

## THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about censorship during the Korean War. In the interview segment, ER discusses defense mobilization and inflation with the Secretary of Treasury John Wesley Snyder.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, John Wesley Snyder

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[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, the Associated Press recently reported that one of its field dispatches was completely suppressed by army censors because it told what US troops in Korea were thinking. Does this have anything to do with military security? They say Ernie Pyle's wonderful stories would never have been passed by the censorship now being exercised on correspondence. How far do you think uh press censorship should go?

[ER:] I'm afraid that has to be left to the army censor. Now, it's a very different thing if um you have someone like Ernie Pyle who was trying to get the real picture of the G.I. and what he did over to us, or if you have someone who possibly--now I don't know this at all, usually a few reporters are pretty wonderful people who have a good deal of sense of what was wise or not--but I can't imagine that if you had someone who indiscriminately gathered uh conversations with G.I.s, you might get out something which was a passing feeling, let's say, or possibly things that were really unwise as far as information on the type of conditions in the army or the type [Elliott Roosevelt: Or the morale factor.] The moral factor. Which-- so that I really think you have to trust that whoever is in charge of censorship has some common sense. And-and- and [ER laugh] also, a great deal of common sense should be required of the reporters themselves. They--I don't think anyone would ever have felt that Ernie Pyle was not able to

[Elliott Roosevelt: Differentiate.] differentiate. But there are people--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I must tell you a very amusing story that I read--I can't remember where I read it--but I read it the other day, and it was a story that went something like this: That the Pentagon uh refused to pass a story for publication, uh which gave the uh complete facts and figures, including the thickness of the armor plating on a type of Russian tank that had been captured in Korea, on the grounds that it would provide information and comfort to the enemy. And I think that's very delightful.

[ER:] I think that's a wonderful story! I think that is just--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] They wouldn't allow publication about their own tanks.

[ER:] But the enemy tanks.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] That's right, but I think that on this -- that whole question that it should be approached and the American public should get a more clear knowledge of why army censors sometimes, on the surface, don't seem to be doing a job that has anything to do with censorship for security reasons. Uh and there's been a lot of unjust criticism of MacArthur's command in that respect. Uh because, after all, if we get out a series of stories uh where uh they're all aimed, for instance, at G.I.s uh ah saying, "Oh this whole government uh set up that we have is dreadful. What are we doing here? Why are we in Korea? Why is this, why is that? And we think it's dreadful." That is doing nothing but I uh lending aid and comfort to the Russians. They use it in the propaganda.

[ER:] Well, of course, they use it in their propaganda, and also it isn't anything that has any value because anyone will grouch, particularly a soldier at certain times. [Elliott Roosevelt: Certainly.] And it doesn't mean um his real feeling when he sits down to think it all out. But I personally would like to say that I have seen some maps and I have seen some stories that made me very unhappy because they gave information that I felt the enemy would have -- would really have had to dig. I don't mean they wouldn't have got it; they probably would. But they'd have taken much longer to get it and um they'd have to take some risks to get it. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And I don't like to see those stories in our papers. That worries me. I don't mind at all when I hear that a G.I. has said that he doesn't see why he has to sit in the cold and why he can't have this or that or the other thing, because I always remember how they used to be enraged when they were told they had to sit perfectly quietly in a tree without moving a leaf. And yet when you got them by themselves they were terribly proud of having learned how to sit quietly in a tree without moving a leaf and they would say to you, "We can sit longer than the Japs and we got the Japs." [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And that was a pride but there was a gripe first, you see. (5:35)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes. Well, I think that on this whole question of military security, that the American public sometimes is misled into thinking that the average "Brass," so to speak, of your military command is just being very arbitrary. And they forget that, in actuality, there are many factors that have to be weighed, and that is perfectly natural that sometimes a correspondent may have written a story that he thinks that he has observed all the rules of the game as far as observing military security and that he's got a gripe that he didn't get his story by. And maybe his home office has gone to bat for him, and sometimes uh we see the repercussions in the papers but we really don't understand the real reasons and back, and sometimes they can't be told to the American public.

[ER:] I think that's absolutely true, and I'd far rather see us serve on the side of getting too little information. The only important thing for us to know is that everything that can be done for the help and the support of our men is being done. And it's not important for us to know just what our tanks are--what the newest tank, or the newest jet, or the newest this or that has or hasn't. It doesn't mean anything really to us; the only person really concerned is the person who is going to fly it. [Elliott Roosevelt: That's right.] And it's much--it's very bad, really, to hand it out. I don't mean they won't find it out, but why hand it out to them so they don't have to try to find out? And those are the things I'm really worried about. I don't like that. I'd much rather be kept in ignorance than I would know too much.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] You know, I think another very interesting story--it isn't really apropos of censorship, although it so happens that the gentleman who is the central character in this story has been uh in the last few weeks in a rather controversy with the high command because he wrote ah a very derogatory series of articles, which uh came out in *Look Magazine* against General MacArthur and his conduct of the war in Korea. Uh but that wasn't the part that I was particularly amused at. The part I was particularly amused at was that he made a very definite rule with his newspaper, *The New York Herald Tribune*, that if he was reassigned to the European theatre that he would refuse to go if Miss Marguerite Higgins, his compatriot on that paper, went to the same theater. That he never wanted to go as a war correspondent in the same theater with her again. [ER Laughs]

[ER:] What on earth do you suppose happened?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, it seems that she scored so many news beats on him, and that it was the more fun for all the correspondents over there in Korea because Miss Marguerite Higgins turned up in the front line in every single attack and every single top, front-page story. And he was always scrambling to keep up with her. Being a rather elderly man from World War II, he had a devil's own time on keeping up with Miss Higgins, and so he laid down the rule, "I'm not going to compete with her anymore."

[ER:] Well, I think that's perhaps a very fair rule to lay down but I think it's quite amusing. And, of course, being a woman, I'm rather pleased about it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, it is rather interesting because Miss Higgins was the lady correspondent who got MacArthur to lift his ban against women correspondents in the fighting areas. So that is one thing that she did accomplish.

[ER:] She did accomplish. Well that was wonderful. That was really good.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] But I think that on the whole, with regard to military security, uh that we do have war correspondents who are extremely good at observing the rules of the game. And sometimes military security has been bumbled because of difficulties of clearing through wire services, the cables, and so forth are limited, and, therefore, some of these things have come through not properly censored. The stories, such as you mentioned, have come through and the War Department--the Defense Department, rather, has been rather unhappy about them and uh have taken steps to make see that they don't occur in the future. (10:45)

[ER:] Well, I-I think it's much better to have occasionally err on the side of too much censorship uh in the actual field reports than it is to err on the side of having too little.

[Elliott Roosevelt:]: Yes, I think I agree with you on that one. But now we've got to move on to another part of our program. (11:16)

[ER:] Recently when I was in Washington, I had the pleasure of a visit with our distinguished secretary of the treasury and he showed me a letter he had just received from a student in Central High School, St. Joseph, Missouri, which he and I think indicates the depth of the thought which people old and young are giving to our problems these troubled times. The student, Janie Vaughn, wanted Secretary Snyder's advice as to ways in which high school students could be helpful. The Secretary has kindly given me permission to read portions of Janie's letter. She says, "Dear Mr. Snyder, I am a member of the Student Committee, organized at Central High School, to see what can be done toward helping the nine hundred students in this school acquire a realistic, yet not necessarily pessimistic concept of the future which faces us. The committee hopes to find something that will help combat the feeling of futility which sometimes arises as we view the confusing events in today's world. If we can succeed in clarifying in our own mind the real basic problems facing people today, we believe two things will become possible for us as high school students: One, although we cannot hope to perform miracles on any of the problems which now baffle even the adult world, we may be able to make some immediate contributions in specific areas if we know best where to begin. Two, at the same time, if we clearly understand where our efforts are likely to do the most good we should be able to prepare ourselves to make more valuable contributions as adults." Janie said, somewhat apologetically, that she realized the secretary of the treasury was a very busy official. But she added, realizing that it is from busy people, people able to see clearly the problems confronting the nation, that young people need assistance these days. The Secretary, I think, took Janie's letter to heart, for today he is my most welcomed guest. To answer some of her questions, I present the secretary of the treasury, Mr. John Wesley Snyder.

[John Wesley Snyder:] Mrs. Roosevelt, this is a genuine pleasure to meet you, you know, to be here with you on this occasion, to chat a while about some of our economic problems that are facing us during our defense mobilization period. And this letter from Janie Vaughn I-I think sort of sets the right scene for our-our little discussion today.

[ER:] I think it does, because I think Janie is typical of many individual citizens who feel confused and baffled and they don't--they'd like to help. And they don't know just what the problems are facing them

and financial problems look to a great many people like something very difficult to understand. So what about the individual citizens, Mr. Secretary? Should he or she feel any personal responsibility for the success of financial mobilization?

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, I think this letter from Janie is one of the most encouraging things that has come across my desk in quite a few days, because it shows that the individual, the high school individual, the college individual, the grown-up are intensely interested in just what this is going to mean to them as an individual--what this program of -of defense mobilization, what-what its impact is going to be upon their individual lives. And, of course, you and I know that it's going to have a tremendous impact because we were coming out of the last war in a most hopeful attitude. We felt that we-we had--we saw ahead of us a great opportunity to build peace and prosperity in all parts of the world with our leadership that we had learned that we had grown up to accept and to ah take over as leaders of the world because we had matured in that leadership. We had to accept it because it came upon us suddenly. We had suddenly, through our way of doing things -- it built our nation into a great nation of great productivity, of great leadership, and of great resources. And we found that we were in a peculiar position that we had to take all the things and be helpful if we wanted the kind of life that we are all so anxious to have. And then just as this was taking root, just as the time when through the great international organizations that we had uh created and helped uh participate in the foundation and in the growth of, just when we felt we were taking a hold and doing some service to the world, we've had this unfortunate setback. We can only consider it a setback because we're not going to allow to be more than that, and thereby we've got to go into this defense mobilization program with an intense ah intensesness that that means that we're going to win. And the fact that each individual is becoming personally interested in their part in this program is a great encouragement to me, Mrs. Roosevelt.

(17:02)

[ER:] Well, of course, Mr. Secretary, I find in going around the country that one of the things which is perhaps hard for people to face is that they must really undertake sacrifices in this country uh and responsibilities, which ordinarily would not be thrust upon them unless we were actually in a war. Now, we're asking them to do all this--to do it in the hope of preserving peace, aren't we? That's what we're hoping for.

[John Wesley Snyder:] That's exactly what we're trying to do, and it-it is the finest insurance policy that an individual can make is to take their personal part in what we have to do. It may mean a small sacrifice. It may mean a large sacrifice we go on into the program. But whatever it is, it's well worth whatever we are called upon as individuals to contribute to that program.

[ER:] I think everyone is willing to do almost anything to keep peace in the world and really to help their own country. But it's such a new thing. It's such an unusual thing that they're slow in getting started in facing it, I think. So I believe that if you make it clear to them what are the definite things that they should do--can you tell me, what are the things that each one of us should be doing day by day?

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, initially I think we must try to grasp what our real problem is. You and I in the past few years have been in many parts of the world. And we have seen the-the type of life they have there. We've seen the-the hardships that many of the peoples of the world have been subjected to since the war and some that were subjected to it as an outgrowth of many years of difficulties and privations. But we're always so happy to get back to the United States, to this sort of life that we have set up for ourselves here. And we realize that we really do have a very fine life. And, therefore, it's one that's so vitally important to preserve. And if we can take the message to the individual, that he really has something extremely valuable to preserve then, that is the first step. The second step is to face up to what the individual can do about it. And I think that the first thing that they can do to help arrest inflation and roll it back is to watch their own personal expenditures, the things that they are buying for themselves

these days, restricted to the necessary things or the things that are not in short supply, so as to not bring uh-uh inflationary pressures on scarce articles or those articles that will be required to the defense program.

[ER:] Now, how will they know uh what are the scarce products? (20:07)

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, they will become evident, I think, as-as the wage and price controls go into effect and we see those items that are -- that do remain under control. Those will be the ones that will be decontrolled and not be in short supply and can be freely purchased. But those articles that involve critical and strategic materials, that require unusual amount of labor to create--the labor that might be needed in the defense plan as our labor. Certainly our manpower will become shorter as we--our greater demands for defense articles and our uh-uh service requirements uh for men and women become larger, we'll have fewer people to do this defense production work, and we must watch for those items that will-will be made short by those procedures.

[ER:] Well now, of course, price control should be a help in controlling inflation, and it should be a help to many people who have seen of cost the living rise and are worried as to how they pay the higher cost of living, and high taxes also. But the controls should uh help in that way but we know that when we did this before certain mistakes were made. Now, are we taking account--I'll give you just an example: One industry told me that um in the last war, one of the troubles that they had was that the men dealing with their industry knew nothing about their industry as a particular occupation, you see, or business. Therefore, they found it very difficult um and uh they couldn't um get--there were the minute controls went on, there were black markets and grey markets, and they are opposed therefore to control. Now number one, I think someone who knows the business should be in charge of that particular business, and number two, I really think that we should try to make it a disgrace for anyone to buy in a black or a grey market.

[John Wesley Snyder:] I couldn't agree with you more. I- I think that if we could get our people educated to the point that they know when they indulge in black market operations, that they are actually a-a-a-are thieves of our personal property and wealth because they are causing us, as individuals, to pay more for the things that we have to buy and they're taking it right out of our pockets, the same as if they had reached into our pocket and removed the money. I know the controls are a most difficult operation I think there are many inequities, but I think we've got to face this serious situation. I hope that by proper restraint and by other procedures and savings and by some of our tax uh-uh impositions that we will be able to assist in the control of inflation. I know that it is the desire of the president to bring us to bear every possible effort to keep inflation under control.

[ER:] Now I just have to have a few minutes break because we have to let our sponsors say a word, and then we'll come right back.

(Break 23:42-23:49)

[ER:] Now, I'm glad to come back to this, and I want to ask you, Mr. Secretary, if you could say something directly to the women of the country, because I believe they spend much of our national income and I would just uh -- they could do much of the saving. And there are other groups I think of, but start with the women.

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, you know I have a very high regard for the power of women. You know that I have probably more women in high positions in the Treasury than any other department in the government. And I certainly believe that they are the spark plug of our whole uh economy these days, because the women really do control the largest part uh the largest part of our spending. And I think that

it's extremely important that we do call to the minds of the women that they are probably going to be the real controllers in our anti-inflationary effort. Because if they were-- be a little more careful about their buying and a little more careful about the direction of their buying, they can be a great deal in keeping down the demands for--and not only the demands, but the proper distribution of some of the vital items in -- that will become scarce if this defense program goes into a long period of time. Uh I think that they can be a little more careful about uh the full usage of the things they already have without replacing many items that still have a-a good long life ahead of them and can -- materials and foods and things of that sort.

[ER:] They can. They can do that with many -- much of their household equipment. Can't they?

[John Wesley Snyder:] That is definitely true, and certainly they can with things in the kitchen. You -- uh I recall to my mind a while ago the very unfortunate misuse of sugar in many instances during the last uh war. I hoped that the women will give careful consideration to this if uh food supplies become scarce, but at the present time there is no indication that we do have any shortages in the food line, fortunately, at this time.

[ER:] I remember what to me seemed certain inequities at the time. For instance, I know of people who bought sugar in the black market, but I felt that more consideration should have been given, for instance, to women who live in the country and ah in the canning season need sugar for preserves and for putting up ah foods of different kinds.

[John Wesley Snyder:] You're certainly right, and your mentioning women on the farm makes me think of another very important thing that our people can do and I think that people on the farm and the preservation of their farm machinery, the better protection and getting a longer use out of it, because we will find that farm machinery will be one of the items affected by the defense program and will necessarily have to have a cutback. We-we towards the end of the last war, we found farm machinery becoming very short in supply. In fact, unfortunately, too short, and I hope that we will begin right today to take better care of that machinery and keep it better housed and covered and oiled and keep it in operation so that it'll last much longer.

[ER:] Well, there is another thing that I think perhaps we could do. I remember in the last war when I went over to England in '42, that they had formed clubs in different areas and instead of leaving the machine idle sometimes--it belonged to -- it didn't belong to an individual, it belonged to a whole area, and one person was hired to take care of it and use it by a whole group and then it um -- it was a tractor it did the work for a whole area. And I think we perhaps do that instead of having so much individual farming machinery, which is nice to have when it's plentiful, but which also leave the machine idle a certain amount of time. (28:15)

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, I think we're going to call on our people to use all the ingenuity possible, because we have--we should have recalled some of the difficulties we have been experiencing in the last war and those are fresh in our minds and we certainly will profit by them. There's one thing that I really do think that would be vitally important, and is vitally important, in our individual responsibility and our individual opportunity in the future on -- as a personal participation in the defense mobilization program and that is increased savings. We have the highest individual income this country's ever known. Our latest reports that it's going to run somewhere around 245 billions of dollars per annum on the average.

[ER:] Well, then we should be buying bonds shouldn't we with those savings?

[John Wesley Snyder:] That is exactly--I am delighted that you intercepted my thought because that's exactly the thing that I was going to suggest. That there isn't any more important anti- inflationary force that you can bring to bear today than to increase your savings, and the United States savings bond is a

very, very fine investment for people for savings. I want to encourage them to save in every fashion, because every dollar that you put away into savings for some future use that you can find so readily apparent by thinking a few moments of things you'd like to have in the future, put away that money on a regular basis. You'll find that that will bring a better uh anti-inflationary force than most anything we can do today.

[ER:] Well now, how about the children? They used to have a chance to save on with stamps on cards. Can they do that now?

[John Wesley Snyder:] We still have the School Savings Program that is very effective, and in many parts of the country it has become an institutional affairs in many of the schools.

[ER:] Because I was told the other day of a little of a uh a little -- almost a charity school in North Carolina where every child is paid a dollar a week for work that they um do, and they have to put ten cents into saving and ten cents into giving to the church. And I couldn't help thinking ten cents in savings takes a little while to buy a bond, but still it was something a child could watch grow, and I think our children are very important to bring in money on this program.

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, they certainly are, and we are encouraging the School Savings Plan. Um that is uh growing in importance in the country, and many of the commercial banks are now taking a very keen interest in encouraging thrift in the child from the time he starts school on up. I believe that that is one of the fundamentals in-in the whole foundation of our American life, is the fact that we did learn to save years ago and to spend it at the proper time. If we continue to do that, I think that we will go a long way towards preserving the kind of life that we want.

[ER:] Well, uh of course, as you know, Mr. Secretary, I have a great horror of war. I have a feeling that uh I would hate to feel that we are facing another war because I feel that it will mean to us um something that we have never yet experience. And for that reason, I uh have a feeling that whatever we can do to get our people to feel that this is an effort to actually prevent war and to prevent from coming to our shores the type of misery that has come to so many other countries in the war days when war was actually on their own doorstep. I-I think every one of us should be anxious and willing to do everything they possibly can do. So that I hope you will send out to us, from time to time, definite things through our newspapers that all of us are expected to do. And I hope you get the pledges of many women and many men that they will um comply with whatever you ask of them, because I know that the financial situation is the backbone of whatever we're going to do.

[John Wesley Snyder:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, I'm going to take this very letter that we just uh read and make that the uh impetus for preparing as careful a presentation of the problem for the young people and for our adults so that they will know exactly what our problem is. And I think you're doing a tremendous service by uh giving an opportunity for us to discuss these matters and lay the foundation for further uh discussion and further development of the causes of uh -- that we are facing and the things we must as individuals do.

[ER:] Well, you see, Mr. Secretary, part of this problem is a public relations problem. It's getting to the people what they must do and this um idea of personal responsibility. So I am enormously grateful to you, that you came today and took your time to do this. I can't thank you enough, and I hope it will mean a great deal of real value in getting the people, particularly the women, to thinking about what they can do. Thank you.

[John Wesley Snyder:] I've been pleased to have this opportunity.

[ER:] Thank you again.

(34:37)

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