

See earlier letter typed 1926/12
(1926)
Hotel de l'Europe
Salzburg, Austria

Dearest Florence:

Thanks for your lovely letter that just reached me. I had qualms of everything after I had sent the other.

I do not know what Mrs. Grabisch is going to do about her apartment. I saw her before I left for a few minutes and she said that first she had to hear from America--if she is invited or not. Secondly, that she must rent the apartment for enough money so that she can support her husband--that son of a bitch you met there--apart from the rent. I told her that her apartment is lovely, to be sure, and she deserves a right rent for it. But it gets me in the gall when she mentions the sacredness of supporting that son of a bitch. She will, I suppose, write you when she hears from America. If the price and conditions suit you, accept, and have a contract with her. If not, you can go to the Zimmermann Nachweis Bureau right there on the corner of Savigny Platz and get a list of dozens of apartments that you can look at and that may please you even better.

She wanted me to take over her apartment and just pay the rent, and let her husband keep his room. But really, it is impossible for me to live in the same house with the man. Poisonous it is.

She also said that if she rented the apartment, she would want a contract. And I told her that you would too.

Yesterday Tilla Durieux and I went with three men in a huge automobile and covered long, long distances. Over the dinner table she told the men about your having spoken of Coolidge as being constipated, and then of Mrs. G.'s reaction thereto. They all shouted with laughter. Oh dear, if Mrs. G. could only know what people and perfectly strange people at that, can talk about over the dinner table! She would have to outcast most people.

I felt very sorry for her in Berlin, however. She read my book and thought I ought not to publish it under my own name, and so on and so forth, but at the same time she wept and said she wished she were younger and had been able to be analysed that she might not be in her present fix. Said that as she read my book she was shocked but even as she read she knew I was telling things that were of great importance.

Oh well, what can one do. As she talked with me we went into a restaurant and I was exhausted so took some wine. Under the influence of the wine I dropped my politeness and courtesy with her and when she suggested certain changes in my book I told her what I thought--that I did not give one God damn for what people think of me; that I am not the elegant repressed lady she thinks I ought to be; that I have lived with a dozen men and have only reached the age of 34 and have another 30 years ahead of me. That I may live with one or a dozen more--that is all my affair. And, to rub in it, that my mind is not yet quite made up on the matter! That just now I was living with no man, but that was a misfortune that was not my fault. And she had tears in her eyes and said of course one can't say what another person can or should do; that she feels a woman is different from a man in sex matters; that she feels a woman can not live with more than one man and be really fine and noble in the higher spiritual sense. And I replied, under the influence of wine, things I don't care to repeat here. Poor woman. She is so everlastingly good in so many ways.

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But so Victorian in others. Now what can one do when such a woman loves you with all your faults and violences, and assures you to the end that you always have a home in her house at any and all times. Just to come back to it. I forgive her her attitude towards conspitation, although that attitude is not confined to the intestines. I always remember how good and tolerant she is in other ways. Perhaps she has to reconcile herself to similar things with me.

I'm glad you saw Shaw. But I don't understand your hero worship. It is infantile. He is a wonderful man. It is sad that mankind is so beastly low that Shaw stands out as a light amongst us. Great men are not great; they only appear so because the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ general masses are so low. Then of all maelstroms in existence, Shaw has been in the very midst of the greatest. You try to keep yourself apart from it. That merely shows me that you have been brought in the analysis up to certain points only, but have never cleared them up. Otherwise you ~~XXXXX~~ could listen to the most terrible conflicts, and you could sit in the midst of a maelstrom and not feel as you do about it. You could study it and create out of it. But you try to take refuge in a bundle of things that some doctor brought out in you without analyzing them or clearing them up or out. You are like a child that refuses to walk, and demands always to be carried. Otherwise you could look these terrible social things in the eye, and study them without the negative emotions you have. For those emotions are to me terrible--your emotions of not facing poverty and the things that are ruining mankind. It reminds me of Wilson during the war--or some man or other. There was a cartoon showing him meeting a ragged and hungry woman ~~XXXXXX~~ in a beautiful restaurant. He asked that the woman be taken away--else he could not enjoy his dinner. Then of course he enjoyed his dinner. One can have babies and art and gossip and all and still face the realities of life with clear eyes.

Here in this hotel I have seen things that have awakened many, many thoughts in me. There is an orchestra that plays the best there is in music, and in the evening we sit there and read or smoke or meet interesting people--and we always talk. There are children who come with their parents and sit there. Lovely, clean, well-dressed and well-fed children. I see them in the making--cleanliness, good taste, cultivated conversation about them, and the best there is in music. They will ~~xxx~~ grow up the best and most cultured, and they will scorn the working class and say that the working class could have what it wanted if it only tried. Then I remember ~~xx~~ all the children we pass on the street: the only music they heard is the cheap trash they hear in the kino--for which they can pay ten pfennigs. Cleanliness to them is a bath once a month or once a year. Conversation to them, and intelligence, is what Susie said to Mary and what Mary said to Jane about the new dress or the new pair of stockings that Mary's mother bought for the baby. For I see more and more that we human beings are products of our environment, to a very large extent. I do not speak of the occasional genius or selfish person who does otherwise. They do not count in the scheme of things unless they destroy the ugly things. Then I look about in the lobby and see slick, well-fed, rich men smoking their cigars and ordering drinks and paying with a gesture that shows that money is nothing to them. And I think of them grasping and collecting the good things of life and holding them for themselves, and using their brains to justify

their actions. I know they have big bank accounts somewhere--more money than they need for life. Yet they keep the money and continue to add to it, and I see that each Mark means the sacrifice of a worker's baby somewhere. Then I hear them talk about "anarchy" and the "danger of Bolshevism and Communism". As I sit and listen I doubt their humanity at all--I really doubt if they have the attributes of human beings; they are only the body of a human being. And I long for the day to come when the working class will be sufficiently conscious to shake the earth to pieces and drown these people in a flood of their own blood.

I am glad I have come here. It has not corrupted me as I thought. It has only brought me face to face with the most terrible injustice that has ever existed--the inhumanity of man to man; his callousness before the dog-like existence of the masses. Madame Durieux I excuse. She knows all this. She knows that to give her money away will not change the present system. But she helps where she can to destroy the present system and she will take her chance in the new society. She does not use her money to support the present system, nor does she use her intelligence. But she does not hide her face from the truth of the present social system--nor from the eternal truth that is beyond all social systems--the equality of all men before eternity and their equal rights in this life to all that is good.

Pardon if I judge you. I do not class you among the rich people of the world. I do not ask you to give up the little money you have to live on. You would not help society by doing it. But as I see it, your life, your very existence is not worth anything at all if you live passively in the very midst of injustice, and at the same time think only of protecting yourself and yours. You are no better than others, and I am no better than others. If you live, or bring ~~into~~ others' existence, others who are protected from knowing what the vast masses suffer, then think of protecting only them and yourself, you are a selfish, utterly selfish person. To me motherhood can not mean concentrated selfishness. Nor do I speak in the material sense when I write this. But in the intellectual and spiritual sense. My doctor, for instance, is a psychologist and a physician. She is calm and very certain of herself. She is a mother who values motherhood. But she is a Socialist also and always before her eyes stands the masses. Until you are able to live your own life, but only in connection with society, I refuse to admit that you have been analysed, but I will say instead that you have been in the hands of American quacks for ten years who can go so far but no further. There is no disharmony in being a mother and loving babies and gossip and dresses and a little art now and then as you express it, and facing reality.

If I am always tortured by misery about me, you must know that is because I was born in misery and my roots are in misery. I shall be analysed enough one day to not be hurt so much, but then I shall be all the better revolutionary and I shall use my brain like a weapon. Then you cannot help it if I say to you also the things that lie in my heart. If our friendship is worth anything it is worth a little truth now and then--or what passes for truth in our minds. You have the same right to do it with me. Perhaps it is a difference of temperament between us. To me life is a passionate and beautiful thing, and I have suffered too much for these 34 years to passively face my friends and even support them in what seems to be anti-social things. I know you are not anti-social; else you would not try to hide your face from the suffering of all people. That you try to escape shows that you are fighting the very spirit in yourself that is worth protecting and analysing and clarifying. There is a happiness greater than that which lies in merely grasping happiness,

but you tell me you have decided, for your own happiness, to ignore certain things! What kind of happiness is such a happiness? You can not expect me to respect it. I do not and can not.

You consider me neurotic that I feel misery so deeply. Then I wish to remain neurotic. If I thought my analysis would take me away from the class struggle, then I would never be analysed. If I thought love would blind my eyes to it, would make me think that me and mine were the only things worth while, or the chief things, then I would also stop the analysis. The class struggle I say, and mean the international struggle with which India is so intimately bound. It just happens that I have taken the Indian end to work with.

(2)

Two days later:

I am sending to you the little play I took from you. Madame Durieux has read it. She laughed. It is a jolly little thing, she said--but only a drop. In other words, you should write, but write in a more concentrated and broader sense, I suppose. It is not enough. The germ is there, but it should grow.

Then I have news to tell you. Madame Durieux has offered to give me an income until I take my doctor's degree from Berlin University. I have not made up my mind definitely yet. I want to do it above all, but still have not decided. I want the German method of research. Anyway, I may accept it for two years, and at the end of that time I shall be able to write my thesis I think. I have the strength to carry very heavy work, and if I accept her offer I shall return to Berlin in September and begin my work. That means such work as I have never done--concentrated, intensive work. Never before have I been able to study for a month without working my way through. This would give me the opportunity. The only thing that holds me back is the mental feeling to dependence. I dream of it and think of it with depression, and that may be worse for me than anything else. I must decide.

In September Madame Durieux and I go to Frankfurt to see some publisher also. Then I have to go before the Kultus Ministerium and talk with them and try to induce them to let me take my degree within two years, or as soon as I show myself able to do it. I am not a child, and I have considerable original work on India to present as proof--my work that appeared in the "Zeitschrift für Geopolitik" last year, and that has been published by the University of Munich now as a text-book. I shall present as proof that I have already done original work. After I take my degree I shall apply for a professorship in some Indian national university. That is, IF. I do not like the idea so much as if I were working on my own money; but later I may make enough money from my book to drop her income and live from my own work.

Love to you. Pardon the long lecture. Scattered as it is.

Agnes