

Transcript, The Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt Radio Show, program on the Ku Klux Klan, December 22, 1948. During 1948-1949, Mrs. Roosevelt co-hosted a regular show on ABC Radio with her daughter, Anna. This partial transcript from their December 22, 1948 program features a sharp attack by ER on the Ku Klux Klan.

The following is the text of the ABC
broadcast of ELEANOR and ANNA
ROOSEVELT, Wednesday, Dec. 22 at 10:45
A.M. EST.

ANNA: MOTHER, I READ THE OTHER DAY THAT A MAN NAMED DR. GREEN, THE GRAND DRAGON OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, HAD MADE A SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID THE KLAN DOES NOT STAND FOR HATE, THAT IT STANDS FOR LOVE. I KNOW THAT PARAMOUNT NEWSREEL HAS ASKED YOU TO REPLY TO THIS SPEECH BY DR. GREEN, AND I'M SURE THAT OUR RADIO AUDIENCE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK OF HIS SPEECH AND OF THE KLAN.

MRS. R: YES, ANNA, I READ PORTIONS OF THE SPEECH BY DR. GREEN AND I SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE SAYS THE KLAN DOES NOT HATE JEWS, CATHOLICS AND NEGROES, AND THAT KLANSMEN ARE SWORN TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION AND NOT TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. HE SAYS THEY ARE SWORN TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION, BUT THE PIERY CROSS OF THE KLAN IS STILL USED TO INTIMIDATE NEGROES AND DENY THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO VOTE. DR. GREEN SAYS THAT KLANSMEN ARE SWORN NOT TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, BUT WHITE-ROBED MEN ARE STILL TERRORIZING DEFENSELESS NEGROES IN THE SOUTH. THE GRAND DRAGON SAYS THAT THE KLANSMEN BELIEVE IN BROTHERLY LOVE, BUT THEY STILL MEET SECRETLY AND WEAR MASKS. SINCE WHEN, I WONDER, IS THE SMILE OF FRIENDSHIP HIDDEN BEHIND A MASK? THE ANSWER OF COURSE IS THAT THE KU KLUX KLAN IS JUST WHAT IS ALWAYS HAS BEEN---A SECRET, TERRORISTIC, ORGANIZATION, HOPEFUL OF ENFORCING THE WARPED IDEAS OF A FEW HOODLUMS ON A DEFENSELESS MINORITY!

X MRS. R: HOWEVER, DR. GREEN'S SPEECH REVEALS THAT THERE IS SOMETHING NEW ABOUT THE KLAN. INTOLERANCE NOW BEARS A NEW MASK---THE MASK OF BROTHERHOOD. BIGOTRY HAS BEEN STREAMLINED. IN FORMER DAYS, THE KLAN WAS MORE BLUNT AND MADE NO BONES ABOUT ITS EVIL INTENTIONS. IT BOASTED OF ITS DISLIKE FOR JEWS AND CATHOLICS, AND OF FRIGHTENING NEGROES WITH GUNS AND FIERY CROSSES. BUT NOW, ACCORDING TO DR. GREEN, THE KLAN NO LONGER HATES JEWS AND CATHOLIC AND NEGROES. IT BELIEVES IN CHRIST, HE SAYS, AND IN BROTHERHOOD.

ONE OF THE STRANGEST THINGS TO ME IS HOW MEN CAN PAY LIP SERVICE TO AN IDEAL LIKE LOVE OR BROTHERHOOD, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRACTICING OPPRESSION AND CRUELTY. HITLER PROBABLY REALLY DID NOT HATE THE POLES OR THE DUTCH OR THE BELGIANS, BUT HE INVADDED THEIR COUNTRIES AND KILLED THOUSANDS OF THEM. I DON'T SUPPOSE MR. STALIN ACTUALLY HATES THE LITHUANIANS ~~OR THE YUGOSLAVS~~ OR THE RUMANIANS, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT HE HOLDS THEM IN VIRTUAL BONDAGE. SO, ALTHOUGH DR. GREEN SAYS THAT THE KLAN REALLY DOESN'T HATE NEGROES OR JEWS OR CATHOLICS, I'M AFRAID THAT I AND MOST AMERICANS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO AGREE WITH HIM UNTIL THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING AND GOOD WILL ON THE PART OF THE KLAN. THERE IS STILL TOO GREAT A SIMILARITY BETWEEN A WHITE NIGHTSHIRT AND A NAZI BROWNSHIRT.

MRS. R: ONLY RECENTLY THE UNITED NATIONS PASSED A BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS. FOR TWO YEARS A COMMITTEE, OF WHICH I WAS A MEMBER, WORKED ON THIS DECLARATION OF RIGHTS TO GUARANTEE EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL MEN. THE RUSSIANS, LIKE THE KLAN, APPARENTLY DO NOT BELIEVE IN EQUAL RIGHTS, ALTHOUGH THEY--LIKE THE KLAN--WOULD NOT ADMIT THIS. WHILE WE WORKED, SLOWLY AND LABORIOUSLY IN COMMITTEE TO FORMULATE THESE ESSENTIAL RIGHTS, THERE WERE FREQUENT DISAGREEMENTS AND DISPUTES. WHEN THESE OCCURED, I USUALLY TRIED TO SET FORTH THE AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE RIGHTS OF MEN, AS OUTLINED IN OUR OWN BILL OF RIGHTS. AND ALMOST ALWAYS THE DELEGATES OF THE U-S-S-R AND HER SATELLITES WOULD ASK: "BUT HOW ABOUT YOUR TREATMENT OF NEGROES IN YOUR COUNTRY?" "HOW ABOUT YOUR KU KLUX KLAN LYNCHINGS?" WHEN THE RUSSIAN DELEGATE ASKED ME THOSE QUESTIONS, I HAD NO ANSWER. WHAT DO YOU SAY, STANDING BEFORE A COMMITTEE OF A WORLD ORGANIZATION, WHEN YOU ARE ASKED ABOUT THE KU KLUX KLAN? YOU CAN NOT EXCUSE IT, FOR THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR IT. YOU CAN ONLY SAY, AS I SAID TO THE UNITED NATIONS, THAT MOST AMERICANS DESPISE THE KU KLUX KLAN; THAT FOR EVERY HOODED KLANSMEN THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS WHO CHERISH OUR TRADITIONAL FREEDOMS AND WHO DESIRE ONLY TO LIVE IN PEACE AND BROTHERHOOD WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. I WONDER IF DR. GREEN--WHO TALKS OF UPHOLDING THE CONSTITUTION--IS PROUD OF THE FACT THAT HIS ORGANIZATION WAS USED MORE THAN ANY OTHER WEAPON BY THE RUSSIANS TO ATTACK OUR COUNTRY BEFORE THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD!