

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

January 9, 1951

Description: In the first segment, ER discusses the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund with Lois F. Slade, Josephine Colletti, and Augusta Mendoza. In the second segment, ER interviews Ruth Gruber, author of *Israel Without Tears*.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Ruth Gruber, Mrs. Lois F. Slade, Miss [Josephine] Colletti, Augusta Mendoza

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[ER:] Good afternoon, this is Eleanor Roosevelt. I am happy to welcome you for another visit here in my living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel. As usual, I have a guest that you will be anxious to meet and as usual Elliott will assist me on the program. And now, here is Elliott.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I agree with you, Mother. I know how anxious you've been to talk with Ruth Gruber ever since reading her new book <u>Israel Without Tears.</u> I found myself completely engrossed with it and welcome this opportunity to meet Miss Gruber and thank her for the brilliant job of reporting she's done. But first, may I say a few words for the people who make this recorded program possible?

[Break 0:48-0:58]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] When you next shop for dresses, remember that McKettrick has everything that you could want and at a low price. Pure Irish linens ' McKettrick's in dark and light colors at only seventeen dollars and ninety-five cents, for example. And pure silk shantungs and sparkling silk prints for only nineteen dollars and ninety-five cents. And there are styles to wear for every occasion, from morning to midnight. Slim sheath dresses, party dresses all made with ' McKettrick's very careful workmanship, and all styled with ' McKettrick's special fine fit. ' McKettrick's come in all sizes too. So see the McKettrick's at Bloomingdales, McCrary, Abraham & Strauss in Brooklyn and in fine stores throughout the country. (1:53)

Now if you had your pick of fresh flowers or imitations you'd choose the real flowers, of course. Well, the same comparison can be made with facial tissues. For instance, only Sitruie tissues are made with the original celu-weave process, as a result every tissue is softer, stronger and yet economical. So, instead of imitations, get Sitruie tissues at your favorite store.

Do you like to try new and different things to eat at your house? Then treat your family to a meal of Golden Mix griddle cakes or waffles. You've never tasted anything more delicious or appetizing. Made from a new scientific blend of finest grade wheat and soy flours, Golden Mix turns out griddle cakes and waffles so light, so tender, so creamy rich there's just no comparison. Yet economical Golden Mix at your grocers is easy to get. Get it today and enjoy all the wonderful things Golden Mix makes--griddle cakes, waffles, doughnuts, cookies, nut bread, muffins and other delicious eating surprises.

[Break 3:13-3:28]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Are you willing to give an hour of your time to the saving of a life? Of course you are! And this is what the Red Cross is urging you to do today. During that hour a pint of your healthy blood will be taken from you painlessly, to give double the previous monthly Red Cross collection of six thousand pints. This double quota of twelve thousand is absolutely necessary to satisfy the military

requirements of the Defense Department and the home front during the month of January. Virtually every healthy person can donate a pint of blood at regular intervals with perfect safety; most people have more blood than they really need. A pint can be taken from this surplus without harm. Give yours through the Red Cross immediately, delay may be fatal to someone in need. Call Murray Hill 9-1000, your New York Red Cross Center, to arrange for an appointment at your own convenience.

The business of the United Nations is your business. You are a stockholder. Do you know the latest about the UN and what it is doing? If you want to know, visit the Information Center for the United Nations at 220 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street. Experienced experts can answer your questions.

You've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt program which comes to you each day Monday through Friday at 12:30 and at 660 on your dial and this program originates from Mrs. Roosevelt's living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. This is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all a very good afternoon.

[Break 5:18-5:33]

[ER:] Before I introduce Miss Gruber, I would like to present to you a lady closely connected with the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund. In December 1947 the League of Women Voters honored their great leader by forming this fund, the purpose of which is to promote international cooperation for peace through educating women throughout the world for responsible citizenship. The aim of the fund is to spread knowledge of how democracy works in a free country and how the individual citizen assumes responsibility for government. With me today to tell us more of this worthy enterprise is Mrs. Lois F. Slade who can testify from years of personal experience to the fine work this fund has accomplished. And I can also testify that she has helped a great many people to recognize their responsibilities. I've always had a great admiration for Mrs. Slade.

[Lois F. Slade:] Mrs. Roosevelt, I can't begin to tell you what a joy it is to see you again and to find you once more, in perhaps another direction, helping the women of the world.

[ER:] Thank you, Mrs. Slade. Now, I'd like to ask you how is the Carrie Chapman Catt Fund achieving a worldwide success in the dissemination of information to women?

[Lois F. Slade:] Mrs. Roosevelt, when Mrs. Catt died her friends and fellow workers formed a memorial fund to reach out beyond the United States and to send pamphlets translated into many languages for their information and also to send representatives to help them understand their heavy responsibilities in the world. The great joy of this has been the response that has come from women in more than thirty countries. I wish there could be a representative from each of these thirty here today, to tell you how they have found the needs, the wishes, the ambitions and have met these. Perhaps one of the most interesting has been Japan. There, through the civil education officer under General [Douglas] MacArthur, work with the women has been done with immense results. I have brought with me today Miss [Josephine] Colletti whom I should very much like to introduce to you. She was the civil education officer after the war. (9:11)

[ER:] I'm so glad to meet you Miss Colletti and um I-I have a feeling that all of you have been carrying on the work which for so many years Mrs. Catt herself did in going to other countries and inspiring women to work in the civic field.

[Josephine Colletti:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt, and you are absolute correct in your statement. And I must say that the printed materials supplied by the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund were of

inestimable value in our work in the democratization of women's organizations in Japan. Without these materials our efforts would not have been as successful.

[ER:] I have met some of the Japanese women who've come over to this country ah, under, by direction I suppose of General [Douglas] MacArthur but probably ah through your efforts on a number of occasions.

[Josephine Colletti:] Yes Mrs. Roosevelt, ah according to directives issued us by the General [Douglas] MacArthur we combed field for outstanding leaders in Japan who would be able to learn a great deal of our democratic principles and practices in America and perhaps bring back to Japan something that they had actually saw--seen in action here in our grand USA.

[ER:] Well, I was very much impressed by those who came last--I think it was last year already-- the first ones. And I'm to meet some more, I think, this very afternoon, later on. So that, I--I'm--I thought they were getting a great deal out of their trip.

[Josephine Colletti:] Ah groups are being ah asked, selective we must say and also according to democratic principles of ah competition. In other words, on the basis of ability shown by different individuals they are chosen ah to come to America.

[ER:] That's very interesting. And now, Mrs. Slade?

[Lois F. Slade:] Another country where a great deal of interest has been roused, a great deal has been asked, and I think a great deal given through the Fund is Italy. When the Carrie Chapman Catt Fund began to look into the question of what they could do in Italy in answer to many demands it came to the conclusion that the chief bar to any work there was the illiteracy of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of adults, particularly in the southern part of Italy, the boot. To overcome this illiteracy and to make a start understanding democracy the Carrie Chapman Catt agreed to set up a school for teachers who would train the women of Italy in reading, writing and understanding. They offered when they started the school to take 100 teachers-- young men and young women--and to train them in turn to teach these people. For the first school thirteen hundred people registered and they were able to do one-hundred only. Even that amount meant the, an expense of over four thousand dollars, they've gone on since and other groups have helped. Very fortunately on last Friday Miss Augusta Mendoza arrived from Italy to tell us what the progress there has been, and I'm happy to be able to introduce her to you today. (13:43)

[ER:] I'm so glad to meet you Miss Mendoza, and so happy that you that um could come today and tell us a little about ah what this work is. Will you tell us something about it?

[Augusta Mendoza:] Certainly. Well, I am not quite prepared now because I am being just landing now from a plane. But I must tell you that just yesterday morning a lady came to my house before I was leaving and she was from the Union for the Fight against Illiteracy who was eh-- had the fortune to had the- the help of Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund and she brought me all new plans which she want to develop, and I ah can tell you that the center which has been organized with the help of a teacher, trained with the money given by the Carrie Chapman Catt foundation has been extraordinary important in literacy.

[ER:] Ah do you feel, I want to ask you this, that this is one of the ways in which you can combat communism in Italy.

[Augusta Mendoza:] I do. I certainly do.

[ER:] Ah, you think the illiteracy has been one of the um dangers, really because you can tell people who can't read ah almost anything and they believe it.

[Augusta Mendoza:] Of course, and you know that where there is a great illiteracy problem where there especially a great well, lack of eh means the country. And we see that great danger always.

[ER:] Well, ah I'm very much interested that the Carrie Chapman eh Catt Fund has been able to help you in this particular um fight. Because, I remember Italy very well, I've always been very fond of Italy, though I haven't seen it for a long time, and I do remember ah that difficulty of literacy particularly in the southern part of Italy. And um I should think that um helping your teachers eh to teach adults [Augusta Mendoza: Exactly.] ah would be um a very valuable contribution. [Augusta Mendoza: Yeah absolutely sure.] And you find a great many teachers interested? (16:10)

[Augusta Mendoza:] Many, I am not directly ah, working in that Union for the Fight against Illiteracy, but I've just been told recently again that there is a great and always a great amount of interest.

[ER:] Very great interest. [Augusta Mendoza: Yes.] Well I'm very happy and grateful to you Mrs. Slade for coming today ah to tell the radio audience about ah the work that is being done. I have a- a gratitude for Mrs. Catt which I can never express. She was one of the early people as a very young woman that I heard speak on the responsibilities of the woman as a citizen. So I want to thank you again.

[Mrs. Slade:] Can I say a word?

[ER:] Yes, surely.

[Mrs. Slade:] I want to tell you that Mrs. Catt has over, and over, and over again said to me one great gratitude of her heart was for Eleanor Roosevelt who had done more than any woman in the world to lift the ideals and the standards of women.

[ER:] Thank you! That's a wonderful thing, because I really admired her more than I can say.

(Pause from 17:34-17:48)

[ER:] My guest today is one of the leading foreign correspondents and noted lecturers in the country. She's covered many assignments for the <u>New York Herald Tribune</u>. She is Miss Ruth Gruber whose book <u>Israel without Tears</u> has recently been published. I'm happy to introduce to you Miss Gruber.

[Ruth Gruber:] I'm happy to be here.

[ER:] Miss Gruber, your book has an entirely new approach to the subject of Israel. What made you write this kind of book?

[Ruth Gruber:] Well, every year that I've been going to Israel for the last four years I've been watching it struggle toward independence, trying to record its growth out of war into peace. And this last year it seemed to me that Israel had developed into a country with so much humor, so much spirit, so much vinegar that I decided I would write about the new country, the <u>Israel Without Tears</u>.

[ER:] [ER laughs] Vinegar, why do you say vinegar? Must humor have vinegar? [ER and Ruth Gruber laugh, ER coughs]

[Ruth Gruber:] Well, it--it's peppery, it's salty and it does have some hu--vinegar.

[ER:] It has some vinegar too? [ER and Ruth Gruber laugh] but I hope it has um some just plain fun in it.  
[Ruth Gruber:] Oh, it has a lot of fun. It--Israel, as you know has many problems, but every time the Israeli tightens his belt he tells a new joke.

[ER:] Tell us-- give us some examples of the type of humor then.

[Ruth Gruber:] Well um one of them that eh everybody tells the one about President Chaim Weizmann who was one of the juiciest story tellers I know. And he tells a-a story of the last time he saw President Truman. President Truman said to him, "Well goodbye uh Dr. Weizmann here am I the president of a country of 140 million citizens and you are going back to be president of a million citizens" and Dr. Weizmann said eh, "Ah no Mr. President, I am going to be the president of a million presidents." (19:55)

[ER:] Oh! [ER laughs] That's a wonderful story.

[Ruth Gruber:] It's- it's no disenchantment with the new democracy it's just that nobody is superman. Everybody can quote Einstein and Shakespeare.

[ER:] That's a wonderful thing um, I- I think that from the point of view of music, too, you seem to have a--a million people who are musical in Israel.

[Ruth Gruber:] Oh, absolutely. Ah, Tel Aviv with a population of three hundred thousand has more subscribers to its philharmonic than New York, or Chicago or Philadelphia.

[ER:] That is really wonderful because they must put ah money that comes very hard into going to the philharmonic.

[Ruth Gruber:] Oh yes and they say, as one of their jokes, that Israel exports two things: pianists and oranges.

[ER:] [ER laughs] Oh, pianists and oranges! Well, I was wondering, where does Israel export its oranges to now?

[Ruth Gruber:] Ah, mostly to England, England is—

[ER:] Mostly to England? [Ruth Gruber: Yes.] Well that's interesting. Well, now, could you tell me one of the things that of course I'm very conscious of is the uh feeling between the Moslems and the Christians and um um the Arab people that are in Israel. Could you tell me a little bit um about their relationships?

[Ruth Gruber:] Oh, I think perhaps that relationship between the Jews of this new Jewish state and the Arabs is one of the most heartening things in the world. There are now some one hundred seventy thousand Arabs living inside the Jewish state, and you find Arab children who go to Arab schools which are paid for in part by the Jewish state. Arab magistrates dispense justice in Arab courts which are paid for by the Jewish state. All the Arab churches, both Christian and Moslem, are all protected by Israel and Arab culture and religious worship are carefully guarded. In fact Arab women go to the polls to vote, and you see them sometimes with veils and sometimes without veils.

[ER:] That's-- um um that would seem to indicate that they can really live um very happily together if they're given the chance.

[Ruth Gruber:] I'm sure they can, the, one of the things that the Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion told me in an interview one day was that the basic bill of rights of the country, its philosophy, was ah taken from the Bible. It was those words "love thy neighbor as thyself."

[ER:] That's something which we try to preach everywhere, and which we ah will do well when we have' actually put it into ah action everywhere. Um I wonder if you'd tell us something about what's happening ah to the face of the earth in Israel today. (23:00)

[Ruth Gruber:] Well, the- the country has ah changed enormously in these two and a half years since Israel was born. As you know it's the proudest achievement of the United Nations, it's the baby born there. And um, in these two and a half years some half a million new immigrants have come in. A people of six hundred fifty thousand have taken in five hundred thousand new immigrants. When you go there today, it's as if you are watching great rivers of Jews flowing home to the sea which is Israel. They come from all countries in Europe, they come from North Africa, they come from Yemen, they come from Iraq and Iran. And, they are creating a new thing there, ah somebody there called it a pressure cooker rather than a melting pot.

[ER:] Well, ah um, are they--are they cultivating every inch of the ground?

[Ruth Gruber:] Oh, every inch that they can, yes. These-these new immigrants come in and almost immediately now go out on the land, go out to- to ah build new roads, go out to make the earth fertile. Israel has two goals, to reclaim people and to reclaim the land, and the two work hand in hand.

[ER:] But of course a good deal of the land must take ah quite a bit of reclaiming because um I remember very well um going over the maps of Israel and um realize when the question of the Negev was up and realizing that actually that had to be um made over just the way I once saw down in Deming, in um ah New Mexico. Oh, land which was completely desert land brought back so that it flowered in the most remarkable way I've ever seen. But that came because they discovered an underground river and pumped the water to the surface. Now, they haven't found anything like that as far as I know in the Negev.

[Ruth Gruber:] No, but the magic word is the word "water," and they're bringing water now in pipes down into the Negev. Wherever they do find water they create settlements and then they link these settlements with pipes, and they now have pipes going all the way to Eilat, right at the tip of the Red Sea. (25:30)

[ER:] That's really--it's such a tremendous amount of work and yet, um like all pioneering, I imagine there is a satisfaction in it which ah those of us who live in a settled country don't know.

[Ruth Gruber:] Yes, yes, the satisfaction of being creative, of pioneering.

[ER:] It's- it's a very great satisfaction. I remember ah very wonderful woman who, Mrs.[Golda Meyerson [Meir], who was here, telling me that her daughter had gone down to one of the settlements ah in the Negev and ah that she had the most beautiful flowers that they just ah they could grow almost anything.

[Ruth Gruber:] Yes, and- and grapes ah all- all kinds of ah fruits grow down there.

[ER:] What do you think is the greatest lesson that the world can learn from the example that Israel is setting us today?

[Ruth Gruber:] Well, I think the world can learn that when a country, even a tiny country, has a dream it can fire the imagination of men. It can give them hope and courage. It can give them a chance to live with freedom, to live with decency and dignity, without hunger and without fear. Israel has proved that, Israel

is a tiny country. You can't measure Israel with a ruler. You have to measure it in height and depth and soul in history and dreams. You have to measure Israel in the fact that it was built on a Biblical vision and on the cremated bones of some six million dead. That's its strength, that it is a creative country, that it was built in our time by a creative people, that it was built out of death for life and that it has the largest arms in the world, welcoming home every homeless Jew.

[ER:] Well, of course that is the dream, I think of- of the Jewish people. They all feel I remember in the camps in Europe, the feeling that if they could get home that was the one thing the older people longed for and the children longed for and everyone you saw that was the dream. And I was always afraid perhaps the dream wouldn't be as wonderful as it was in anticipation when it became a reality, but, evidently it does remain wonderful. [Ruth Gruber: Yes it does]. Now we have to stop.

(Pause from 28:08-28:18)

[ER:] You were talking of the great migrations of immigrants into Israel, but there is one thing which interested me, when you spoke of children's migrations. Can you tell us something about that?

[Ruth Gruber:] Of all the people coming into Israel, of all these migrations, the most blessed and the most hopeful is this children's migration. It's the migration of children who need a home, who need security and most of all who need love. And um while uh I go back every year, I always go to the children's camps and the children's centers to watch the children develop to see—

[ER:] But are they- are they all orphans?

[Ruth Gruber:] Some of them are, not all, but many of them in the children's camps are orphans, or if not the children of the broken homes, and the children rescued from the DP [displaced persons] camps in Europe were largely orphans.

[ER:] Well now, those who are not orphans, um ah are there parents there too or where are they?

[Ruth Gruber:] There are some whose parents are there, whose parents perhaps have been divorced and there are some ah who have just one parent and the parent has to work and can't take care of them, or there are some coming in now from the Middle Eastern countries the parents can't yet leave but the children are being brought out quickly. You know, that was how so many thousands were rescued from Germany, ah was Henrietta Szold's idea that um if they couldn't rescue all of the people from Germany, they might at least rescue the children and they did rescue thousands of children that way.

[ER:] Well, that- um that is a--is a wonderful thing to be doing, and I don't wonder that you go to the children's eh camps to watch their development because that must be fascinating.

[Ruth Gruber:] It is fascinating and-and terribly moving, because um in one camp that I visited with Supreme Court Justice [William O.] Douglas one day, we discovered ah that they worked toward what they called the point of confidence. They tried to find the point at which the child would have faith in them and frequently children come who can't, who- who lose the power of speech because of the terror of what they lived under and um um in this camp called Onim, [Nizan Onim?] they searched for that point of confidence and we met a child who had come and who didn't talk at all, and whose arms were longer than the rest of his body proportionately. They called him their ape child because he looked like an ape, and ah when he first came to them um he didn't talk at all he walked around like a monkey and later when they had reached the point of his confidence, he told them that he'd come from Czechoslovakia, that- they knew that they had rescued him. And he told them that when his parents were about to be burned they turned him over to foster parents who had no food, so the foster parents took him into the forest and all

day while they searched for food they tied him up to the tree like an ape and so he began to walk like an ape and act like one. And then when the war ended, when thousands of children were discovered all over Europe, he was brought to Israel and now that he was in this beautiful camp, now that they had found the point of his confidence and he was talking, they could see that his hands and arms had stopped growing and the rest of his little body was catching up. (31:47)

[ER:] Oh that's a pathetic story, but I imagine there are many, many others just as moving as that, just as sad, really, that a child should have to go through things like that.

[Ruth Gruber:] Yes, and of course there's the hope too that they do, ah outgrow the terror.

[ER:] Now, what do you feel um is actually Israel's part in the world picture today?

[Ruth Gruber:] I think Israel looks upon its role as um one of-- well of playing an independent part. She certainly is-is close to us in her thinking, she's very close to the United States. In fact when you go down the streets of Tel Aviv you think you're walking down New York because Israel has such Yankee ways. And- um and American movies are influencing the children, American books are read by everybody, the Brooklyn ice cream bar sells ah ice cream sodas and malted milk. And I think the Americanization of Israel is already an accomplished fact. But Israel feels that her role in the world is one of-of independence, she must um take the part that she feels is um is one where she might even be a- a kind of bridge.

[ER:] Kind of bridge? Between um between the modern world and the less developed world around her in the Near East?

[Ruth Gruber:] Exactly, because she is the democracy in the Middle East, she's the stronghold of democracy there. And as strong ah, the more she develops the more other the countries around her will develop. She will help raise the standard of living of the Arabs.

[ER:] Well, now, that's-that's very interesting point you touched on because I've always heard that one of the difficulties, one of the things that created irritation between the-the ah Jewish people and the Arabs was that the Jewish people had so much more ambition, and very often, enough intelligence to feed their families better and therefore to have healthier people, with the result that the Arabs found it so hard to compete. And that, naturally, they were a lazier people, and um therefore that they rather resented the fact that they had to raise their standard of living if they were going to compete and if they didn't compete they sank below the Jewish people. (34:27)

[Ruth Gruber:] Well I think um that's changing a great deal. The ah Arab ah match factory in Nazareth pays what are probably the highest wages being paid to Arabs anywhere in the Middle East because Arabs must get the same wages that Jews get. And news of that has spread all over the Middle East, and there are stories of how Arabs are filtering back into Israel so they can work in this match factory. It's a kind of illegal immigration in reverse; you remember the Jews had illegal immigration before. [Ruth Gruber laughs]

[ER:] Well I heard the most, one of, to me one of the most, ah frightening and sad stories in connection with our ah Arab refugee camps ah ah, in those countries around Israel. Um I heard that um try as we would eh the numbers of refugees never became less. And there were always, you thought you'd gotten rid of two hundred-fifty thousand and-and thought well now instead of being seven hundred-fifty thousand we'll be five hundred thousand and then lo and behold you woke up the next morning and there was still seven hundred-fifty thousand. And, I was told, that incredible as it sounds, the cost of feeding an Arab a day was three cents and the food was so much better than they were accustomed to in their camps



in the desert and so forth, that the Bedouins just infiltrated in order to get this delicious three-cents-a-day food that was being given out in the camps. And I-- that to me was a terrible sort of picture of what um really the level of ah living was in that area and for those people.

[Ruth Gruber:] Yes, I think that's why um it's so important that Israel become strong, because the Arabs living inside of Israel live such a- a good life, their um their economic level is so high because they get such high wages that—

[ER:] Do you think that they will spread um what they learn into the other Arab countries?

[Ruth Gruber:] I'm sure they will.[ER: You do?] I'm sure that if peace finally comes to the Middle East, and we all pray that it will come soon, ah that the Arabs in Israel will spread it because they have relatives in these other countries.

[ER:] Well now I'd like to ask you about one episode, or one little bit of history that you were in on. You were on the magic carpet operation which flew Yemenite Jews from the tip of Southern Arabia to Israel. What was that like?

[Ruth Gruber:] Ah, that was one of the most fascinating trips I ever made. I flew with these Jews who were escaping from ah Yemen, this kingdom in the, in- in the tip of Southern Arabia, to Israel on American planes. The wings of the airlift were those of the Joint Distribution Committee and the flight was made possible through the United Jewish Appeal. And the people all flew home feeling that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.

[ER:] The difficulty must have been their language must have been different. Um when they got there they must have been like strangers.

[Ruth Gruber:] Not really because they' had all read the Bible, studied it, lived by it and all of them spoke Hebrew which is the language of Israel.

[ER:] I have a feeling that Yemen is probably one of the most um out-of-this-world kind of places, because ah, a young French woman doctor told me she'd been called there on a case and it was something quite different from anything anyone could imagine.

[Ruth Gruber:] Yes it- it was, and- and the excitement of these people as they came into Israel, the sheer religious ecstasy of it was something I'll never forget.

[ER:] Well that's ah a wonderful picture to close our talk on, and I thank you so much for being with me today.

[Ruth Gruber:] It's been a pleasure

(Pause from 38:51 to the end)

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