

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In this segment, ER discusses President's Truman's "bold new program" for underdeveloped nations, the Point Four program.

Participants: ER

[ER:] Thank you, Anna. When President Truman, in his inaugural address, mentioned a bold, new program for the undeveloped areas of the world, it was inevitable that it would appeal greatly to the imagination of the American people. And so it has, as you can easily tell by reading the daily newspaper and listening to your radio. But for a time, after President Truman made his surprise mention of the plan, no one seemed to be quite sure whether it was an actual program or would be one, or whether it was just a general statement of principle to be talked about now and perhaps acted on much later. Now it seems that the United States probably will present the first concrete details of the so-called "bold new program" to the United Nations Economic and Social Council which is in session at Lake Success. I think it is encouraging that the president intends to use the United Nations in the furtherance of this program.

During a time like the present when the world is so divided politically, it is of the greatest importance to try to keep this great pioneering and constructive work as non-political as possible. I've heard, for example, that Burma chose to receive technical aid recently from the United Nations rather than accept British offers of help for the reason that the Burmese felt they must not incur obligations to any one country. Also, I read that one or two other countries have hesitated to take aid from the United States, for fear of being drawn into a clash with the Soviet Union. It seems quite clear that as one UN official has stated, "The approach to this plan must be non-political or a good idea will be lost, so far as the United Nations is concerned." I think it's rather amusing incidentally, that as yet nobody seems to know quite what to call this plan for aiding undeveloped areas. Sometimes the newspapers refer to it by the technical and uninspiring term of "Point Four," because of its place in the inaugural address. At the other extreme some correspondents use the much more dashing designation, "Bold New Program." But officially, it has no name as yet, which is rather a handicap in discussing it. Certainly it deserves a good name. Perhaps you can think of one.

In any case my husband began to think about this idea of developing some of the undeveloped areas of the world a long while ago. And Mr. Statinyas (sp.?) has formed a company which, right now, is helping to develop Liberia as an outgrowth of the talks which he and my husband had on the subject of our national responsibility to help Liberia uh develop and get on her feet as a nation. And uh without question there are other things that uh we have thought about in the past and uh I remember, for instance, my husband saying that in the coming years if we could sell just one little item to some of the nations that had never before bought, and get from them something in return even though we helped them to develop it at the start, that that would mean much more to our prosperity in the future than anything else we could do. He was thinking, I think, of the need of the Arabs right after the war for white cotton material and I think that uh he thought there were other things that we could help with. And that is a basis, of course, uh for this bold new program. It's a realization that it can help us in our economic situations and at the same time, it can raise the standard of living for peoples that have had very little in the way of comforts as we know them throughout the world. There are a great many people that this program could affect and at the same time, it will help not only our nation but the other manufacturing and exporting nations. Now back to my daughter Anna, in Hollywood.

(5:11)

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Transcription: Emily Whaley
First edit: Anna Karditzas
Final edit: Christy Regenhardt

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