

## THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In this segment, ER interviews playwright Robert Sherwood.

Participants: ER, Robert Sherwood.

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[ER:] Thank you, Anna. It is a great pleasure this morning for me to introduce an old friend of ours, a valued and trusted worker with my husband. He is Mr. Robert Sherwood and I know the name is familiar to most of you since Mr. Sherwood is the author of the delightful plays *Reunion in Vienna* and *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, besides many others. Mr. Sherwood is not only a very successful playwright, but he has also written a best-selling book, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, which the critics agree is important and significant history, written as fascinatingly as a novel or a detective story. Isn't it quite unusual, Mr. Sherwood, for a dramatist, a man of the theater, to enter so fully into the wider stage of history and world affairs? How did your interest start? (1:04)

[Robert Sherwood:] Well, thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. I can answer that directly by saying it started under the influence of your husband's administration. Long before I had ever met your husband I had had the privilege of voting for him and had enthusiastically followed the New Deal and gradually I found that my own-my own outlook was broadening and it was being reflected more and more in what I wrote. I think that of all the achievements of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the greatest was the influence that he exerted on our people: educating them, stimulating them to become a living part of our own government and then a living part of the whole human race.

[ER:] Thank you, Mr. Sherwood, I agree with you on that. I've always thought that that was a great contribution. Your long and hard work on the book, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, I know is the reason we've had no more plays from the Sherwood pen of late. When may we expect another, Mr. Sherwood?

[Robert Sherwood:] Well, I'm working on one now, Mrs. Roosevelt. It's not exactly a play, it's a musical comedy. This is my first attempt at a musical comedy. I'm doing it with Irving Berlin and you may remember, in May--yes, in May 1941, when President Roosevelt gave his famous "Unlimited Emergency" speech, I got permission to bring Irving Berlin to the White House that evening to listen to the speech and afterwards we all sat around in the Monroe Room and Irving played some of his songs for you and the President and your guests, and even then we were talking about the beautiful days that were to come when the war would be ended, if it would ever be ended, and we thought what fun it would be to do a show together, and now we're doing it and so far it is great fun.

[ER:] Well, I think we'll all look forward to that production with great joy. Now, Mr. Sherwood, being a director of the Roosevelt Memorial Foundation [ER clears throat], you would be a very good person to explain the foundation to our listeners, would you be willing to do so?

[Robert Sherwood:] Well it-it's a vast project which would take a great deal of time to um explain, but the basis of it is your husband's great interest in education and particularly in the development of the younger generation as citizens of this country and citizens of the world. What we plan is a very extensive series of international fellowships and scholarships, particularly for the study of the science and the art of human relations and all in the name of Franklin D. Roosevelt. We hope to have a chair at Leland Stamford University, at Harvard, at Oxford, the Sorbonne, a Franklin D. Roosevelt Chair of Human Relations and a constant interchange of students throughout all of the United Nations. (5:09)

[ER:] I'm glad of that, I hope also that you're planning to help, uh, make the papers available as soon as possible to students. That seems to me will require some extra staff at the library and also, I am hoping that the foundation will add a wing where the things given to the library and to my husband from foreign countries may be permanently on exhibition. That seems to me also an educational project for the vast number of people who come there to actually see how closely we're tied together. I hope that's also in the thought of the foundation.

[Robert Sherwood:] It most certainly is, and we're already very much at work and have been, for a long time, adding to the papers by interviews and correspondence with all manner of people, famous and obscure who were associated with your husband and we're getting down their living recollections, which they might never write down themselves.

[ER:] That I'm very happy about and also about the papers from contemporaries that are being put into the library which will add to the value for those who study there. Thank you, Mr. Sherwood, for being our guest today, and now, back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood. (6:37)

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