

**REMARKS TO FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL, HYDE PARK, NEW YORK**

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Description: Eleanor Roosevelt describes her 1957 trip to the Soviet Union and discusses the differences between the USSR and the United States. She also takes audience questions.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt

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[ER:] Ladies and gents, I asked what you'd really like to know about this Russian trip. I think perhaps I ought to tell you how I came to go and what the object of my going was. I was asked by the newspapers for whom I write a column, the *Syndicate*, and particularly by *The New York Post* if I would go to China, but our own state department does not like to have people go to China and so they said I couldn't have a visa for China. And then *The New York Post* said, well would you go to Russia? And I said yes, I would go. And so I applied and it took me some little time to get the visas for the three-three of us who were going: my secretary Ms. [Maureen] Corr, Dr. [David] Gurewitsch, who speaks Russian and whom I wanted there for-to have with me, and myself. And it took us, oh, very nearly two to three months to get those visas from the Russian government, but they came through without any objection and the papers had asked me if I would go and try to see what the Russia of today was like. And I had given that considerable thought because as you know the Soviet Union set very strict limitations to where people could go, even after they granted them a visa within the Soviet Union and our diplomats are particularly restricted, and because of this we have restricted their coming into this country in the first place and then where they can travel after they come into this country so that our country is if anything more difficult for them to move about in than it is even for us in the Soviet Union except where the diplomats and the foreign correspondents are concerned. (2:26)

Well I had carefully written to the Russian embassy and said that I was coming as a correspondent, that I would come Intourist, but that I would want to see the things which affected the life of the people today. And I thought a good deal about how I was going to do this. I decided that the way to do it was to get in touch with the top people, the ministers who headed up departments of government which affected the lives of the people. Well now what would affect the lives of the people? Agriculture, education, social welfare, health, and so as soon as I arrived, I went to our embassy and told them what I was going to do and that when I had seen all I felt I could see in and around Moscow within a driving distance, I was going as far away as I could go so as to see whether what they told me in Moscow was actually working in distant parts of this very big country because the Soviet Union is very very much larger than the United States. And so I had made up my mind where I was going to try to go and I was really very fortunate in the place I chose. (4:02)

I thought I would like to go to two places that I had heard about ever since I was a child and thought were glamorous; Tashkent and Samarkand. Samarkand you will remember was the capital of Tamerlane and he is buried there, his tomb is there and so those places all through history had just – I tucked them away in the back of my head as places I'd want to go to. They're right in central Asia and close to the border, the northern border of Pakistan. And I asked, before I left here, if I might be allowed to go there, but I didn't know how long it would take me, nor how really fortunate I was to have picked on Tashkent because the one jet line they have running, is the commercial line within their country, is from Moscow to Tashkent, it runs, there is a flight everyday, both over and back. I didn't know this and it was lucky I didn't because I would probably have thought that I couldn't do it, it took too much time. Because had I had to go by train it would have taken me eight days and eight nights, and if I'd taken an

ordinary plane, I would have been twelve hours flying. The jet plane it took me exactly four hours, four hours over and four hours when we came back. (5:50)

Now I better tell you that probably no private company could operate a line, like that one from Moscow to Tashkent, because the plane just eats gas and it would probably be highly un-economic to run it as it a regular line, but nevertheless they run it with great pride as a government line, of course, and they are perfectly delighted to tell you that they are the only country that has a commercial run, that runs regularly every day from one point to another and it's always full, there's always a full plane going both ways.

Well, when I did reach Moscow, as I tell you, the first thing that I did, we got there in the evening, so we had dinner, and then we drove around the city and I was impressed even driving in from the airport at the number of cranes, and I was told that every crane meant an apartment house going up. Well there are hundreds as you drive in from the airport and even in the dark you could see them sticking up. And after we'd had dinner, we drove round the city and I saw all this building going on and I had heard that housing was very bad and that they were having difficulties because not only was there great destruction during the war, but they'd had to bring in a great many people from the country for industrial purposes and therefore they had to have a lot more housing and they just didn't have it. So they were building very rapidly.

And the very next morning, the first thing I did was go over to the embassy and the ambassador greeted me by saying-I asked whether there was anything he wanted to tell me that I must either not say or that he would like to me to say if I met anyone. And what did he have to tell me? And he said well Mrs. Roosevelt there's really nothing except of course that I think I should tell you that your rooms are probably wired at the hotel and I said oh yes suppose they were. I made the discovery as I drove in from the airport last night that I had been allotted a very important interpreter and he said oh really who? And I said well I've got Anna Lavrova and she was the interpreter who translated for my husband at Yalta. And so they didn't pick out someone with that amount of background unless they really wanted very careful reports on me. And I said therefore I'm not in the least worried by the fact that my rooms are probably wired. I came to learn, to learn all I could and I don't intend to say things or to talk about things in an antagonistic way, I want to learn. And the ambassador said well very well then, but it's well to have it in the back of your mind. And I said thank you sir I will and then I went back to the hotel to meet the head of Intourist and I told him that I wanted to see these cabinet offices and he said oh that's something we never do, we show you the sights, we do everything, but we never make appointments, but of course we will try. And I said well sir, there's no use in my being here, there's no use in my being- using your services unless you can make these appointments because I have come to find out what Russia is like today. So he said he would try and I got, that very afternoon, my first appointment. (9:57)

And I had no trouble at all in seeing anything I wanted after I had met the minister, but unless you meet the top person, nobody will show you anything or talk to you about anything because they are all afraid. But once you meet the head and you ask them to notify the places you go to, you then can be told almost anything, and see almost anything. There's one or two things you have difficulty with. I never succeeded in doing one thing that I wanted to do very much. The whole of the Soviet Union is divided into medical districts and every medical district has its own visiting doctor and several nurses and the nurses go the rounds into homes visiting people who are sick or people who have just had babies and they give a good deal of advice about how living conditions can be improved and living conditions are probably the most difficult things in the Soviet Union. So I was very anxious to make the rounds with the nurse and Dr. Gurewitsch tried too. We tried twice and they never said no but something always happened so we didn't really have a chance to do it. I mean the nurse that day didn't turn up, which was most unfortunate, but that was the day when she just couldn't make her rounds, or that was the day when it wasn't quite suitable to send us and we just never did get to make those rounds. Fortunately I did have

one or two leads, two people, so I did see some homes, otherwise I would have had a pretty hard time, I think, to get an idea of what life in a home was. (12:18)

Now you have to realize that the whole set up of existence in Russia is different from ours. We have great production and largely through machines. They have a great productive effort going on, but while they are using machines where ever they can get them, they have to develop a labor supply and because they somehow-for reasons I can't tell you- but we still produce per man hour, two and half times as much as they do. Now whether it is they are using-they did use almost entirely German and British machinery in every factory at different times. Now they're making great many machines themselves. But whether it is that the machines are not quite as good as ours, or the people have never learned to be quite as skillful, or whether it is that their actual conditions of life make them have less initiative or less perhaps speed- I don't know, I can't tell you. I tried to find out and I never could.

But as yet they need a tremendous labor supply so their whole set up of life is to produce a labor supply, men and women must all work, every man and every woman. Now they want healthy children so the labor laws are quite interesting. A woman has, before the birth of her child, so many days for which she is paid by her industry or by wherever she's working, in a collective farm or in a state farm, whatever she's working at, she gets paid those days before the baby is born. And then she has eight days in the hospital, still being paid, if the birth is a normal birth she only spends eight days in the hospital, then she goes home, and free of charge the doctor visits her in that first month once, the nurse, the district nurse visits her three times, and after the first month she and her baby must appear at what we would call a well-baby clinic, they must appear every month. Now remember that everything in the Soviet Union is compulsory. It isn't your choice, you have to do it whether you like to do it or not, just as you have to go to work whether you like to go to work or not. Lately, as the need has lessened in [uncertain word; work], they are allowing a few women to stay at home as housewives. But they are women who have fairly large families. If you have a family – of course you get for every child an allowance – now if you have a family of five or six children that allowance becomes quite a little income and a few women, not many, but a few are permitted to stay at home with their families when they have five or six children. But the average woman goes back to work on the fifty-seventh day after her child is born. She gets paid up till that time and on the fifty-seventh day she goes back to work and takes the child to a nursery which is run according to state regulations, and very well run, and run by people who love children and who take wonderful care of them. (16:53)

These children never suffer from lack of affection because the Soviet people love children and they get very good care from trained people, the head of one of these nurseries is very well trained and it's under social welfare. But the pattern is the state pattern and in the Soviet Union they haven't followed the ideas of Freud, they have followed the ideas of a scientist called [Ivan] Pavlov. Very well known in this country, he believed in what might be called the theory of conditioned reflex. If you train people on that theory you would have very well disciplined-and people would grow accustomed to certain things and they would do them automatically as time went on. I doubt if he ever expected to have quite the effect that he is having on the Soviet Union but every child in a nursery is trained according to those theories and a baby six months old has already learned to cooperate in his exercises. (18:17)

I happen to be interested in what this theory would produce and so when I was in Leningrad, which in many ways is a more, a freer city than Moscow, it's a little more sophisticated, people are better dressed in the street. You have your greatest museum, the Hermitage there, with the most beautiful pictures, all of course bought before the revolution, very few have been bought since the revolution. But Leningrad is a more sophisticated city and in spite of the fact that there was great destruction during the war, you must remember that all the ideas of good things for the people that were begun at the time of the revolution forty years ago came to a complete stop in the war, the war just stopped everything, and the people in the Soviet Union suffered so much in the war. I don't think any of us have the faintest idea of

what war meant because war for us has never been actually on our own doorstep. Person after person in the Soviet Union remembers having seen his village burn before his eyes with everything that they cared for going up in smoke and then living in woods and fields on any berries they could find, any roots they could dig up, just barely keeping alive, cold and hungry and wet. War to these people is something that was very personal because they sent all their young men to the different fronts and many of their young women and they never had a word because there was no organization for postal service, they never knew till those boys and girls came back whether they were alive or dead. (20:47)

So these people know what war really can mean when it's right in your home. It's very much more personal to them than it is to us, and they take out those years of the war as the years when of course no progress was made, they're just black years in which life was barely an existence. And I think that's something we have to remember because even a dictator has to understand the feel of his people, has to know what are the things that really mean something to the people.

Well to go back to our talk about Leningrad, in Leningrad there is probably the best of the medical districts because they were very anxious to show it to me. It's exactly as far as set up goes the same pattern as every other one, whether it's in Tashkent or in Moscow or anywhere else, but they probably do a little better job. And when I asked about statistics they were the first people who said to me oh yes, last year we kept statistics. Well now you know statistics are very difficult to really know what they tell you, because you have to have a uniform base for them to mean anything. And I discovered very quickly that when they were telling me about the death rate of babies, they did not count any babies having been born that they knew at birth would not live for the-after the first two or three days. We count any baby that is born alive as having been born; therefore we count any baby that dies within the first two or three days as a loss, a death. But even taking into consideration this difference in base, it was rather remarkable to have them tell me that in the past year their records showed that they took care of 19,000 children in that district and they lost one baby under a year old. And under sixteen years, they lost four children. (23:45)

Now every child up to the age of sixteen or seventeen, when ten year school is over, must go to that same clinic once a month. Soon as he's old enough to go alone, it's his or her responsibility. Up to that time the mother must come with the child, but once they're able to go alone then it's their responsibility and they have to go and if you don't go, then you're sent for. Now this is what you must remember, that everything that happens to you is compulsory. Your job is compulsory, sure it means that you get paid so much at the end of every week and you have it, but you've got to have it whether you want to or not. Now you go to the clinic because you have to go, it's good for you to go. It results in the best preventive medicine I've ever seen. But it isn't because you know that this is something you want to do and is the wise thing to do, therefore you make the effort to build this up. You have to do it, it's good for you and the government decides it is.

And now besides having this clinic in Leningrad, they have a college of medicine. Now there are many colleges of medicine all over, but this particular one is for young students who think on graduation from ten year school, not only that they want to go into medicine, which will mean six years of training, but that they want to be, eventually, pediatricians. Now they will not be a pediatrician when they finish their six-year course because then they must give three years to the state and be sent wherever the state wants to send them. They will get general experience. Then if they want still to be a pediatrician they will come back and study on the specialty for three years at a medical college that is particularly experienced in that particular thing and by the time that they finish those three years, they're as good as anyone is in this country. They are very well trained. But in this college, which takes those that think they want to become pediatricians, they were trying an experiment. Can you have a child brought up in an institution up to three years old as well developed, as healthy, as normal in every way, as a child brought up in a family? (26:45)

And they took thirty-two children, they take them every year from the lying-in hospitals whose parents have decided either to abandon them or who have died, and at the end of three years they are adopted into – by some couple, but during those three years they are in this institution, and I was asked if I'd like to go through it. And then I was asked if I would like to see a six-months old baby and how he had been trained and the nurse brought in the baby and put him on a blanket on the table and then she took out two little rings and held them up. And the baby's little hands came up right away and he grabbed the rings and held them tight. She raised him up and let him down and after a certain number of times he just dropped the rings, he knew the exact number. And then he began to move his feet and I said what next? And she said oh he knows. The next is his leg exercises and she gave him his leg exercises and then he lay perfectly still. And I said what next and she said oh he knows. He must keep himself as rigid as possible cause now I do his exercises standing on his head. And she took him up by his heels and stood him on his head and she twisted him round, this way and that, and he had a wonderful time, he had a lovely time, but he knew exactly what he was doing. He cooperated perfectly and then when this was over, this exhibition, she said to me would you like to see our little one and a half to two year olds and I said very much and so four of them came in, it was the room in which they evidently did exercises and so along the wall there was these rows of bars, you know, and underneath a very narrow bench, just wide enough for a little child's knee. They came in, they pulled the bench out, they sat themselves down, took off their shoes, put their shoes along the wall, came back, lined up and the little ones crawled, knee after knee along that bench. The other end, they came back and they walked, little foot after little foot, and then they went back and they crawled underneath just, their little fat shoulders could just get underneath, but they got underneath all right and then suddenly I saw them climbing up the wall and I thought oh heavens one of them will fall off but not at all, nobody fell off. And they were down again and they lined up and they went over to the nurse who had a towel over her lap. One at a time, they climbed up on her lap, took hold of her hands and she let them all the way down one side and all the down the other, the requisite number of times for each one, and then they went back and got their shoes, and sat on the bench and put them on and put the bench back and then marched out again, just the way they'd come. But I thought, heavens, this is why they are so disciplined. This is why the children you see in the street are so disciplined. (30:17)

The streets of Moscow are the cleanest streets you've ever seen. In the first place, all the new cities they build have these enormous wide avenues and they're swept by women with brooms all day long and at night they are hosed by machines. But you'd occasionally expect to see a piece of paper floating around, never. Now paper is rationed and it's very precious but it's allotted by the government for books and newspapers and magazines so forth, but still now and then you'd think that someone with a package would tear a piece off, no, never. And one thing that you see everyday except one day in the week is a very long line that winds its way slowly up to Lenin's tomb. Now this is a country in which you are supposed only to worship your type of government, but human beings have to have something to worship and so Lenin who is the father of the Republic and Stalin lying beside him, are really the point of worship. They lie fully dressed in this tomb and every single day for twenty years that line, which is a mile and half long, slowly turns on itself three times in the garden below the Kremlin and then climbs the hill up to the Red Square. And at the top of the Red Square, as you come in, are the pigeons who expect to be fed and an old woman with a big basket, and she sells pigeon food in little envelopes, and the children break away from the line, they get fully tired, it's slow work, they break away and they usually buy these little envelopes. And I watched a little, oh I should think she was two, three years old, I have a picture of her. She bought her little envelope, she opened it, she spread her food around for the pigeons who all flew down around her, and then I thought, like all of our children, she'll throw it down. Not at all, she smoothed the envelope out and she took it back to the old woman with the basket and then she went back to the line where her parents were. And I thought, heavens the discipline. (33:07)

Heavens, now I begin to understand. You never see a person in the streets of Moscow throw a cigarette stub down, throw a match down, light a cigarette you put the match back in the box. I don't know what you do with the stub. But I never saw it on the sidewalk. And the streets are immaculate; the subway is immaculate, very beautiful, marble and crystal chandeliers and beautiful carvings. But immaculate and yet hundreds of thousands of people go through there everyday in just as much of a hurry as they are here at home. And that's another interesting thing. Every one of them, as soon as they're on the subway, takes a book out of their pocket, and I looked with interest to see what they were reading. Never a comic. Never a funny page out of a newspaper, never. Always something that was really a classic of some kind and I looked because just now we're being told that we're way behind in science in this country, and we are to a certain extent. But we mustn't think that because the Russians have done more in science and in mathematics than we have that they have neglected everything else. I went through some papers in literature, which were the graduation papers of a high school ten year graduate in 19—uh '55, and to do those papers would have required a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a knowledge of the first book of Goethe's *Faust*, and a very good knowledge of Dante's *Inferno*. Now how many of our high school children could pass a comprehensive examination which covered those three classics? I think that what we really have to face is the fact that most of these young people, up to forty years ago, only 10 percent of the people of the Soviet Union could read and write, and gradually more and more have been allowed to have an education. And so today, when almost everyone can have an education, they are avid to learn. And they work much harder, much harder! And they know that education, real education, means that you finish having a disciplined mind. That's the real purpose of education because you never can learn all there is to learn, but you are creating a tool in the years that you are being educated and if you take courses that are so easy that you get by, then you'll not have a disciplined mind, you won't have the kind of an instrument that can take a difficult thing and see it through. And that's not what the Soviet's have allowed. (36:50)

Now they use their education politically, we might as well face this fact. We've never thought of doing that, but they have to and therefore they do it. But education is actually doing – I have a fear, I have one fear about this, that there is perhaps too much discipline and too little real doing a great deal because you understand that this is a need and a necessity, and that's the trouble with compulsion and of course education there is under compulsion, just the way everything else is. But we are looking at the results and we can't turn our noses up at the results of compulsion because this is a system where up to this year a child of seven had finished nursery school and kindergarten, he went into school at the age of seven, he came through at the age of seventeen. Now all along the line he took examinations for ability and the minute he did not show the ability to do the work, he was out, he went into the labor force. But just as long as he had the ability and could prove it in his exams, then he could go right on. Now there's one other thing we have to remember that right along with that ability test, every Soviet child takes a Marxist test. So he knows his Marxism very well by the time he is ten year graduate. And he's a pretty disciplined person. Now I'm not saying this is entirely good. I'm still wondering whether under the Pavlov system you are going to hurt initiative. But this is what's happened so far and this is how the Soviet Union at present wants it to be because they are using their people, their students for political purposes. Suppose, for instance, you go on showing ability and you finish ten-year school. You've been in school ten months out of every year; you've taken your two months holiday in camp under the school, not under your family. You have from your first year done one hour of homework and in you last years you've done four hours of homework every day. You have done probably four years of physics and four years of chemistry by the time you finish ten-year school. You have done a lot of exercise and outdoor sports because they love it and they think it valuable. (40:36)

To downgrade thee under supervision and one of the things that you have great difficulty in finding out about the Soviet Union is any trouble with mental health or juvenile delinquency. They look at you and say mental health oh - they're really backward in psychiatry- but mental health oh, a little good hard work on a collective farm and most people will be all right even if they are schizophrenic. We have

to wait and see, but you talk about juvenile delinquency and I am sure they must have some disturbed children who need mental adjustment, mental care. But they will not acknowledge it and they tell you oh, no, no we have no trouble and finally I began to wonder part of the reason was that you had so little time, you were so constantly under supervision that perhaps you really didn't have much time for juvenile delinquency. It might just well be that there were so many organizations, there's Pioneer Youth, in every factory all kinds of clubs which take in young and old and possibly there was no time, I wasn't sure and I'm not sure now. And whatever it is I can only tell you that they – I said to one psychiatrist well now look, what would you do if a boy attacked an older person with a knife? And they looked at me in horror and said but no boy would do that. And I said well it has happened. Oh why that would never happen, it could not happen! Well it's hard to believe of course except under the theory that actually you have no time when you're not under supervision and that you are kept so very busy because you know if you fail you go right into the labor supply. (42:59)

But if you are college material at the end of ten year school you don't have the luxury of four years, if you want to chose it, of liberal arts college, oh no, you have to choose what you're going to be, right then and there at the age of seventeen. And sometimes it's not such a happy choice, I had a boy tell me I'm an engineer but I hate it and that must lead to frustrations but whatever you choose you have five years of training and your living expenses are paid by the government as well as your tuition. And if, because they want engineers and scientists, if you choose engineering or science you get a little better living expenses – living allowance than you would otherwise, so your compulsion is sugarcoated. You'll probably be made to do it anyway if they thought you were good enough, but they graduate in this way a tremendous number of young people as scientists and engineers. And now one reason why they are so successful with their scientific work is that the government believes in research, just for itself, pure research and it will finance any number of research institutes. They have in the Soviet Union in forestry alone, twelve research institutes, great big ones, just in forestry. So the government believes in this, in every field. So you have quite an open choice for a youngster coming out of his course in science. It gives the scientist a chance to have a great big pool of brilliant, young minds, fresh young minds. They can choose the most brilliant and use them from then on. That's a great thing for a scientific group of people engaged in research. Secondly, if you are a scientist you can think freely because anything you discover is good for the Soviet idea, for the communist idea. If you're a writer, or a painter, or an architect, Mr. (Nikita) Khrushchev can say to you one day, what you wrote yesterday, that is not good for the communist idea, you apologize tomorrow morning, and you apologize alright because you don't know what would happen to you if you didn't. But, a scientist, whatever he discovers is of value to the communist idea. So here is the one field in which you may think freely. (46:03)

You can't get a scientist to answer a political question. I tried over and over again. But immediately your answer is oh I'm no politician, I know nothing about politics. But as long as he sticks to his science, it's the one field in which he can think absolutely freely. And that's why they've gone ahead so fast. There are three reasons and those are the reasons. And the other way, of course, that the government uses, politically, education is that they don't need in their industries as yet or for their scientific research all of the young people who graduate in science. So the government will say we need so many people who are going to serve patriotically for the next two or three years in some country. They will go as engineers and scientists. We've chosen you Mr. Jones, to go to Burma. You will go to the language institute – every big city in the Soviet Union has a language institute. You will go to the language institute and learn every dialect, every Burmese dialect. You Mr. Smith, you're going to Brazil, you learn Portuguese. And you'll perhaps go into the Spanish speaking countries so you learn Spanish too. (47:45)

[track change]

[ER:] And this is valuable because young people are encouraged – they go to the language institute as an extra but they can make money that way because the government is always needing interpreters and Intourist uses interpreters. And the government is bringing in all the time people and delegations from uncommitted countries that it wishes to convert to the communist idea. They do many things with this in mind. Not only the sending out of their young people who will take their skill and at the same time the friendly gesture of knowing the language of the country you're going to be in which flatters people very much and the ability to transmit the ideas, which they've learned all along the line. Those Marxist examinations, they culminate in knowledge of Marxism and a very good indoctrination. So you see politically this is an important thing that the government does with education. Now you have, in addition, the value of bringing in as government guests large delegations from uncommitted countries in Asia and African and South America and young people who learn the language. They keep in every place of entertainment the first three rows of seats for sale to foreigners. Now we have grown to think of those countries as iron curtain countries because they first would not allow people to come in from foreign countries. But that has been very much changed. Khrushchev told me that this past year not a single visa had been denied to a single American and in every hotel I went into Americans's would dash up to me and say oh Mrs. Roosevelt we're so glad to see you. We come from Grand Rapids or we come from San Diego. I began to feel that everybody in the United States was travelling in the Soviet Union last summer. And it was very interesting and so I believe Mr. Khrushchev when he said that in the past year they had not denied a visa. (2:38)

But travelling as a tourist is not the same as when you want to try to really find out something about the life of the country. And that's harder to do and harder to get your opportunities. But if you dig hard enough, you can do it. And this particular thing I watched with a great deal of interest because I would see – I would buy my tickets and then I would find sitting on my right a delegation one night of twenty from the Sudan. And I couldn't help wondering, I don't know perhaps you do, but I don't know what language you talk in the Sudan or the natives talk. And I would find it very difficult to know where I would go, in New York let us say, to find people to act as interpreters for a delegation. But there were three or four young Russians who were talking just as glibly as if, whatever the language was, was their own. And I thought, oh heavens, this is something that we can't duplicate and I watched, behind me sat a group of Syrians. One of them I served with in the UN so I talked to him and the other side was a Bulgarian group. And every night you go to something if you're in a foreign country, I went to see many ballets and theaters and circuses and the puppets, everything that was open, though I was there at the time when some things were closed, the biggest theater there was closed. But they have extraordinary performances, the ballet was the most beautiful thing I ever saw and the prices are kept fairly reasonable so that all the people can go. And for foreigners, these first three rows are always available. (4:41)

Now this is a systematic diplomatic way of selling their way of life. Because they say to these people, we know your people are hungry, we know you lack industrialization. That was what was the matter with us forty years ago. Look what we have done in forty years. Our people have free medical care, they have free education, they have a job, they're assured of a pension when they're old, they're assured if they're ill of care and of a pension if they can't go back to work. We are developing our industry and eventually we will be able to give our people many more things, because now we have to develop the heavy industries, they have to sacrifice. And of course they constantly remind their people that they have to sacrifice and these industries have to be built up because we (US) want to destroy them. We are opposed to a communist world, well that's quite true.

They are quite sure that peacefully, without a war, they can achieve a communist world. And unless we are willing to face the fact that they have lived in a war economy, we got rid of our war economy just as quickly as we could, but they've lived in a war economy. Their government has given them just enough. And the contrast of what they had before is so great for many of them were peasants, who lived in huts with mud floors, with their animals right in the same room with them, and that as bad as

housing is, is probably better than it was then. And the government has always given them the feeling that next year, they'll have a little more, next year they'll be able to buy things that they can look at now, but probably can't buy because prices for anything except the basic necessities of life are sky high and an automobile, oh you'll put your name down and you'll wait eight years to get an automobile. You put your name down for an apartment of your own, not a multiple apartment in which you just have one room and share the cooking facilities and the toilet with five other families, but an apartment of your own, oh you'll wait eight, nine years for that. Now they keep telling you it's coming, it's coming, next year, the year after, and just enough does happen so that you keep the hopes of the people and they are – they have it so engrained in them that this is going to happen that whenever you criticize anything, their reaction immediately is ah yes, that may be so now, but in a few years we will have just as much as anybody else. And they are very proud of the fact that their country has become one of the greatest countries in the world and there is no use in our fooling ourselves that a revolution is going to happen next year in the Soviet Union. It just isn't going to happen. These people never knew freedom so that this amount of economic security might very easily mean to them the beginnings of freedom. You never had freedom before. (8:42)

Now it's a different story for the satellites, they knew freedom, and they have been milked for the benefit of the Soviet people, themselves. So there I think the troubles of the Soviets are very real troubles, but within the Soviet Union – people grumble of course. No one likes to go without what they hear people have somewhere else, but if you're told everyday and all day long and the only knowledge you have of the outside world comes to you through communist papers, all of whom carry the same news and very little about the world—I never felt so cut off from the world in my life. You can buy two French communist papers, an East German communist paper, and the *Daily Worker* from London. Outside of that nothing but Soviet communist papers, all of which, all of which carry the same line, and everywhere there is never a mention of the United States which doesn't carry an adjective the war mongers, the people who want to destroy you, the people who are going to make war on us, so that actually every sacrifice is made so that we will not wipe them out. Now the extraordinary thing to me was, now whether they overplayed their hand I don't know, but I found no personal antagonism.

I was surprised that I never encountered a Russian who said anything really disagreeable about the United States. Often I was asked by Russians, particularly Russian women, if I wouldn't work to prevent war. And I said surely I do work to prevent war, I do everything I can. I said perhaps my way of working will not be your way of working because you work for a communist world and I will not because I prize freedom and the chance to learn and to want things myself and to work for them myself and I think it's a much firmer foundation than your foundation which is all compulsion. But I will grant you that you have achieved certain objectives and they have and the sooner we know about it—the reason we haven't known is because we went through a period in this country of fear. We were afraid to use the word communism or to talk or learn anything about the communists because we were afraid that somebody would say if you were interested, ah he must be a communist or she must be. That was the result of the McCarthy period and we're reaping the sad results right now, because if you are afraid of something and know nothing about it, it's always bad. Actually I asked many people what communism meant during that period and they couldn't tell me what communism really was. And so whatever we did not like we began to call communism and that also is a very bad thing in a free country because it means that people use their freedom of thought. (12:22)

In a free country you must have the right to differ and to think along different lines. If you don't you lose one of the great assets which has built our country and I'm glad the period of McCarthy has come to an end and it amuses me very much to find that one of the things I was worried about when I was in the Soviet Union and at the same time we had there a gentleman from our department of forestry, who was a scientist and really knew his business. He'd come in on a delegation of three Americans serving on a UN mission. The first one the Soviet's had ever allowed to come in and they'd come in to study

logging and to make any suggestions possible. Now logging is just one special part of forestry but this one man that we had sent, the other two were just lumber merchants; the one man we had sent really knew his business and when he gave me his report, and we came home on the airplane together, and he said to me you know the thing that worries me is that nobody is going to believe me, they are never going to believe that the Russians are this good. And he said here is my photograph of the research center that we visited. We haven't got anything like it in the United States. He said here are my photographs of a variety of different machines. We don't have anything that touches these but he said but they won't believe me at home. And I said well that's one thing I've wondered whether if I began to tell the things that have happened, whether they would believe me. And then Sputnik came, and since Sputnik came everybody's been asking me questions and nobody says you must be wrong, they can't be that good. But I want to emphasize the fact that this is done under compulsion and perhaps compulsion is never so well grounded because people may not understand it so well and not having worked to achieve it themselves if they ever do get a certain amount of freedom, they may not do the things that they have learned about. (15:04)

So I want you to think about this, but never belittle the achievements of your adversary. This is our greatest adversary and we have to prove that we can do better in a free world, in a free economy, and give people better lives. And that we can do more for other areas of the world than they can do under compulsion and that is the challenge that Sputnik really brought us and that's what comes into each one of our lives everyday. Are we actually doing what we should do for the uncommitted areas of the world? You know you can lose your freedom just as quickly without a war if gradually you lose to communism country after country and your free area becomes smaller and smaller. You lose your freedom just as quickly that way. It may take a little longer but you lose it in the end just as well. So this is the challenge that all of us face and I think it's something that we cannot afford not to understand because it has to be answered by each one of us individually. What are we willing to do to hold freedom in the United States?

[Applause: 16:44-16:45]

[Moderator:] How many foreign languages are taught in the Russian schools and at what age and at what grade are these languages started to be taught?

[ER:] You actually go to the institute. There is in every city a language institute and you go to that institute for foreign languages. About 40 percent of the children take English and almost every graduate has learned at least two languages besides his own. And at least two, very often you find they've learned more. But they do that outside of their regular schoolwork.

[Unknown Audience Member:] I was wondering, Mrs. Roosevelt spoke of the fact that if children don't measure up and can't pass these examinations, they are put into the labor force. At what age would they be taken from the school if they were not able to do the academic work? I mean what would be the earliest age?

[Moderator:] You spoke, Mrs. Roosevelt, of students not being able to make the grade being pushed into the labor force. At what age would they be put into the labor force?

[ER:] I think they would go into the labor force by the time they were – had had three or four years of school. I think if they cannot keep up after that, they go right directly. And then you must remember that women are as necessary as men, for instance—and women in the Soviet Union do the same kind of work, you find. I looked out of my window on the train coming into Leningrad and they were re-laying the heavy tiles under the tracks and I saw a section gang, three quarters of the workers were women. (19:03)

[Moderator:] What kind of work do these young children do?

[ER:] There's all kind of work. For instance, going into seven, suppose they came out, they probably will not be taken out of school until they were twelve or thirteen, do you see, somewhere around there. Well, if they are twelve or thirteen, they will begin and work in the hotels in all kinds of different – they work on the farms, they use workers, twelve or thirteen years old, a boy or a girl, there are any number of small jobs, do you see, that a twelve or thirteen year old will start in.

[Moderator:] I think you had a question. I have a lengthy question Mrs. Roosevelt, I'll try to paraphrase it this way. You mention nothing about small towns, as we know small towns in the United States. What influence have these small towns had on teenagers? Where are they sent to school? Are they sent right in the small town in which they are born or raised? And when do they go to the institute?

[ER:] Well you see the Soviet Union is divided into republics. I went from Moscow, which is the capital of the Soviet Union down to one of the small republics in central Asia. The same pattern is followed everywhere. Now the capital of the republic of Uzbekistan which is one of the small republics, is Tashkent. Now Tashkent is the biggest town for that area. Samarkand, which I allude to, is a smallish town with a great deal of tradition of the past, not too many industries, perhaps only one or two, with one big and very fine tuberculosis hospital, bone tuberculosis hospital. (22:27)

But the patterns right through are the same. There were two women who came to meet me at the airport, one of whom was on the local council who asked me innumerable questions about labor laws for women in the United States, social service in the United States. I was very much interested because the Soviets are very proud of having allowed the culture of the different republics to be retained. That goes for every group except the Jews. The Jews because they were not a republic, but were scattered through many cities, are gradually – I don't know how they preserved any of their culture, but they are trying very hard to integrate them. Now it's been hard and I don't know how the Jews will succeed in retaining any culture, but in Uzbekistan they have a people who love music, and so you find in that little republic, nineteen colleges of music. And they have some old string instruments which they have taken infinite trouble with to adapt them to the orchestras of today, do you see, so they can play with the orchestras. They've preserved all the old songs which came down by word of mouth through the generations and they really care in Uzbekistan about – they're beautiful musicians, I heard two orchestras that were quite the finest I heard anywhere and it's from there a great many of the musicians go to the different cities and they have a great many groups of musicians that go from Uzbekistan. So you find, how you find the pattern is the same. It adapts itself, or is made to adapt itself to the culture of the people where it is.

Now you have the same ministries, the same but within the education there is flexibility. Now even in a little republic like Uzbekistan they are starting their own college of medicine, their own colleges of different kinds. In any town that is big enough you will find a college, they may have to, because the child as I told you has to chose his profession, they may have to go to the biggest town nearby to get into the higher education that he wants, but up to that time you will find pretty well through ten year school that the pattern is the same. Now related Soviet education wrinkle I think has very serious questions, as far as I am concerned, they are trying more and more to establish for this ten year school period, boarding schools and every child will be in boarding school during the week so that the parents will only have them at the weekend, and I went to those boarding schools and the regimentation from my point of view was frightening do you see because everybody did on the stroke of a bell what they were supposed to do. And I thought that would be pretty tough as time went on, but I don't know and we have to watch this. This is all new and it's all with merchant material you see because these, so that your small town is a pattern of the big one and even your rural areas feed into the nearest place that can have this. You have your school in your collective farm for instance which has great many people on it as a rule, but you progress from there to the nearest place that has the higher education. (25:54)

[Moderator:] There are no liberal arts colleges, how does a teacher prepare to teach? Do they go to a specialized school? Or is it--?

[ER:] There are special colleges for teachers. They go to learn the things they mean to teach, do you see. You may, for instance, you may be an engineer and you may decide to become a teacher and that means longer training, but you would be a teacher in that profession and you may decide at any point to train as a teacher and there are special schools for that training. There's no reason why you may choose to study architecture or literature or history or history of course as they teach it, is history that you or I would hardly recognize, but nevertheless you may specialize. For instance, the husband of my interpreter, Anna Lavrova, is a professor who teaches at Moscow University in French history and literature.

[Moderator:] This government gives a great many services to the people, now how does the government get the money to pay for these services?

[ER:] Out of the people. The people work very hard and produce a great deal and it's out of the people, every bit of it is taken, and they are very angry with me in the Soviet Union at present because they picked on two things that I said as being really very inimical. One of them was that I saw no well-dressed woman in Moscow; I never did. No woman in Moscow and no man is well dressed. The other is, that I said that I've never seen, and children this does not apply to because the children are as healthy and as light-hearted and as loved as any children you can imagine, and are fully of life and fun. But I saw no adult person who laughed, laughed spontaneously. The faces looked to be strained and they're all conscious of the fact that they are watched every minute. And that, they are furious with me for having said. They say that this is a libel; they do laugh and laugh easily.

Now it's true that the Soviet's have a sense, I mean the Soviet people have a sense of fun and a sense of humor, but it seemed to me that as I watched people in the streets of the city, particularly, the expressions on their faces were very strained expressions and I felt that what I had seen explained that. For instance, a young boy, he was an engineer, but he had served as an Intourist interpreter for a while and he had been with my granddaughter Kate for a while when she was there. So one day he wanted to come and see me and leave something for Kate, but he didn't make the appointment by telephoning himself, or calling up the hotel and asking if he could see me, no. He called a foreign correspondent that he knew and asked him if he would ascertain whether I would be home and got from him the number of my room so he would not have to ask at the hotel desk. And he came and he presented me with some Russian records because he said Kate had promised to learn Russian and a box of candy, in a painted box, that he said Kate had liked. And when he got up to go he said, Mrs. Roosevelt, he's now married and his wife teaches somewhere, no his wife works in a library, and he said Mrs. Roosevelt, its alright, I know that you will be taking trips out of Moscow and you will be leaving some of your luggage here. And its alright to leave the records and the box of candy but here is a letter that I want you to give Kate and I want you to put it in your handbag and never to let your handbag out of your sight because he knew that whatever luggage I left would be gone through and he didn't mind, because there was nothing incriminating in having candy and records, but the letter he never wanted anybody else, you see, to read because you see the mere fact that he wrote a letter to somebody outside the Soviet Union might give him a great deal of trouble. So I was to see that that letter never got into the hands of anybody else. I was to always see my handbag as where I had it in hand and in sight. The atmosphere of anxiety you see.

(31:23)

[Moderator:] Back in 1936 a book was written indicating that the Russian educational system was far in advance in the theatrical arts and creative expression in general. Is that still that case?

[ER:] I can only speak for the things that I saw. There is no question in my mind that the opera I saw, the ballet I saw, the people were better trained and the scenery and the whole performance was a far better production than we would put on in the same fields here. Um--(32:09)

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