

Thoughts on Peace during an Air Raid.

The Germans were over this house last night and the night before that. Here they are again. It is a queer experience, lying in the dark and listening to the zoom of a hornet which may at any moment sting you to death. It is a sound that interrupts cool and consecutive thinking about peace. Yet it is a sound--far more than prayers and anthems-- that should compel one to think about peace. Unless we can think peace into existence we-- not this one body in this one bed but millions of bodies yet to be born-- will lie in the same darkness and hear the same death rattle ^{overhead}. Let us think what we can do to create the only efficient air raid shelter while the guns on the hill go pop pop pop and the searchlights finger the clouds and now and then, sometimes close at hand, sometimes ~~in the distance~~ ^{far away} a bomb drops.

Up there in the sky young Englishmen and young German men are fighting each other. The defenders are men, the attackers are men. Arms are not given to Englishwomen either to fight the enemy or to defend herself. She must lie weaponless tonight. Yet if she believes that the fight going on up in the sky is a fight by the English to protect freedom, by the Germans to destroy freedom, she must fight, so far as she can, on the side of the English. How far can she fight for freedom without firearms? By making arms, or clothes or food. But there is another way of fighting for freedom without arms; we can fight with the mind. We can make ideas that will help the young Englishman who is fighting up in the sky to defeat the enemy.

But to make ideas effective, we must be able to fire them off. We must put them into action. And the hornet in the sky rouses

My Virginia Woolf.

(Mounts House, Rodmell, Devon, July, 1918.
England.)

another hornet in the mind. There was one zooming in the Times this morning--a woman's voice saying "Women have not a word to say in politics." There is no woman in the Cabinet; none in any responsible post. All the idea makers ~~xxxx~~ who are in a position to make ideas effective are men. That is a thought that damps thinking, and encourages irresponsibility. Why not bury the head in the pillow, plug the ears, and cease this futile activity of idea making?

^{office tables and}
 Because there are other tables besides conference tables. Are we not leaving the young Englishman without a weapon that might be of private value to him if we give up ~~private~~ thinking, tea table thinking, because it seems useless? Are we not stressing our disability because our ability exposes us perhaps to abuse, perhaps to contempt. ² "I will not cease from mental ~~strife~~ ^{fight}" Blake wrote. Mental ^{fight} ~~strife~~ means thinking against the current, not with it.

That current flows fast and furious. It issues in a spate of words from the loud speakers and the politicians. Every day they tell us that we are a free people, fighting to defend freedom. That is the current that has whirled the young airman up into the sky and keeps him circling there among the clouds. Down here with a roof to cover us and a gas mask handy it is our business to puncture gas bags and discover seeds of truth. It is not true that we are free. We are both prisoners tonight-- he boxed up in his machine with a gun handy; we lying in the dark with a gas mask handy. If we were free we should be out in the open, dancing, at the play, or sitting at the ~~open~~ window talking together. What is it that prevents us? "Hitler," the loud speakers cry with one voice. Who is Hitler? What is he? Aggressiveness, tyranny, the insane love of power made

manifest, they reply. Destroy that, and you will be free.

The drone of the planes is now like the sawing of a branch over head. Round and round it goes, sawing and sawing at a branch directly above the house. Another sound ^{begins} ~~begins~~ sawing its way in the brain. "Women of ability"--it was Lady Astor speaking in the Times this morning-- "are held down because of ~~Hitlerism~~ a subconscious Hitlerism in the hearts of men." Certainly we are held down. We are equally ^{prisoners} ~~prisoners~~ tonight--the Englishmen in their planes, the Englishwomen in their beds. But if he stops to think he may be killed; and we too. So let us think for him. Let us try to drag up into consciousness the subconscious Hitlerism that holds us down. It is the desire for aggression; ^{the} ~~the~~ desire to dominate and enslave. Even in the darkness we can see that made visible. We can see shop windows blazing; and women gazing; ~~and~~ painted women; dressed up women; women with crimson lips and crimson finger nails. They are slaves who are trying to enslave. If we could free ourselves from slavery we should free men from tyranny. Hitlers are bred by slaves.

~~Now~~ ^A bomb drops. All the windows rattle. The anti-air guns are getting active. Up there on the hill under a net tagged with strips of green and brown ~~color~~ ^{leave} stuff to imitate the hues of autumn ~~and~~ ^{guns} are concealed. Now they all fire at once. On the nine o'clock wireless we shall be told "Forty four enemy planes were shot down during the night, ten of them by anti-air ^{craft} ~~fire~~ fire." And one of the terms of peace, the loud speakers

speakers say , is to be disarmament. There are to be no more guns, no army, no navy, no air force in the future. No more young men will be trained to fight ^{with arms}

That rouses another mind-hornet in the chambers of the brain-- another quotation. "To fight against a real enemy, to earn undying honour and glory by shooting total strangers, and to come home with my breast covered with medals and decorations , that was the summit of my hope... It was for this that my whole life so far had been dedicated, my education, training, everything..." Those were the words of a young Englishman who fought in the last war. In the face of them do the current thinkers honestly believe that by writing "Disarmament" on a sheet of paper at a conference table they will have done all that is needful? Othello's occupation will be gone; but he will remain Othello. The young airman up in the sky is driven not only by the voices of loud speakers; he is driven by voices in himself-- ancient instincts, instincts fostered and cherished by education and tradition. Is he to be blamed for those instincts? Could we switch off the maternal instinct at the command of a table full of politicians? Suppose that imperative among the peace terms was, "Childbearing is to be restricted to a very small class of specially selected women" would we submit? Should we not say "The maternal instinct is a woman's glory. It was for this ~~that~~ that my whole life has been dedicated, my education, training, everything.. But if it were necessary for the sake of humanity , for the peace of the world, that child bearing should be restricted, the maternal instinct subdued, women would attempt it. Men would help them. They would honour them for their refusal to bear children. They would give them other openings for their creative power.

That ^{top} must make part of our fight for freedom. We must help the young Englishman to root out from themselves the love of ~~medals~~ medals and decorations. We must create more honourable activities for those who try to conquer in themselves the fighting instinct, the subconscious Hitlerism. We must compensate the man for the loss of his gun.

The sound of sawing over head has increased. All the search lights are erect. They point at a spot ^a exactly above this roof. At any moment a bomb may fall on this very room. One, two, three, four, five, six...the seconds pass. The bomb did not fall. But during those seconds of suspense all thinking stopped. All feeling, save one dull dread, ceased. A nail fixed the whole being to one hard board. The emotion of fear and of hate is therefore sterile, unfertile. Directly that fear passes the mind reaches out and instinctively revives itself by trying to create. Since the room is dark it can create only ~~out~~ ^{from} of memory. It reaches out to the memory of other Augusts--in Bayreuth, listening to Wagner; in Rome, walking over the Campagna; in London. Friends voices come back. Scraps of poetry return. Each of those thoughts, even in memory, was far more positive, reviving, healing and creative than the dull dread ^{made} of fear and hate. Therefore if we are to compensate the young man for the loss of his glory and of his gun we must give him access to the creative feelings. We must ~~share~~ ^{make} happiness. We must free him from the machine. We must bring him out of his prison into the open air. But what is the use of freeing the young Englishman if the young German and the young Italian remain slaves?

The search lights, wavering across the flat, have picked up the plane now. From this window one can see a little silver insect turning and twisting in the light. The guns go pop pop pop. Then they cease. Probably the raider was brought down behind the hill. One of the pilots landed safe in a field near here the other day. He said to his captors, speaking fairly good English, "How glad I am that the fight is over!" Then an Englishman gave him a cigarette, and an Englishwoman made him a cup of tea. That would seem to show that if you can free the man from the machine the seed does not fall upon altogether stony ground. The seed may be fertile.

At last all the guns have stopped firing. All the search lights have been extinguished. The natural darkness of a summer's night returns. The innocent sounds of the country are heard again. An apple thuds to the ground. An owl hoots winging its way from tree to tree. And some half forgotten words of an old English writer come to mind: "The huntsmen are up in America..." Let us send these fragmentary notes to the huntsmen who are up in America, to the men and women whose sleep has not yet been broken by machine ~~gun~~^{fire}, in the belief that they will re-think them generously and charitably, perhaps shape them into something serviceable. And now, in the shadowed half of the world, to sleep.

August, 1940.

Monks House, Godmell, Lewes Sussex.
27th July 1940

Dear Mrs Fisher,

I did receive your first letter safely, and I replied to it some weeks ago. Perhaps by this time you will have had my answer. But I will repeat briefly what I said: In the first place I am very much interested by your scheme. But I cannot promise to write anything definitely, because conditions here are so unsettled; and also because I may not find myself able to deal with any of the subjects you suggest satisfactorily.

~~My first intention was to write you a long letter, but I have decided to write you a shorter one, and to leave the rest for another time.~~ But I would like to write an article, roughly speaking, about womens position in the present war; and her possible contribution to peace. I gather that you allow me freedom both in the choice of subject and the length of article. I should aim at about two or three thousand words. But I should like to know; by what date you would want it? Also, do you allow simultaneous publication in magazines here or in the ~~United~~ S. A. ?

I will of course wait till I hear from you about these points. We find that the delay in getting letters from America is very considerable. Yours dated 'uly 5th only reached me three days ago.

Yours sincerely
Virginia Woolf.

Monks House, Bodmell, Lewes, Sussex.
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Your sincerely Virginia Woolf.

Mrs Raymond Fisher
295 Convent Avenue
New York
USA



Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

3rd Sept. 1940

Dear Mrs Fisher,

I enclose herwith the
article you asked me to contribute
to your book.

for I hope it will reach you
in time for publication. I am
sorry ~~for~~ a delay that was
inevitable.

With kind regards

Virginia Woolf

(Mrs. Woolf.)

BATH
LEWES
5 15 10 AM
3 19 41
Mrs Motter Harris Fisher

~~care of Miss Rhoda McCulloch~~

The Womans Press

~~600 Lexington Avenue~~ 295 Convent Avenue

New York N.Y.

U.S.A.

152
1 AVISTOCK SQUARE,
W. 10th St. N. W.

Monks House
Rodmell, Lewes
Sussex. England.

W. Fisher

Private

~~152~~

21st June 1940

Dear Mrs Motier Fisher,

Thank you very much for your letter, which is full of interesting things. There is nothing I should like better than to write something for the book you describe. But I am afraid that I must begin by making two qualifications: first, conditions in England are such that I have to face the fact that all writing may become impossible. Second, if I were able to write an article, I should have to offer it to one of the American magazines, for ever since the outbreak of war I have promised to write for one or another of them such an article as you describe. I could not thus promise anything definitely, for the first reason; and you may well feel that you cannot leave a place open for me. Then again it is quite likely that you would not care to publish anything that had already appeared in a magazine. Perhaps you will let me know how these difficulties affect you.

With regard to the article itself, I should very much like to carry out your first suggestion: that is to try to ~~develop~~ develop further those views of what should be the attitude of women towards war and peace which I sketched in my book Three Guineas. As I said there, indifference would become impossible once war aroused emotions. Now that war is very close to me, I am experiencing the emotional changes which I foretold. And of course, it is an extraordinarily interesting experience, although all conclusions when one is in the midst of it are hazardous and ~~and~~ perhaps of no value, save as symptoms. All the same I should like to try to work them into some sort of shape, if only as notes for people more happily circumstanced to consider. And nothing would please me more than to lay them before an audience of American women, whose part

part in preserving and improving our civilisation must be such an immense one. And it is a great encouragement to me at this moment, when the future looks so dark, to realise, as your letter makes me realise, how actively women on your side of the Atlantic are interesting themselves in problems which will remain of the greatest importance, whatever our fate is here.

Please accept my thanks for your letter and for the good will which it expresses. I have delayed writing, but only because, as you will understand, we are living at a time of great daily anxiety.

Believe me,

yours sincerely

Virginia Woolf

By You say that your book is to be published in the autumn.
What date would you require the article?

Monk's House

Rodmell

near Lewes

Sussex

3rd Sept. 1940

Dear Mrs Motier Fisher,

I have written an article, called Thoughts on peace during an air raid which I hope may be in time for ~~your~~ your book. I am sending it by this post under a separate cover. I should have liked to have written more fully, and also to have revised the article. But I think that it is best to send it as it stands, and know that you will make allowances.

I have left it so late that I am not sending it to the magazine--it was The Forum--that asked me for an article. Therefore you are free to publish it whenever you wish. But I should be glad if you would tell me when your book is coming out in order that I may print it over here if I wish.

Perhaps you will be so good as to let me know of its safe arrival. I realise that I may have ~~late~~ sent it too late; but as you can imagine, it has been very difficult to write at all.

Yours sincerely

Virginia Woolf

Mrs Motier Harris Fisher

295 Convent Avenue

New York

N. Y.

U.S.A.



Oberlin
Ohio

3

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

11th Nov. 1940

Dear Mrs Fisher,

I have received your letter, and write to say that I have no objection to your having sent the article on the Air Raid to the New Republic. Of course I am glad that it should be published, as you seem to think that your book may be delayed. I am surprised that the Forum did not answer you. Miss Moir has more than ~~once~~ pressed me to send them just such an article. But perhaps she is no longer on the staff.

I hope you are pleased with the result of the Election. We are over here. Privately, we are a good deal distracted; as our London flat has been bombed, and that means a great deal of worry about furniture and so on as you can imagine. But the above address will always find me

Believe me, yours sincerely

Virginia Woolf

Mrs Motier Harris Fisher

Oberlin

Ohio

U.S.A.

World Center for Women's Archives
1270 Sixth Avenue, New York, New York
~~285 Madison Avenue, New York, New York~~
Circle 6-3480
Telephone Murray Hill 6-1986

"No Documents, no History" - Fustel de Coulanges

Because we know you are interested in women's achievements, we are appealing to you.

In these critical times when our gains are threatened and even the record of our struggle and accomplishment is being destroyed, we need your help.

We beg you to read the following statement which is sponsored by many who believe in women's contribution to social history.

The purposes of this organization are:

To make a systematic search for undeposited source materials dealing with women's lives and activities, interests and ideas, as members of society everywhere. Included in such source materials will be letters, diaries, speeches, pamphlets and articles, manuscripts of books in special cases, notes and memoranda, programs of work and publicity.

To reproduce important materials, already deposited elsewhere, by means of microfilming and other modern processes.

To become a clearing-house of information with respect to the location and character of source materials on women in other libraries and institutions.

To encourage recognition of women as co-makers of history.

***Who would use
such available
material?***

THE SOCIAL HISTORIAN who deals with the history of countries, peoples, business, professions, labor, arts and sciences.

THE PLAYWRIGHT AND NOVELIST who seek background in which to place the struggle that makes fiction as well as history.

THE BIOGRAPHER who wants facts about a woman's life and her relations to the world in which she lived or lives.

THE EDUCATOR who has no basis for handling the woman's role in history, past or contemporary.

THE JOURNALIST who, writing the news of today, must have the background of yesterday.

THE CLUBWOMAN who wants to know what other women have done.

THE WOMAN ARTIST, SCIENTIST, DOCTOR, LAWYER, TEACHER, FARMER, INDUSTRIAL WORKER, BUSINESS WOMAN, who wishes to deepen her knowledge of women in her field of activity or in another field.

THE STUDENT who has papers or theses to prepare on subjects relating to women, or in fields of endeavor largely carried on by women.

THE GENERAL INFORMATION SEEKER who needs to supplement emotional reaction with factual knowledge.

***Why is
a new center
needed?***

Because existing institutions—even women's colleges—tend to specialize in men's materials. Often they have very little source material of any kind.

Because women are inclined to destroy their own documents, while carefully preserving the letters and other materials of their fathers and brothers. The Center will try to secure a more balanced picture of humanity in the interests of historic truth.

Because the public at large does not realize the extent to which history eliminates the story of women. Special attention has to be called to women's work, ideas, observations on life, and ideals to give them the consideration that their value carries in fact.

***But wouldn't
the
Congressional
Library be the
proper
depository?***

No. Though the Congressional Library contains a copy of every book copyrighted in America and a magnificent collection of other books on every kind of subject, its unprinted materials are mainly political in character. In this relation it possesses some important materials on women in the abolition movement and in the woman suffrage campaigns. Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lydia Maria Child, Susan B. Anthony and Anna Dickinson are there. But neither in origin nor in continued support is the Congressional Library adapted to the building up of a great archive dealing with the broad history of women.

Twenty years ago, an eminent leader of the woman movement gave to a public library priceless documents concerning the movement for equal suffrage. Today, twenty years after, these papers lie crammed in drawers crumbling to dust . . . in such condition that readers cannot use them without injuring them. The institution had so little interest in these records that an investigator found them only after much searching and enquiry.

What about giving materials to a city library?

The direction of all public institutions is partly political and therefore subject to men's control in the main. Women need to direct the collection, preservation, and guidance of readers in women's materials to correct the balance—until such time at least as it acquires stability, through natural cultural discipline.

Why not give them to a state institution?

What is also true is that infinite waste of time, energy, and money occurs where researchers and general readers must seek materials among 48 states and many cities. Economy of education with respect to women will be served best by the World Center for Women's Archives.

Furthermore, the materials of women from other countries logically belong only in such a Center.

Not long ago an enquiry was made by the great Deutsches Museum at Munich concerning American women's contribution to Science. But no American was found who could answer that question.

The center could best serve international culture?

Such questions the Center would try to be able to answer in time.

At present it is supported by sponsors, membership fees and contributions. To date this income has merely covered minimum office expenses.

What is the present support of the center?

An annual income of \$35,000 a year would provide proper housing of records and a technically trained staff which would collect, preserve and make available the material to meet demands for service which are increasing daily. Such provision for three years, at least, would allow for development, unhampered by the immediate need for fund raising and would give the Board of Directors freedom to work toward an endowment, thus insuring the future of the Center.

Fire-proof space and proper equipment for the care of materials as they come in.

What is needed at once?

A trained technical staff to handle the search for materials and to care for them when they are deposited.

Members and friends.

Mrs. Marjorie White - in Charge of Archives

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Motier H. Fisher

Publications

Magazine articles:

Hygeia, 1937-39	The Lonely Child Best Foot Forward "The Child is Father of the Man" Too Good for his own Good
Modern Psychologist, 1936	Is Your Child Popular?
National Parent- Teacher Magazine December, 1936	I was a Teacher in That School
Education, 1937	In Place of School Marks
Nation's Schools, 1937	Success Habits
Parents' Magazine 1936-1939	Summer Camp for your Child Are Allowances Practical? Lighthearted Parenthood Ambitious Parents (Accepted only)
Journal of the American Ass'n of University Women January, 1937 June, 1939	The Occasion and Mother Lady Galahad
Social Frontier 1938, 39	It is My Turn Song of the Stuffed Shirts (Accepted only)
Trailer Travel 1937, 38	Serial: Vagabonding by Trailer
Trailer Caravan '37	Trailers go Highbrow
New Masses May 10, 1938	Liberal Arts and the Marginal Life
New York Times 1938 (March, I think)	Story of a Women's Bank in Cleveland
New Republic October 4, 1939	Rabble Rouser of the Right
WKK-WCLE WTAM 1937, 39	Two series of parent education programs broadcast from Cleveland have written and reviews

In previous years I wrote numbers of articles/which appeared in various education, business magazines and local publications. They hardly seem worth listing