having full appreciation. Now I'm sorry to say that we are nearing the end of our time and I've enjoyed very much our talk even though we couldn't fight! [ER laughs]

[Louis Untermeyer:] Not much, I'm afraid.

[ER:] But thank you so much for coming and I'm very grateful to you, Mr. Untermeyer.

[Louis Untermeyer:] Thank you for having me.

(Break 34:12-34:16)

[ER:] I'm going to read one of Mr. Untermeyer's poems called "Prayer."

"GOD, though this life is but a wraith,  
Although we know not what we use,  
Although we grope with little faith,  
Give me the heart to fight--and lose.

"Ever insurgent let me be,  
Make me more daring than devout;  
From sleek contentment keep me free,  
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

"Open my eyes to visions girt  
With beauty, and with wonder lit--  
But let me always see the dirt,  
And all that spawn and die in it.

"Open my ears to music; let  
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums--  
But never let me dare forget  
The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half done,  
Keep me with stern and stubborn pride;  
And when at last the fight is won,  
God, keep me still unsatisfied."

[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.

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