

## WOMAN'S PLACE IN WAR TIME

In these urgent days when our country is struggling with complex problems, you women students recognize that you are a vital part of America, a part of her human resources. You are eager that your contribution to your country's cause shall be made promptly and effectively. This morning I am going to talk to you about the college woman's place in this war. I do not intend to imply that I have the answers to all the problems that are confronting us now. No one of us has all the answers. But I do have a suggestion for the young people in our colleges and universities. My thought is that whatever place college people take in our country's war effort we must be not only generous but also wise and thoughtful. We must be sure that each one of us exercises the best powers within him to come to the right conclusions and to utilize these conclusions to answer the questions of his mind and his heart.

These early weeks of war work are the time when feelings are at their highest pitch. For weeks and months emotions will continue to wield vast influence. Therefore you, as college students, have the solemn duty of using your intellects so that everything you say and everything you do shall rest on decisions made in the light of tested thought.

To me the greatest source of pride in our national history is that as we have developed strength we have also developed ideals. In the growth of a great nation, as in the growth of a fine individual, the two aspects of life - the soul and the body, the spiritual and the material - must unfold symmetrically. Because we Americans have always endeavored to bring our

spiritual ideals into proper relationship with material forces, the materialistic and mechanistic forces have not dominated. One of the things at the base of today's furor is that certain national cultures have adopted as their dynamic principle of life and living the idea that "might makes right," that materialism is the best basis for thinking. There the human being is reduced to a subordinate place. Our American concept puts the human being in the center; here human personality is the important value. "The soul and the body in balance" is our idea. "Man does not live by bread alone." The eternal quest for each individual is to balance selfish impulses, to become master of himself, and to give consideration to others.

The struggle in progress in the world today is essentially a clash of ideologies. One group of nations which lack respect for human personality is at war with the other group, the democracies. In order to conquer those nations which threaten to destroy our civilization we are compelled, for the time being, to use their devices. We are forced to emphasize the physical, to build a terrific body, a mechanistic body, a blitz body. Circumstances command us to transform all our resources into a very scourge, so far as we can, in order to out-manuever those other cultures which are dedicated primarily to domination by materialistic force. Japan, Germany and Italy respect that mechanistic force. The soul of America alone will not destroy their engines of war. We must develop a body equal to their body - and they are almost all body at the present time.

Today we are facing a great paradox. You must help America solve it. The problem is this: can we turn loose the forces of hate (and we must hate the thing we fight) and still keep ideas and ideals that we love? Can we hate and still value the only concept that makes for permanent peace?

Is this paradoxical behavior possible in human affairs? The answer is yet to be determined. We <sup>in a sense</sup> can ~~control~~ materialistic force. We are doing that more and more effectively all the time. But we must prove that by such domination of body over body we can save the soul of America, the thing that is vital in American life. There is the paradox - to become efficient, mechanistic and strong and retain idealistic values at the same time.

This war is different from any war since Biblical days. In it we are seeing a return to barbarian times. The point is this: all members of a fighting nation have again become military objectives. One of the highest points in the history of war was reached when David met Goliath. Each of the warring countries sent one of its men out in front to engage in individual combat and agreed that the success of the fight between those two would determine the outcome of the war. David killed Goliath, and David's people won the war. The next long step in military history came when fighters donned uniforms. This change brought about a new military code: the soldiers in uniform were the legitimate objects of attack. Now that kind of war is gone. Everyone is now a legitimate object of attack. Any man, woman, or child, in uniform or not in uniform, may become a target of the Axis powers, as the records show.

Every one of us, therefore, must prepare for war. Each one of us must become part of a fighting unit. The question is: where does each individual belong?

There is one major occupation for every person. That is to help develop morale. It is morale behind power that wins wars. Germany lost World War I because her people at home lost heart and refused to support the men at the front. The Germans have been winning World War II by destroying

morale in the countries of their enemies. Therefore, first of all, let us be too intelligent to help our enemies by doing anything that might disrupt morale. Your challenge is to do those things which will increase our strength to resist and our will to fight.

What we are fighting for is the preservation of a way of life, a new way of life which has reached its highest expression in our nation, which was fostered here, and which we want to perpetuate. We have placed the human being in the center of things, regarded him as our most important asset, and now in this great international conflict we must act as if the asset that is most important is mechanistic force - production for destruction. This procedure is dangerous. We must never let these materialistic things become all-important. We must keep on thinking of the soul of America, finding means for human betterment, finding capacity to work one with another, thinking together, subordinating selfish interests for the good of the group, and at the same time making it possible for each individual to develop himself to the fullest in terms of his own potentialities. It is these things that will preserve America's soul. For in this threat by a foreign philosophy we must do all we can to safeguard what we prize and make sure that our highest ideals shall not perish. We must erect ramparts for this purpose. We must continue to guard these defenses energetically after the great victory comes.

What, specifically, is woman's place in a world at war? Woman is the conserver, the socializer. In earliest times when all people were migratory there were no homes and hence no civilization as we think of it. Life was a matter of hunting and fishing and finding crude shelter from the elements. The women of those roving tribes grew tired of this way of life. There was too much traveling, too little security, and there were no ways

of preserving the experiences of life which they valued. Gradually the women began to improve the rough shelters; they made gardens and planted seeds, and they said, "We shall call this place home. The men can go out from here to hunt and fish." Women established homes because it is in the home that human values and human experiences can be preserved and transmitted from one generation to another. Through the ages woman, in her capacity as homemaker, has been the one upon whom man has depended to preserve the significant outcomes of experience.

As conservers, your job, individually and specifically, becomes that of studying more systematically than you have ever studied before, and studying with greater energy than ever before. You are symbols of American ideals. You will become the symbols of peace. You must represent what America means. I do not know what reasons motivated you when you came to college. Probably there were many. Some enroll in college in order to associate with nice folks, or because college training will lead to a job, or because going to college is the thing to do. Or you may have had more specific ambitions. In any case, it is true that as you approached your classroom work in the past it was not with 100% concentration and energy. Your job now is to concentrate 100%. In terms of rendering war-time service, your job is to seek every opportunity to find more definite, satisfactory understandings about what life is, what American life is. You must answer the questions: "What am I here for?" "How can I become the kind of person I should become, with the idea of rendering the best service any woman can?"

As never before, your primary purpose is to develop a philosophy of life that is not confused, even though the way to achieve it may lead through days of confusion. Don't just study in an idealistic way. Live in

the way we set up idealistically as the way to live. Get experience in democratic living. It is urgent that you take advantage of this opportunity because there are thousands in our country who cannot now live democratically. These are the men in our fighting forces. There is a corporal over the private, a sergeant over the corporal, a lieutenant over the sergeant, and a captain over the lieutenant. Everybody takes orders. That system makes for military efficiency, and right now we need armed forces second to none. But that is not cultivating in men's minds and hearts democratic habits. Do everything you can in this free atmosphere of your college campus to fulfill the democratic responsibility that is yours so that by your living and your study you personally may become a realistic pattern to influence not only our people now, but our people after this war is successfully concluded.

In that way you symbolize what it is we are fighting for, and in that way you build morale. In that way, also, you equip yourselves and your nation for post-war service. The greatest battle is the one we shall fight when the war is over. What will be the thing that will hold us together? What will be the dynamic, unless it be those people who have the intelligence and have set themselves the task of equipping themselves definitely for that service.

I wore the uniform in World War I. After I and the thousands like me came home and put away our uniforms, we began to witness a strange state of affairs in our country. Speeches were made. Presses poured out literature. And what did they try to tell me? It was something like this: "You poor puppet! They made a fool of you. The commercial interests, big business, just got you to pull their investments out of the fire." We heard that kind of thing in speeches, we read it in books, we listened to it over the radio.

That period of disillusionment irked me beyond measure. I was a fool because I wore the uniform! I was not! I helped to keep the world safe for democracy. The Germans in the last war were saying, "Der Kaiser und Gott." They considered their head man equal to God. "Might is right" was the slogan they had then. They tried to dominate the world with that philosophy. If that horror had engulfed the world then, you and I would not be here today trying to preserve our way of living. We fought for democracy then. We have to fight for it again now, and we may have to fight for it still again. I appeal to your intelligence so that both now and when the war is over, whenever you are told that we were deluded and misled, you will not give that kind of talk a hearing.

By that time, at the end of the war, you will have transferred your life to homes and communities. The nation will look to you to guard those values for which we have been fighting. You will have to be the leaders. The need to think clearly, to strengthen our American institutions, and to man our positions of leadership will be greater than ever before.

You are going to be the mothers of tomorrow. No people transmit as effectively or as fully the nation's culture from one generation to another as the mothers of that nation. Professor T. V. Smith has presented this idea very beautifully in these words: "For generation after generation women as mothers have converted potentialities into individuals by treating them not as the nobodies they were to begin with but as the somebodies they were to be. This is woman's gift..." Yours will be the task of raising children who will understand and love and work for the things we value and who will have strong souls and strong bodies, - a tough generation to meet tough problems.

Shall women leave college now to go to work? That is a vital question. Let me help you to find an answer. You will want to know how many women are available to meet the needs in industry and therefore how urgent it may be for you to go to work.

How many unmarried, unemployed women between the ages of 18 and 24 do you think there are in the United States? Two million!

How many women of all ages do you think there are in all of the colleges, universities, junior colleges, teachers colleges, normal schools and every other type of higher institution above the high school? 550,000!

How many women do you think there are in institutions such as ours that grant degrees? 400,000!

Shall you go to work? My point of view is that if it is necessary to increase the number of women in industry and business, we had better put to work those two million who are not married and who are not going to college. Let us put to work women of the other age groups. Let some of the younger married women work before we put the relatively small numbers of college women to work. Let us exhaust these reservoirs.

You college women are particularly aware of this problem because you happen to live in a community where the demand for industrial workers is very great at the moment. But we still have railroads to transport workers, we still can build dormitories to house them, and we can bring to the nation's assembly lines these unmarried unemployed women before we draw on the 400,000 who are being trained for leadership.

You alone must see how your sense of duty is involved. You must not be drawn from your job of study into a job in industry without first analyzing carefully what your potential contribution is. You must ask what contribution you can make not only in the present emergency but in terms of what is to follow.



I am appealing to you to be the carriers of your culture. There are all too few people who are going to be able to develop the understanding that is essential to stabilize our thinking through this war and to guide the tremendous adjustments we shall have to make after the war. This task of preserving democracy will utilize every bit of intelligence and energy and patriotism that you can muster. View changes as they affect you in your personal experience. Analyze everything that comes within the orbit of your observation in terms of large democratic relationships. Here, ready to your hand, is your most significant task for the present and for the future.

In the meantime you college women are not remote from our war effort. You can find ways and means of making important contributions. For example, take a First Aid course if you have not done so already. This is your first obligation. Why? Because, as I showed you, you and the members of your community are all potential military objectives. I am not sure that enemy forces will be able to come over here to make us use this First Aid knowledge; but they may, and you will be ready for the emergency. It would be pretty difficult, incidentally, to take a course which will offer more opportunities for practical daily usefulness in peace time than this one.

Have your blood typed or contribute your blood plasma to the reserve supply. Increasingly medical men are saving lives by transferring blood from one individual to another. We all know within our circle of acquaintances people who owe their lives to the fact that someone had blood of the same type and was willing to give it. In the event of terrible injuries there is great loss of blood and the need for replacement is critical. Every healthy individual should stand ready to render that service.

Every college woman should arrange in her program for time to give to war work, whether it be a half-hour, two hours, four hours a week. You will

find opportunities for your contribution on every hand. You can use odd moments, too, which need not be regularly planned. The Red Cross has urgent need for several types of service that you can render.

I have given to you here my own thoughts about woman's place in war time. While I have told you what I believe, you must not think that I am in any way giving you a final judgment for yourselves. The responsibilities for decision are yours. This is a democracy, and I would betray the democratic principle of freedom if I were to tell you arbitrarily what to think and what to do. Shall you go to work? Shall you remain in college? You have the responsibility to choose. That decision is yours!

May I give you this principle as a guide? Look at your college, your community, your nation, and bear this in mind: you must live with yourself. You must make decisions which will honor your own integrity and insure your best contribution so that in the future you can live happily with yourself, knowing that you did not fail at a critical time. Through the years you must be able to feel that you gave the best of your gifts and your potentialities to the cultivation and preservation of the soul of America in the hour of trial.

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Address delivered to an  
Assembly of the Women Students  
January 15, 1942