

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

June 14th, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER reads a listener's letter regarding foster care. In the following segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question regarding the Schuman Plan, which sought to create a shared market for European coal and steel. In the closing segment, ER interviews Dr. Hildegard Brucher, an elected official from West Germany.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Elliott Roosevelt, Dr. Hildegard Brucher

[ER:] How do you do? This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking. We are continuing with the programs which I recorded while I was in Europe, attending the United Nations Human Rights Commission meetings.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Since the reestablishment of political life in Western Germany after the war, there has been a small but important minority of young people who want to see a real democracy develop in their country. Mrs. Roosevelt's guest today, Dr. Hildegard [Hamm] Brucher, is one of this group. Deceivably young and charming, she is the holder of two responsible elective offices in the American zone of Germany. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce Dr. Brucher, whom she interviewed on her recent trip to Geneva in just a few minutes. First, we have an interesting question to discuss, which we will get to after our announcer tells us something about the products of the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

(Break 1:12-1:32)

[ER:] Today, I'd like to take a few minutes to read another interesting letter sent to me in connection with the foster parents broadcast last April. It is from Louise Lessen of Brooklyn, New York and she says: "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt. To begin with, may I thank you for the interesting program you so ably present. This letter is in reference to the foster parents program on May 7th, 1951. The reason I decided to express my opinion and offer a suggestion, for what it is worth, is because matters relating to human welfare are of first importance and the welfare of children not only touches emotionally, but have social and economic impacts. This has developed our baby clinics, milk stations, child study groups, specialists in child psychology, etc., adding up to what is known as pediatrics. At the same time, another social phenomenon has developed. The matter of a longer life span, and what to do about this, at sometimes a disguised blessing—geriatrics. And still, another strange development, a peculiar cleavage between the generations due to economic and social changes brought on by the war conditions these past thirty years, shall we say, where homes have dwindled, housekeeping, for the greater part, taken out of the home, and the idea of three, or even two, generations sharing a home is looked upon by our specialists in these fields, as paramount to cannibalism.

At the same time, I read that a-Cornell University-- that, at Cornell University, a scientific study on imposed retirement, according to pre-geriatrics' ideas on old age, sixty or sixty-five years, is the death knell for many vigorous persons still capable of and willing to continue at some useful needed work. What appalls me is the glaring gap between our scientific findings by different groups as if they were working on different planets and their application to all fields of human relations. As a matter of fact, we are always about one hundred years behind our own development. It is time for a non-scientific person, just an all-around rough and tumble person experienced in living, to take over and coordinate these specialists and I'm serious! Trained efficiency experts can't see the problems for their own restrictions; they were trained on past problems. Life consists of immediate and tomorrow's problems, as any old-fashioned housekeeper-mother knows; as you, Mrs. Roosevelt, very well know. Here we have a scientific

foster parents' setup that isn't aware that some couples of sixty or even sixty-five are better fitted to care for and love a lonesome, helpless waif or group of such children, than some couples of fifty who are eligible. We have all at some time seen grandparents left with motherless babes, and the care and love they lavished on these children. Some years ago, I wrote about the human waste of older people, set aside as useless furniture in an attic, dying from lack of being needed, feeling unwanted and unloved, waiting for the end, on one hand and the love hungry children in institutions who could each have a grandma or grandpa if only these institutions were arranged with ideas relating to human beings. I brought out the fact that these older people would find in themselves great resources of long forgotten abilities tha-- and little children would get care and individual attention they so sorely need. I can hear an uproar of the scientifically trained. It doesn't have to upset schedules or interfere with discipline, in fact, it could be arranged so that all concerned would profit, but I see the experts catching up with the rocking chair. All the new ideas aren't any more perfect than the old ideas were all wrong. With best wishes for your good health and continued activity for many years beyond the accepted retirement age. I am sincerely yours, Louise Lessen." (6:00)

[Break: 6:02-6:11]

[ER:] How do you do? This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking. We are continuing with the programs which I recorded while I was in Europe, attending the United Nations Human Rights Commission meetings.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Since the reestablishment of political life in Western Germany after the war, there has been a small but important minority of young people who want to see a real democracy develop in their country. Mrs. Roosevelt's guest today, Dr. Hildegard Brucher, is one of this group. Deceivingly young and charming, she is the holder of two responsible elective offices in the American zone of Germany. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce Dr. Brucher, whom she interviewed on her recent trip to Geneva in just a few minutes. First, we have an interesting question to discuss, which we will get to after our announcer tells us something about the products of the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

[Break: 7:17-7:30]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] The question for discussion, Mother, has been asked by Mrs. E. Tenny, of Forest Hills, Long Island, New York and is, I think, a particularly good one due to the fact that you have so recently spoken with people all over Europe, including Monsieur [Robert] Schuman [1888-1963] and Monsieur [Jean] Monnet [1888-1955]. The question is, "Please tell us why the European countries are against the Schuman Plan, which seems excellent?" (7:59)

[ER:] [ER laughs] Well, I don't think they are because it's just been accepted but the reason that they hesitate, of course, is um because it is the first time that countries which for centuries, have lived with borders, carefully guarded, over which you uh--in passing which, you had to show a passport, you had to pay customs--it's the first time that they are going to do away with all that. That nobody is going to pay customs on certain things that you are going to be able to--to begin on an economic plan which pools the economic resources on certain things. [ER clears her throat] And allows them--[Elliott Roosevelt: Iron and coal, to be exact.] Yes, iron and coal and steel, isn't it? [Elliott Roosevelt: Well, steel is a byproduct of iron.] A byproduct of iron and coal. And uh those being pooled, it is the first step towards uh real unity, which of course in the Council of Europe is beginning on the political and diplomatic level and um, I think that if you could think back um, over far more years than we have existed, um how people have feared each other and how they have competed with each other instead of cooperating with each other in those countries um and realize that it's--the area is smaller than the United States. And we have prospered because we had no economic barriers, we had no customs to pay, we had uh-- the one thing where we really have an example of what harm we can do um is in our differentia--trade differential with the South after the Civil War, which we haven't yet removed, and we've really hurt the trade, and the whole-the

whole people of the South by that, which was um-uh, a real negation of our general policy of unity and cooperation within the United States. Well now, that is the one example we have, [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] whereas as all over Europe, little bits of countries, which you can cross in a few hours um, have had a bristling border uh which nobody could cross without uh showing their credentials. And where you always had to pay a duty on-on any number of things. You had to remember that you couldn't take cigarettes here or chocolate here or something else matches there and so forth. (11:00)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Don't you think it would be a-a good idea to explain a little bit what the Schuman Plan is, insofar as steel, iron, and coal production is concerned because those are the main items that it deals with. The fact that the Schuman Plan represents a pooling of the production of the countries that join the plan, and then, spreads the total production amongst the participating countries, so that there are no tariff barriers but beyond that, that if there is an overproduction then they market that uh together and get the benefits together of-of the wor--of meeting of uh-uh putting it into world trade. (11:50)

[ER:] Yes, well there is one other aspect of this that I think should be remembered and that is that in the past, Germany li--being situated in the center of Europe, controlled the coal and iron to a very great extent for the whole of Europe. And through that control, exercised a control--because they are basic commodities--[Elliott Roosevelt: Right.] exercised a control over the economic situation of practically every country of Europe and over the military preparations of practically every country of Europe. And therefore, built up a power which [Elliott Roosevelt: Disproportionate.] if we do not want war to continue in that area, must be spread out over the whole uh nations and no longer be in the hands of one nation. And that's one of the aspects of the Schuman Plan, which leads us to hope that Europe, which has for so many years, been um--[Elliott Roosevelt: dominated by Germany] dominated by Germany, and also, a constant hotbed for wars to begin because of economic situations. Because the populations grew um too much for the land to support an-and the industry of the land and they didn't uh find ways of moving out those populations without trying to go to war about it. Uh, all those things-- or of feeding those populations-- [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] all those things uh will change with the economic conditions that the Schuman Plan can create. (13:34)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well I think that also, in returning to this question, you stated that there was a hesitancy. Actually the hesitancy uh is not so great because you take Italy, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and I believe, Norway, are all members of the Schuman Plan, and the only major nation--[ER: Great Britain]--is Great Britain that has not already joined the Schuman Plan. I think you ought to explain why Great Britain in our conversations with leaders over there has not already joined up-

[ER:] Well they haven't actually refused but they, of course, have always controlled the um-um-uh--a very large coal production. And they have always had a system with their own dominions of uh preferential arrangements with them and they are just looking at this situation in the light of their world situation. Um you know, there was a day that they say "the sun never sets on the British possessions." Well they do have to look at the world as a whole, even today, and uh, in relation to what their dominions want and what is the best thing for them. Now the-the door is wide open for them to go in, and many uh people that I talked to in Great Britain hope they will go in. (15:10)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes, in fact, the leaders of both parties uh that I remember talking to over there, expressed the thought that in some way uh Great Britain would certainly be joining, and maybe on a limited basis--

[ER:] Maybe on a limited basis. Of course, Great Britain's coal industry-eh is um not really on its feet as yet, it's had--I mean, it's had bad times and it may be that for a time they-they feel they must get their own house in order first, I don't know. But um I-I think it would be a great pity if in some way, they

didn't cooperate and I sure uh that they will in time. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And I hope that more nations will come in. (16:00)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Uh do you feel, uh--I noticed that Switzerland is not a member of the Schuman Plan and they are people who are paying a very highly exorbitant rate for their coal over there. I believe you

[ER: Yes, but they--] told me that you found out that they pay over sixty dollars a ton.

[ER:] No, fifty-four dollars now [Elliott Roosevelt: Fifty-four dollars a ton.] it was, when I was there before they paid over sixty dollars but now its fifty-four dollars a ton-on. And-- but, Switzerland has so ingrained the feeling that its liberty depends upon its neutrality. And you know that they don't produce any coal, you see. All the mountains apparently do not produce any coal. And--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] No that's very true but they do have uh a very large production of uh finished goods in Switzerland. [ER: Oh that require um power--large steel] Large steel--they have an aluminum plant which I saw on my visit uh to Switzerland that produces according to the officials, twenty-five percent of all of the aluminum produced on the continent of Europe.

[ER:] I saw--[Elliott Roosevelt: Outside of the Iron Curtain.] I didn't see that, that was the day that you went off for the day and I couldn't go because I was in com-commission. But um I heard--I-I know you told me about that and they are, of course, highly industrializing areas of Switzerland which in the past, um depended on very poor farming [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] and largely hotel business and mountain climbers. Um they think that's perhaps a little precarious in view of what happened to them in the last war. And I think they are trying to now get industries which will keep them going uh, but the idea of giving up neutrality is-is just something that Switzerland I think [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] will take a long while to accept. (17:58)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Alright well I hope that this uh answers uh Mrs. Tenny's uh letter because I think that there is a false premise in her question that the European countries are against the Schuman Plan. uh And I found, as you did, that the people are very hopeful as to what it can accomplish. I see that our time is up now, and so I'm afraid that we'll have to go on to another part of the program. For a minutes, we will turn our program over to the announcer and then we will be back again with our uh interview of the day.

(Break 18:31-18:40)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now, Mother, I'd like to return to our interview, which I think is a very important one for our listening audience to hear, and one that I think they are most interested in regarding the-the attitude of the German people towards the American policies with regard to Germany today.

[ER:] Well, I'm very glad to go on with my talk with Dr. Hildegard-Hildegard Brucher. Uh That sounds very important but Dr. Brucher is really quite young. Now I'd like to ask you um as we were talking about the Schuman Plan, and the difference that exists between England and France's point of view on it. I'd like to ask you why the German socialists have opposed it?

[Hildegard Brucher:] I would say they oppose it for several reasons. And the leader of the Social Democratic Party stated just the other day that his first and main reason is--that it has been constructed, you can say so, by conservative people and uh Catholic Christian people. And he feels that in this situation in Germany, so close to the Iron Curtain, that there can be only a more or less socialistic point of view on these matters, on these economic--mainly economic matters. (20:04)

[ER:] Well, that's understandable I think. And uh [ER coughs] I think a good many of the Socialists have had that feeling. Well now I know the cartelists have recently opposed the Schuman Plan. Do you think it will help to break down this system of cartels?

[Hildegard Brucher:] Oh, Mrs. Roosevelt, I am no uh expert on these-on these fields! I can only maybe report what people are saying and what industrials are saying and uh, for the beginning they have been very much in favor of the Schuman Plan. But after the Korean crisis came, there has been almost no restriction for German industry. So--but the Schuman Plan will bring again some restriction of-of some kind and so since then, they are opposed to it. And I think there is kind of a potential danger of building something like a supercartel. [ER: I see] Of course, only the future will show. [ER coughs]

[ER:] Only the future will really show. [Hildegard Brucher: Yes] I'm told by Mr. Schuman that is not so, but I-I suppose only the future will see how it really works out.

[Hildegard Brucher:] Let's hope that it won't be. (21:19)

[ER:] Well, we've been talking about Germany in relation to the outside world. I think people in our country are all so anxious to know about political developments within Germany. First of all, how strong are the communists in Western Germany?

[Hildegard Brucher:] I think there has--there has never been any communistic danger in Germany after the war, and they are now out of almost any state parliaments. There are some in the federal parliament but they are not strong and they are not influential and they don't appeal to the German people. You know they--so many men have been prisoners of war in Russia so I think that is not acute danger at all in Germany.

[ER:] Yes and then they are so close to what is happening in East Germany and in Czechoslovakia and Poland, [Hildegard Brucher: That's right and--] that I suppose that they really know more about the actual conditions brought about by uh Russian control-- by Soviet control than uh people who live further away. (22:24)

[Hildegard Brucher:] Yes, I would say so. Because part of their families are living over in Eastern Germany and they can write, or they hear from each other that the living conditions are so terrible and the pressure, I mean the uh--all kinds of physical [ER: Yes.] and psychological pressure is put upon them and that it's even worse than under Hitler.

[ER:] Well now, do you think there's any revival of Nazism in Germany?

[Hildegard Brucher:] That's a very hard question, I would say. [Hildegard Brucher laughs] And I wouldn't speak about revival, because you know, after the war, you couldn't say that Nazism was really dead, you know, it was just quiet for a while. And um I'm afraid to say that it will-it will take quite a couple of years until we are really over it. (23:14)

[ER:] I see. Well now, how-how do young people, who have not actually experienced Nazism, feel about it?

[Hildegard Brucher:] I think young people are, as everywhere in the world, they are open for all kinds of ideas, good as well as uh bad ideas. And if they only could have the right influences and the right education and maybe see other democracies work, so to speak, then I-I would feel that they-they could become real world citizens and democrats also.

[ER:] Well, do you feel that the German education system is being basically changed and reformed?

[Hildegard Brucher:] This is one of my main concerns in my political work because I think the only chance to change these basic ideas and opinions, is to have a reform of our whole educational system because it is basically an authoritarian, you know, father is the boss, the teacher is the boss and you don't-you have to either to obey or to order these other two possibilities and there have been several efforts since the war to change the educational system. Unfortunately enough, there hasn't been too much success so far, although, especially Americans tried very much to bring teachers over and send American educators to Germany. [ER: I know, I met them.] and eh there are now few working really well concerned with all these problems, but in the whole, you know, the-the material situation is so bad. School buildings and facilities and so on. And the teachers are old and they, you know, older people don't like so much to change ideas and practices so they have many troubles but if we could look forward for a couple of years in peace, maybe we succeed. (25:09)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I would like to ask a question. Uh th-the students of the war years and just before the war are the young people who today are growing up to become the-the citizens who will take over in your country. And the leaders of your country must be the people who grew up during the thirties, as they were uh--as they are in our country. Those people grew up under Hitler, under the Hitler Youth movement uh and they participated in it. How do they react today, and how do they feel toward the Western Germany of today and its future in-in the democracies of the world? (26:04)

[Hildegard Brucher:] I would say just these ages you mentioned are little--still very much endangered because they really grew up under this influence. And all I hope is that the eh younger ones who are coming later will uh take over as soon as possible because you know, they start--they were young when the war came or they-they just they didn't experience anything else and they have a difficult time now to start their lives and to-to uh have any good jobs and looking forward for something and they are the real uh fact that you can't know where they turn, you know. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] But there is a strong feeling for Europe in Germany now. I would say that the real ideal you can get people [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] to do something and to work on and to--uh an idea to be uh-to be proud of and so on. Sometime it's not the Europe we feel should have, a democratic Europe and sometimes still a little bit the idea of German leadership in this Europe. But after all, there is this feeling for Europe and the responsibility and the sitting all in one boat, you know. And uh many of these young people you know, they are interested in it and they-they feel strong about these tasks, but finally, you never know really, you know, you meet so many different opinions and sometimes there is very much political apathy I would say and just selfish interests and so on. But then there are others too, and the Americans tried especially to get these ages uh influenced by other ideas and--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Would you say the same is true of the uh young veterans of the last war? The--

[Hildegard Brucher:] Yes, I would include-include these uh young veterans also. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] It's a whole gap between age, you know, the older generation in Germany is a democratic one and then the eh very young ones. In between, it's this terrific gap we have to overcome and this is just our task. (28:29)

[ER:] Well I think that the um the chancellor of the--awakening a real interest in a Europe that is unified, um might serve to be the unite--the point around which all of these people would unite.

[Hildegard Brucher:] I would say so, I really would say so and now we have again much more, for instance, language classes and easy--it's not so difficult for young people to go to France or to travel to Italy and to meet during the vacation and all these factors I think are very important to improve understanding.

[ER:] Well um that I think we have to end because our time is up, but I want to thank you very much for being with me.

[Hildegard Brucher:] It was a great pleasure, Mrs. Roosevelt. (29:21)

[Break 29:21-29:29, repeats 18:31 to 29:21 again until 40:30]

[ER:] We have a few minutes left today so I would like to read to you a letter which was sent to me while I was in Europe, commenting upon a program which was on the air before I left, when my guest was Amelia Igel of the Department of Welfare. Mrs. A.J. Kerouac of Pawtucket, Rhode Island writes: "My dear Mrs. Roosevelt, by listening to your very interesting program as usual this morning, subject foster parents, I could not refrain from telling you that though I am a mother of nine children, I'm real proud to be able to say that during the forty years of my wedded life, I acted as foster mother to exactly thirty-five children, during the time I raised my own family. In my case, I took in newborn babies, one of which had been given up to die. Two doctors could not find any formula that would agree with him." Mrs. Kerouac then gives details as to how she saved this baby's life and continues: "He grew to become five foot, ten and a half inches tall, radio intelligence assistant pilot of World War Two who downed five Japanese airplanes, while their plane was a disabled wreck. And within just fifty yards from the enemy, he maneuvered his plane, though wrecked, to fire the last shell to down the last enemy plane. Then he crashed in Japanese territory. The pilot's body was found but this boy's has not and no one ever knew what happened to him to this day. Then I fostered problem children and I succeeded very well in teaching them right from wrong so that their parents, who could not do a thing with them, are proud of them now. And all children in the neighborhood from far and wide would come to me with their cuts and bruises, torn clothing, socks etc. to mend to avoid a scolding from their parents. And regardless of color or creed, they were always welcome."

[Elliott Roosevelt:] This is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and reminding you that you've been listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time. Today's program was recorded in Switzerland and we wish to thank the Swiss Broadcasting System for making their facilities available to us and also Swiss Air for transporting the recordings.

(43:10)

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