

## OVER OUR COFFEE CUPS

April 5, 1942

Description: ER urges retention of organized labor rights.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt

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ANNOUNCER: This is Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's regular Sunday evening broadcast, sponsored by the Pan-American Coffee Bureau, representing eight Good Neighbor coffee-growing nations. This Easter Sunday evening, Mrs. Roosevelt gives you the last of her 1941-42 series of informal talks on this hectic world we live in. We know from the many messages we of the Pan-American Coffee Bureau have received during these twenty-six weeks how much Mrs. Roosevelt's frank and enlightening views on current events have meant to you millions of listeners. Just as we know how much it has meant to so many of you to learn from us thrilling new facts about your favorite beverage ... COFFEE. We are, naturally, pleased to know how many of you have found for yourselves the truth of our statements that coffee does help give extra energy and extra steady nerves ... that coffee can help every one of us get more out of every hour of work ... more fun out of every hour of relaxation ..... that everyone of us can GET MORE OUT OF LIFE WITH COFFEE.

But now, we know you are anxious to hear Mrs. Roosevelt's Easter message to the Nation ... So, may we present Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

MRS. ROOSEVELT:

Good evening. It is with regret that I am ending this series of broadcasts tonight, because I have enjoyed my association with all those connected with the Pan-American Coffee Bureau, representing Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, and Venezuela; and I have enjoyed talking to friends throughout the country on these Sunday evening broadcasts.

Perhaps it is a good omen that this series comes to an end on Easter Sunday when we think of everything as beginning again, flowers and trees coming back to life after the long winter, and our own spiritual reawakening always seems to coincide with nature's.

This year, above all others, we seem to need this sense of beginning anew and so I am sure that every now and then I shall have the opportunity to renew contacts both over the air and in person with friends throughout the country.

In the meantime, as this is my last broadcast on this program, and as all of us are thinking primarily today about the war, I should like to talk to you tonight about ourselves and our major concerns as they affect our young people in the Services, and our civilian population at home, and ourselves as individuals in civilian life.

Of necessity, I must be among those who live at home, quietly helping in any way that is possible as an individual in a community. For that reason in my own home in the country, I shall be thinking and planning this summer about how to have a successful victory garden, how to use its produce, so that as many people as possible in our family group grow and preserve such things as are needed in the commercial market for shipment to other countries. I shall try to run my home simply but to make it a restful place for those who are now doing the actual work of the war and bearing the burdens of planning and managing to meet crucial world conditions.

These are things which I think all of my rural neighbors throughout the country will be doing during this coming year. In cities and on farms everywhere, women will try to make their homes meet new demands but they will also be at work and their spheres of occupation will broaden day by day. Each one of us will undertake some special interest through which we will hope to make our individual contribution to winning the war and winning the peace.

It is quite evident that the men who are fighting the war and the men and women who are doing the actual active planning and organization work in different phases of active participation, can give but little thought to anything beyond the day by day achievements. And so to the rest of us must be left some of the thinking about the possibilities of the present situations which must tie up with the future.

I think I can best explain this by telling you how I feel when I find myself, as I sometimes do, face to face with groups of young people in the Armed Forces. I can go back to the last World War and remember in the youth of those days, the same eagerness for adventure, the same assurance that something great was in the making. As I think about that, I cannot help hoping that youth will not again be betrayed either by their own weariness, or by the weariness of those of us at home who rise temporarily to sacrifice and altruistic action, and then run away so quickly and willingly from the high moments when the pressure comes to an end.

In the years between the last World War and the present one, one of the things I remember most vividly is the sight of some of our young people of ten years ago, looking for work, coming out of high school and college, ready to take their place in the world, and finding no place open to them. I also remember very vividly when the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration were being discussed as a possible way of meeting some of the difficulties confronting the older brothers and sisters of today's soldiers. The suggestion was often advanced that such organization might regiment youth and might create a division between youth and age, from which would develop a pressure group which might in the end be harmful.

At the time it seemed to me strange that only a few seemed to realize that youth, without work and training and hope, might become welded together and be regimented by hunger into a pressure group of a somewhat more dangerous type than any created by guidance from their government and their elders into some type of training leading to congenial work.

Finally, when I look at the boys in camps today, I wonder why no one mentions regimentation of youth any more now that it goes on apace.

Sometimes I wonder if any of the people who were fearful that training and work for civilian life might cost the country too much, really count what today's holocaust is costing the country in permanent losses, that do not even involve our cash or material resources.

To be sure we must do it. It is a case of self-preservation both for youth and for age, but the thing which sometimes makes me feel guilty is that we elders do not acknowledge a double obligation. An obligation not to repeat our past mistakes and to see that this period of destruction is compensated for by the assurance that never again will we be so short-sighted as not to recognize the obligation of society at all times to the youth of our nation.

Those who are fighting the war, cannot be expected to think out the problems either for the post-war period or for the civilian population now, but those who are civilians, not fighting the war, have got to take stock of their civilization and realize that now, and in the future, the responsibility for the community of the nation and of the world is and will be theirs. We cannot be placid and acquiescent in any kind of an economy which does not face the difficulties of the people as a whole, and try to meet the needs of the individual with the realization that those needs increasingly are going to be the needs of the many. More and more we are going to be drawn together in groups which cannot prosper unless all prosper at the same time.

The other day I talked to a group of people and said that unless we could keep our young soldiers of today in touch with what is going on at home, and unless they come back to a country where they feel that their interests have been safeguarded, and that they have full opportunity to build their normal lives, we must face the probability that we will have a dangerous group in our midst. It will be far greater than any organization of the past and might become a pressure group, thinking only of the interests of its own group and feeling keen resentment that others have forgotten that their group was expected to give even their lives, if necessary, for the preservation of the country and the civilian population at home, who in return did not safeguard their opportunities for a future in a world at peace.

This thought is no attack on the American Legion as some people seem to feel, but a mere statement of the fact which we should foresee. The Legion as a whole has tried to prevent the recurrence of war during

these past years. Today they stand ready to render whatever services they are capable of rendering to the nation, and they remember better than any group in the country that heroes may come home to a grateful country and shortly thereafter they may be simply forgotten civilians.

If we are short-sighted enough to use this present generation of youth as it must be used for war without the realization that we have asked of them all that they have to give, and that it is our obligation to think ahead and see that we adjust our economic system so that opportunity is open to them according to their abilities along the lines which they wish to develop on their return, we may reap the whirlwind.

We cannot afford to expect complete unselfishness from youth and give nothing in return ourselves. We cannot afford to expect them to put in countless hours of service for us and limit our own services to them to an effort to return to normalcy ... a normalcy which created for youth in the past a situation so intolerable, in spite of the government's efforts to create special youth programs.

We were derelict in our duty to youth the world over after the last War. As citizens who accepted the sacrifice of youths from 1914 to 1918, we assumed no responsibility for them when they were demobilized, and I feel that the new "legion" should have the assurance that we will not be indifferent to their problems.

I am sure that labor and management as a whole are ready to match the sacrifices of youth in the Armed Forces, by working such hours as will give us the greatest production, by limiting pay when the cost of living is stabilized, and when profits are controlled. These things must be done, but neither the men in the Armed Forces nor the men and women here at home must forget that the machinery by which labor can bargain with the employer was won by the combined efforts of men of goodwill in both labor and management, but the sacrifices and the main fight have been made by unionized labor. This fight has benefitted labor as a whole, because unorganized labor is better paid when organized labor obtains better pay and more desirable working conditions. It will mean more security in peace-time occupations to those who return from the war as well as to those who have worked to the limit of their ability during the war, if this machinery is not destroyed under the guise of a false patriotism which insists that production depends upon giving up not just limitations on hours and wages, but the destruction of the machinery by which agreements are made between labor and management. I know that there are abuses in organized labor which must be changed but changes can only be made in an organization which exists, so we must be careful not to destroy it.

~~I made a suggestion that pay for over-time work and profits above three percent from invested capital might both be paid in defense bonds. I meant this limitation of profits to apply to invested capital in the upper brackets. It has been brought to my attention that many old people in this country who live on small annuities or investments would not accept this curtailment of money, because even the five or six percent which they now may receive barely enables them to make both ends meet.~~

~~That, of course, is perfectly obvious and I was not thinking of any type of obligatory ruling without consideration for special situations. I was thinking of the possibility of considering carefully where profits could be thus limited and where it was advisable to do so. No idea can be applied in the same way to every situation and, therefore, anything which is done at the present time or at any other time to meet constantly changing conditions, must be flexible enough to be adjusted to special situations.~~

From what I have been saying I know that you will realize that like the great majority of people in this country, I am thinking primarily of the youth in their present position, and of our obligation as protected civilians to them in the future. I realize that the future of this country is tied to the welfare of youth, and that holds good as regards the future of the world also. Out of all this horror we are living through I hope and pray that something really better and of more lasting benefit to all of us will come, but it can only come if all of us do some clear and steady thinking in the present and keep from slumping when hostilities cease.

In closing, I want to say to all those who have already lost loved ones in the Service of this country and of humanity, how full my heart is of sympathy for them, and if prayers can help them I know they have the prayers of thousands of men and women today.

To those who live in constant anxiety, I can only say that I hope God will give them strength to bear the burdens that life imposes. Courage and faith and hope are the watch-words by which we must all live in these days.

ANNOUNCER: Mrs. Roosevelt, may I thank you in behalf of the millions who have enjoyed your Sunday evening talks, and of the Pan-American Coffee Bureau who have been privileged to present these glowing messages of hope and faith to the people of the United States through these troubled winter months. We have been proud and happy to make this gesture of cooperation in our Western Hemisphere Good Neighbor policy. We have been proud to present the only radio broadcasts ever placed in the Library of Congress of the United States. We have been proud of this opportunity to be associated with you, Mrs. Roosevelt. For you certainly do exemplify all that is finest and strongest in the spirit of our modern Americas.

And now may we toast you, very fittingly, of course, in a good brimming cup of the Americas' Favorite Drink ... the Good Neighbor Drink ... COFFEE. And may we salute your great nationwide audience with that toast to extra energy, to extra steady nerves ... that toast to good taste and good cheer ... GET MORE OUT OF LIFE WITH COFFEE.

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Transcribed from a script held in the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.