

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 14th, 1949 (catalog date)

Description: In this segment, ER discusses the German Industry Exhibit held at the New York Museum of Science and Industry.

Participants: ER

[ER:] Thank you, Anna. I've been spending so much of my time either at Lake Success or in Flushing during- ever since the General Assembly opened, that I did not have time to visit the German industry exhibit held at the New York Museum of Science and Industry in Radio City. But I did receive a report on it, and I understand it was really a very interesting exhibit. On display, there were goods from 511 exhibitors, all of them Germans who were thoroughly investigated by the military government and cleared of any Nazi political taint. That is what the notice said eh put out by our military government. I have received word uh that many of these people were connected with Nazi um groups in the past, uh-um from several organizations. But, I think our government uh realizes that it's almost impossible to divorce completely people who once have had Nazi affiliations from going back to work. And if they prove on the whole good citizens now, I suppose they have to be allowed to earn a living.

Among the displays, of course, were the precision instruments for which the German manufacturers are so justly famous-- timepieces, cameras, microscopes, optical instruments. There were furs, china, dolls, and toys, and Christmas tree ornaments in all of which the German makers have always excelled. Sometimes we forget that some of our own Christmas customs came from there; the Christmas tree was a German institution, and they've always been famous for toys and Christmas tree ornaments. The exhibit which drew probably the most oh's and ah's was an elaborate electric train, really a complicated and expensive toy. I think the men must have loved that because I always find that the children's electric train is of far more interest to the fathers than to the children even.

An interested knot of men was always gathered about the German automobile on display: the Volkswagen, a small, neat-looking car with the engine in the rear and the tool kit and gasoline tank in the front under the hood. They promised American buyers immediate delivery on this item. Well, it would certainly seem strange to see the German Volkswagen, which looks a little bit like a toy also-o, but which is the car promised by Hitler to his people, and now uh we will see it driving down our American streets, perhaps.

The purpose of the exhibit of course is to stimulate Western German export trade, and thus relieve the American taxpayer of the burden of supporting -- or helping to support -- the German economy. As General [Lucius D.] Clay, the U.S. military governor in Germany said of the exhibit, "Americans can well extend their goodwill to it, since this is an ancient and time-honored method of promoting the sale of goods produced in one country for sale in another." And those of us who have seen many other fairs of this kind know that that is so. It's been done all over Europe and after all, Germany has to come back and take part in the trade of the world or else the rest of us have to support Germany. And now back to my daughter, Anna, in Hollywood.

(4:08)

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)
File(s): 80-5(47)

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