

THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

January 1949 (catalog date)

Description: In this segment, ER reads a letter from the president of French Republic, Vincent Auriol.

Participants: ER

(0:06)

[Unknown:] Alright

[ER:] Thank you Anna. I have a special letter to read to you all today. I'd saved it when we asked for New Year's greetings and I gave you two, uh because this seemed to me especially important. I noticed in our papers not long ago that some of the European nations were becoming very conscious of the fact that it was not enough to roll up a debt to the United States, they were really thinking of getting things done which would make it possible for them to begin to pay back by buying from the United States, and that meant they had to get production going and use the money that was coming to them wisely. And therefore this letter seemed to me important because of the spirit which it expressed. It comes from the President of the French Republic, Monsieur Vincent Auriol [1884-1966], and it begins:

"Madame, you have been kind enough to ask me to send a message through you for the New Year to the American people. I'm particularly happy to have this opportunity offered me to send your compatriots the warmest good wishes from the French people, and to tell them at the same time what are the sufferings and efforts and hopes of the French people at the beginning of this New Year.

Our sufferings, Madame, you've just observed yourself. You just spent three months in our country. You've visited our devastated regions; you saw the town of Amiens, which is at the same time a martyred city and a symbol of the faith of France in her power to reconstruct. You have seen with your own eyes the valiant efforts undertaken by the French people to rebuild their ruins, to bind up their wounds and remake their economy. These efforts of reconstruction and economic development have been helped by the generosity of the American people, without which they would have come to naught. America has already sent us an important part of the necessary materials and equipment for the realization of our basic recovery, without which our efforts would probably have been fruitless. The French also are deeply anxious that as they put their whole strength into the realization of these efforts, they shall not again be useless and end only in more wars. They feel that this security, which they so passionately desire, could not be assured any more than their rehabilitation can be assured through their own efforts alone.

Therefore, France is among the first to understand that the political and economic problems of Europe cannot be solved only on a national scale. France knows that the salvation of Europe lies in a progressive unification. Our country has been among the first to desire such unification and is ready to collaborate with all to achieve it. Unquestionably at certain times, France has recommended prudence along these lines of unification, not because of a desire for vengeance or because of timidity, but because France wishes to share with other nations the experience she has paid so dear to acquire. If one wishes Europe to become a harmonious home, one must see to it that the different component parts obey the same rhythm and develop under a law which is common to all. A peaceful Germany can play a great role in a unified Europe. But if one wants Europe unified and Germany peaceful, then one must see to it that the great sources of material power, which in the past were favorable to the ambitions of conquerors, are from now on put to the service of the whole of Europe. The reconstruction of these material resources must not again become similar to a malignant tumor which drains all the living forces of the body and develops only to kill the human being upon which it preys.

The French people hope that 1949 will bring closer a European union in which they have faith. They hope that the security of Europe will be built on firm foundations with respect for the independence of nations and the liberty of human beings. So that instead of putting all their efforts into preparation for war, the French people can put the greater part of their efforts into peaceful tasks. Because their aspirations tend towards the ideals of peace and democracy, every Frenchman has one special hope close to his heart, namely the desire to see the ties between the people of France and the people of America drawn closer. These are ties as you know, Madame, that have existed throughout the history of United States because of one-- because of our common love for liberty and our common respect for the fundamental rights of human beings to the definition of which you yourself have contributed such a large part. Begging you to accept my deepest respect, signed Vincent Auriol, President of the Republic of France.” And that I think is a fine letter. And now back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood.

(6:06)

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Transcription: Melissa Melvin
First edit: Anna Karditzas
Final edit: Christy Regenhardt

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