

1 Give unto Moloch

Family and Nation in the Second World War

This, then, would be the message of these days: walk into the future along whatever path may open up before you. Wherever it will lead is no longer in your own hands. Individual and national destinies have ceased to be separate, as once they were. What is important, therefore, is to have the strength not to look backwards.

– Rom Landau, *Of No Importance* (1940)

Dora Mockett used a dull pencil to scribble this section of Landau's published wartime diary into her own personal diary account. Landau, who was a Polish émigré to the United Kingdom during the war years, urged British citizens to unite against foreign aggression; Dora found his work inspiring while her neighbours in Hull endured one sacrifice after another. In both Britain and Japan, diarists were influenced by mass-media accounts and government propaganda, which they sometimes dutifully copied into private accounts as if these were part of a personal history. Kojima Yoshitaka, for example, wrote down news items, such as Japan's bombing of Darwin, Australia, 'with no losses for our side', and once composed a poem about the joys of sacrifice: 'The dark water [*kokusui*] that you toss away all the time / is so sweet when you drink it after a hard day's work'.¹ Despite such platitudes, family matters were a great concern among our six wartime diarists – even those who proactively served the war effort – and it was clear that the first institution to tear the family apart was not the enemy, but one's own government.

The war against the family – whether conducted by the state or by the enemy in the air – began immediately. Dorothy Hughes overheard conversations against evacuation that expressed scepticism regarding the state's abilities to take care of children or preserve families, and in December 1939 the *Protestant Times* in Liverpool put out placards that read 'The Schools Must Be Re-Opened!'² Takahashi Aiko noted the removal of children from Tokyo, and despaired at how the war aged the young prematurely. Her elder daughter was forced by the state to oversee a student evacuation from the Catholic Sacred Heart School

for Girls. Watching her shout orders and organise the primary school students, Aiko was stunned by her daughter's sudden maturity: 'Emi, at what point did you become a grown-up? Be strong, survive, and go with God . . . I looked to the moon and wiped away the tears that were welling up from inside me'.³ Nevertheless, the burden of mobilisation was not shared – the British people were not 'all in it together'. Dorothy Hughes noted that the war had already forced families into difficult positions, as well as exacerbating existing class and generation tensions:

Have heard of lots of young married people whose husbands have been called up, who are banding together and living in one house, in order to pool expenses. Herbert was saying what a large number of men he has seen walking in the mornings, obviously businessmen who have nothing better to do. I don't think it is generally realised what a lot of unemployment there is, particularly among the so-called 'upper' classes, people with their own businesses.⁴

As the war progressed and socio-economic mobilisation intensified, the state intervened in our diarists' lives, tearing their families apart. In January 1945, Inohara Mitsuko was drafted to work in Itami's aircraft manufacturing plant, near her home town, Osaka. She struggled to put a brave face on leaving her home, but she did not appear ready to join society as a working adult:

I woke up early and had the last hot, home-cooked meal by mom, took my heavy luggage and left. Mom carried it for me a while, but she said nothing on the way and seemed very sad. I suddenly felt like my eyes were hot, and I was overwhelmed with emotion. We finally got to the gate to say goodbye, but I left without looking back. And then tears came to my eyes, but I suppressed them. I was thinking, how can I do such a girlish thing when answering the honourable call for student mobilisation?

Sometimes she would find herself virtually alone in a spacious dormitory, which she would only describe as 'so, so lonely'; in addition to air raids, she suffered periodic attacks from fleas, bedbugs, and mosquitoes, after which she would merely write, 'I want to go home badly'.⁵ For Mitsuko, the suffering of separation that labour mobilisation would inflict on her was only the beginning; she, like many other teenagers, would have to watch her family being firebombed in Osaka's city centre. Diarists picked up on the generalised feelings of anxiety and fear parents had for their children as well. In Liverpool, Dorothy saw working-class women clutch their children close leading up to Christmas in December 1939, 'as if they are afraid to leave them at home on account of the air raids'.⁶ Our diarists gradually understood that war did not simply ask for the purchase of bonds or the donation of metals, but the deconstruction of the family itself.

Japanese and British people alike enjoyed close-knit family ties, often in three-generation households, and were largely reliant on relations to help them navigate a dangerous and confusing modern world. As the wartime state disassembled these systems in order to squeeze every last ounce of strength out of the people, being abandoned by trusted family members was as terrifying as the enemy's bombs.

The Ultimate Sacrifice: Family and Nation in the Second World War

Home is not home anymore.

– Anonymous middle-aged man, Hertfordshire, 27 October 1939⁷

City people instinctively knew that the enemy bomber was coming to destroy their loved ones. During a terrible barrage over Bristol, Mrs M. Coleman, an air raid warden's wife, described how her husband dashed out into danger as soon as the bombing began. Left behind, she crawled under the stairs of their block of flats, and was joined by an elderly woman from the unit above. Although she inscribed her patriotic bona fides ('we are all in this fight – even the kids!'), she was terrified throughout; as the women and children heard a plane diving over them, she thought, 'Ye gods . . . this is ours!' The women grabbed pillows and covered the children, 'who must come first'. She heard heavy explosions and thought, 'My husband . . . Something's hit him. He has fallen. Oh, dear Lord, keep him safe!' When her youngest child jumped to greet 'Dada' on his return, she wrote,

How I thanked my lucky stars . . . What a wonderful sound [the all-clear] is! And yet for the poor folk who were now wounded or had lost dear ones, it was a terrible sound. Every time they hear it they can see themselves standing by ruins, just saying, 'I've lost him, or her, or them' . . . I went outside and saw the fires. They looked wicked, somehow.⁸

Meanwhile in Himeji, an iconic castle town in Japan's Kansai region, housewife Shiba Isa had allowed herself to become complacent following air raid warnings that always resulted in no attacks; in 1945, however, the Allies decided to destroy the city, and she was caught off guard. 'The roar of aircraft engines came at night', she wrote, 'and I scrambled to wake my children, grab whatever was around me, including some rice, and run away'. She was alarmed to see soldiers from the nearby 39th Regiment mount their horses and flee in terror with the civilians, into a 'maelstrom of people' on the road. She had three children to manage, including a toddler, when she realised that her middle child was gone. 'I screamed with all my might, searching, and finally was able to find him but, for a

moment, I was sure he was dead'.⁹ During sudden, intensive bombings, such as the one that largely destroyed Coventry on 14 November 1940, many had to grab their most precious possessions and watch their home towns burn from the outside; citizens of the city reflected that 'we would never see [our] families again . . .'.¹⁰ Simultaneously, British and Japanese citizens proclaimed their dedication to supporting the war, giving their sons and daughters to the armed forces and military industries.

At the time, few families interrogated whether the Second World War was worth winning at the cost of a child, parent, or sibling, and this may be one of the reasons why the war was so brutal. The importance of family over nation and state emerged after 1945 as a direct product of war losses.¹¹ This was in spite of the fact that, compared to today, family was arguably more important for Britons and Japanese during the Second World War era, for finding housing, sustenance, employment, and marriage prospects. Despite Second World War rhetoric that insisted on the difference between East and West, both countries shared very similar values when it came to family. Young men and women still asked for family elders' approval of potential marriage partners, employment was often tied to blood relations, and most people still lived close to extended family, meaning leisure time was frequently spent with relatives, including grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles. Before the age of social welfare, critical aspects of health and happiness – including medical care, education, elder care, nutrition, and diet – were heavily dependent on family resources. Consequently, the loss of family members was even more catastrophic for wartime people than it is today, and still they largely trusted the state with their most important assets: their blood relations. The Second World War assaulted some of the most fundamental social relations, making the British and Japanese war experience, in this case, more similar than they were different.

With Friends Like These: The First Strike against the Family

The mass evacuation of schoolchildren from the cities was one of the first and most memorable wounds suffered by families in Britain and Japan. Hundreds of thousands of children, both accompanied by adults and on their own, were removed from urban areas in both countries. Early responses to the call for evacuation were ambivalent or even hostile: Japanese authorities saw such demands as defeatist and, in Liverpool, for example, Dorothy Hughes wrote that locals opposed urban refugees. She had heard 'immorality was rife' among undesirable evacuees from

Birmingham, and Dorothy reflected on the value of the mass evacuation scheme in 1939, revealing the classism that would plague British efforts:

I really think that the best plan would have been to leave everyone alone – let those who really want to be evacuated go on their own account, and let the others take their chance. The whole thing has been a wasteful expenditure of public money, although there is no doubt that it is a first rate experiment in social conditions, etc.¹²

Many British and Japanese parents, especially in so-called slums, held on to their children right up until the bombs started falling – some even refused to evacuate them during the height of enemy attacks. In Britain and Japan, evacuation itself was a disintegration of the family orchestrated by a state preparing for total war.

Evacuated children in Britain felt themselves to be treated rather poorly by the state employees who had promised their parents that little ones would be looked after. The first round of evacuations in Britain came during the ‘Phony War’ of 1939, when an expected massive air attack (the supposed ‘knockout blow’) by the GAF never materialised. Teachers and ‘helpers of school parties’ were instructed to attach labels to their children and to their possessions, with the child’s name, school number, and address; the adults who travelled with the schoolchildren were expected to wear such identifying tags as well. Upon their arrival in the countryside, local authorities asked adults from the cities to report

- a) children who are likely to prove ‘difficult’ from the point of view of behaviour or character
- b) children who are especially nervous and who might suffer without the company of a fellow pupil, or to walk any distance alone in the dark evenings in the country
- c) children for whom waterproof sheets in bed may be thought necessary
- d) children whose personal hygiene was known to need attention.¹³

In subsequent evacuations, locals sometimes treated children poorly, reflecting deep-seated class, gender, and regional biases. Children who arrived in the countryside complained of being picked over like cattle at market, being verbally abused, and even put to labour (instead of schooling) by their ‘hosts’. To make matters worse, the local governments across Britain frequently made errors in the billeting of unaccompanied children, who constituted the majority of people leaving the cities. Albert Shaw, an 11-year-old from Salford, was even left abandoned in a Lancaster school because he failed to appear on the evacuation roster. Trapped alone in the dark, he screamed and cried until a passer-by called the police.¹⁴ Furthermore, wartime education was

tenuous at best. A schoolteacher in Hull, Olive Metcalfe, described how instructions for opening and closing schools during air raids were not promising for those who might wish to enjoy a normal instruction:

If the [air raid] warning goes after school hours i.e. 4pm and the all-clear before 10pm, they have to go to school at a quarter to ten next morning. If the all-clear goes between 10pm and 7am, no morning school at all. If after 7am for the all-clear there is no school at all, morning or afternoon. Very nice too. Strikes me there won't be much education.¹⁵

Eyed suspiciously for their putative hygienic failings, passed along like unwanted parcels, put to labour, and left uneducated, many British urban evacuees harboured resentments well into the post-war era.

Japanese authorities left evacuation plans to the very last minute, but Ministry of Education officials seemed more dedicated to the welfare of children than their British counterparts. The Ministry insisted that the personal security and belongings of the children 'must, of course, be vouchsafed', and the authorities exhorted teaching staff who travelled with children to fulfil their duties as protectors, educators, and moral exemplars. Teachers 'must earnestly apply their energies to the education of these children, and fulfil this duty with the same honourable resolution as a man who has been called into military service, or the education of evacuated children will be a failure'. In another official document, national authorities even delineated examples of what sort of objects an evacuated child should bring, assuring parents that they would be well taken care of. However, 'weak and infirm children' (*kyojaku jidō*) were to be sent to relatives, deemed to be too difficult for the evacuation system to handle. Similar to Britain, Japanese authorities treated children from suspect social classes harshly. From third grade to sixth, primary school children from the slums of Tokyo were doused with anti-lice powders, fed meagre school dinners, and shipped off to dormitories in the countryside without their parents. In any case, like their counterparts in Britain, Japanese children were tagged and sent along with a rucksack of 'necessary items' that were severely restricted by weight limits. As soon as Japanese children were dropped off in rural areas, they became the problem of local authorities and families, from which the government expected 'full cooperation and assistance'.¹⁶ As in Britain, Japanese city kids who were tossed into the countryside found themselves thrust into an utterly alien world without the benefit of family support – only a state apparatus that had many other priorities to worry about. Nevertheless, while British children were billeted almost at random in private houses, Japanese children were often housed together, with friends and other familiar faces, in temples and other large rural structures; anecdotal

accounts suggest that the Japanese system was slightly less traumatic for the children. Despite this important difference, however, their experience was highly dependent on the competency and receptivity of local people in rural areas.

For ordinary people in Britain and Japan, being separated from their families was often worse than the mortal threat of the bomber. Shinonori Mansaku recalled the long, excruciating goodbyes that parents were forced to say to their children as they were moved into rural areas.

In the bustle of all the luggage and farewells, time went by gradually and soon enough it was time to depart. Weaving through all of the people seeing off [their children], our leader cut through the crowd with a flag in hand that read 'Jōbanmatsu Primary School'. When we departed to the right, there were people on both sides of the street, tears streaming down their faces . . . and so that was our emotional evacuation by train, putting the city behind us, making a line ever northward to [the country].¹⁷

Others refused to leave their homes because, in an age before government-subsidised lending and easy mortgages, homes were acquired with great difficulty or literally built by hand. As attacks on London intensified, elderly Gwladys Cox rejected an offer of evacuation to a friend's shelter, writing, 'Delightful of him, of course, but we feel obliged to decline. We cannot abandon our home! If it were bombed in our absence, there would be no one to salvage what remained, if anything'.¹⁸ Adults had to balance the pain of separation with the need to preserve the family during a period of mass bombing; in an age in which single buildings housed three generations, one bad attack could wipe out an entire family line, root and stem. As one Londoner put it at the beginning of the air raids, '[t]hings are getting more lively cannot take risks with children'.¹⁹ Still, in both countries, many families resisted impersonal state-organised evacuations, preferring to rely on country relatives or remain together, even if it meant losing the entire family to enemy attacks. In Bristol, one woman embraced her daughter during a terrible air raid that lasted eleven consecutive hours, telling her, '[i]f we have to go, we'll go together'.²⁰ Perhaps most important was the feeling among working people that their husbands and wives were their companions, and they refused to be apart: 'I had 16 years in digs, and believe me, I've had enough', one man in Liverpool was overheard to say, 'My wife goes with me wherever I go – if I was to be moved tomorrow'.²¹ In Japan, too, this was a common refrain. Nagaoka resident Matsuda Haruko recalled her father announce: 'I'd rather us all die together, as a family, in our house than flee and die one by one alone'.²² This sort of sentiment could enrage some family members: during some of Hull's

worst bombing, Edith Peirse quarrelled bitterly with her father and wrote in her diary that 'he has no thought for me at all, says he is going to live in his home till he dies and not go away'.²³ Even when families fled together into the countryside during air raids, adults forced their children to scatter across fields in order to avoid the possibility of the family being wiped out in one blow, as Kobayashi Takako remembered during the destruction of Himeji.²⁴ Children who stayed behind in urban areas like Manchester recalled a much more convivial and supportive environment, despite interrupted sleeps during night raids:

Our particular house was overcrowded and in a street congested with families. Some twenty-four children between three and sixteen years of age. There seemed a certain camaraderie between all of us, literally like one very large family. Neighbour helped neighbour and clothes were handed down between families with no sense of stigma . . . To us children, there was a deliciously fearful sense of danger, in this nocturnal adventure. Parents, although they must have been deeply worried and anxious during air raids, did their best to keep their fears in check and to allay any childish alarm.²⁵

For families who had experienced the callousness of urban life, the loss of breadwinners and caring parents might as well have been a death sentence for their children. For others, the loss of their children was more painful than death itself.

Still, thousands of adults chose to send their young ones away from the violence, and this could be traumatising for both children and parents, with one London mother writing: 'feeling desolate but not quite so worried for their safety'.²⁶ Children often reacted with remarkable fortitude and cheer, as long as supervising adults did not spoil their fun. For some children evacuation was fun and exciting, or the retreat to the countryside represented an escape from cramped, unhygienic, and ugly urban food deserts that were in the midst of being bombed. Iris Miller reflected fondly on her time away from Westminster:

Mrs. Henry was very kind to us. In her beautiful garden she had a large comfortable summerhouse known as 'the dugout', and there she would accommodate our family when they needed a respite from the war . . . We had a wonderful holiday with marvellous weather; it is a memory I treasure because I didn't see my father again as he died the following April.²⁷

When the bombs fell, initial terror could still give way to childlike merriment among evacuated students. In Kōfu, Mibu Akiko was tasked with overseeing evacuated children as a 'dormitory mother' (*ryōbo*), and so she had to lead them into the hills when a surprise night-time air raid began near the school. Akiko cursed herself for not bringing the children to the ancient burial mounds (*kōfun*) nearby for cover:

I couldn't keep the kids together in the dark, and I prayed for the planes to withdraw, even for a moment. But the B-29s just stubbornly – it seemed like they insisted – flew over us again and again. I felt like I had to resolve to die this time but, at some point, they simply pulled away. At that moment, when I had given up all hope, we were fine, and it was like even the energy to rejoice was gone from me. But the kids were surprisingly happy, babbling on like 'Oh wasn't that scary?' or 'Wow!' putting their rucksacks and futons up on their backs or pulling them along, gathering together.²⁸

Sometimes the security of travelling with a parent helped defuse the anxiety of separation from home. Eva Merrill's mother was also adamant that the family not be separated, even temporarily, and travelled with them to their evacuation destination. For her, as a child, trekking into the country was exhilarating, like going on a school holiday:

Fleets of coaches, or charabancs as we called them in those days, were lined up outside the school to transport us to we knew not where . . . Parents were virtually sending their children off into the unknown, and there were many demands to 'write and tell us where you are' passed around . . . The coaches all took off in a convoy; it was all very exciting with everybody waving to each other. The mothers left behind looked rather forlorn as the coaches increased speed and some of the children on them became tearful. I thought I ought to be singing my head off . . . but none of the Mums on our coach looked like breaking into song . . .²⁹

Thus, children who might initially approach the evacuation experience as exciting were soon influenced by the dour attitudes of the adults around them. Schoolteacher Ōyama Hidenori noted in his diary that evacuated Japanese children 'were numb [*bonyari*] to these rapid changes in their lives, and it was as if they were being pulled along by the teachers in this case'. Looking over his young wards from urban Osaka, who fell asleep quickly as night stole across the countryside, Ōyama wrote that he was 'overcome by tears'. Indeed, the sight of so many homesick and forlorn-looking children struck the adults around them as one of the first losses of the war: 'When I think of these children', Ōyama wrote, 'separated from their parents, I always wonder, just what can be done [for them]?'³⁰ Similarly, Class Leader Marguerite Coles accompanied children removed from Hull, and recorded the vicissitudes of their views in a long letter home. 'I shall never forget that memorable Friday', she wrote, when 'the Hull Central Station closed to the public; the endless processions of children with teachers and helpers, all in perfect order, all heavily laden, and most of them silent'. Once the train started towards Scarborough, she noticed that the children cheered up slightly and began to chat.

'I didn't eat much breakfast this morning', 'Me mother says she wishes she could get hold of Hitler, she'd give him sommet', 'Me mum was crying this morning

when I left home', 'Me mother came in school to see us off', 'Mine didn't because she didn't want to upset me little sister', 'How long do you think we'll be away?' 'Do you think there'll be a war?' 'Me father says it will all be over and we'll be back again in a fortnight', 'I had me shoes mended', 'Me mother is going to try to send me a new pair, but she can't afford it this week' ... 'Me father says Scarborough wouldn't be safe', 'Yes it would, I hope it's Scarborough because there'll be sea and sands'.

After the children erupted in excited talk when arriving in Scarborough, they became quickly quiet and nervous. Billeting among the stern, comparatively well-off population was troublesome considering many of the Hull children were considered 'slum kids'.³¹ Whether the children were on an exciting adventure or a perilous exile depended largely on how the locals treated them in the countryside.

In the post-war period, many who had lived through the conflict as children and adolescents bemoaned the 'loss of youth' or a 'childhood without toys' that characterised the war years. As the Hull experience, and others, show, however, living conditions could improve with evacuation. Contrary to precious modern visions of 'childlike children' and 'vulnerable innocents', young people displayed as much, if not more, fortitude than their adult supervisors. Nevertheless, no matter how amusing a trip to the country could be, nothing could compensate for the feelings of anxiety and loss that both children and their parents experienced when being separated. Whether the separation was voluntary or not, the first strike on the home was invariably launched by one's own government.

Sibling Rivalry: Supporting the City, Preserving the Family

The war turned cities into deadly places, and this tore apart the family networks that Japanese and British citizens had built up over many generations. Because British and Japanese families tended to congregate within urban spaces, mass bombings had the effect of simultaneously destroying mothers, babies, grandfathers, and aunts. Urban residents sometimes seemed aware that the bombed city was trying to destroy their families: Eleanor Humphries wrote in her diary about the circumstances that led to the departure of her relatives:

Sister and husband, who live near L's ... would not build shelter or have ceilings shored. Were terribly shaken and upset when bomb fell in road. They had ... to bring beds down to drawing room and have shutters made for French doors. But they all undressed at night. They did not hear the bomb fall but the house seemed as if squeezed. Walls came in on them, then bulged out and the ceiling sagged

and crashed but did not fall. After that terrible experience, their windows being out and doors all mended, they quickly all packed and departed to the country . . . All hotels full. Were told they could sleep on floor of Town Hall until they found billets. Believe they spent the first night in car.³²

Despite the havoc bombers unleashed on their personal lives, most individuals during the war nevertheless accepted the conflation of individual and family interests with national ones, and stuck with the city even as it killed their loved ones; in other words, they believed, by and large, that what was good for the nation would be good for them individually and for their families. The interests of the city and those of the family, during the bombing war, were mutually exclusive, but too many residents realised this far too late.

One reason for the dedication to the city was that, before the war with Germany officially began, citizens across the United Kingdom felt personally invested in foreign conflicts. Women were especially committed, perhaps because they were not expected to fight on the front lines. Mary Bloomfield (Coventry), Bessie Skea (Orkney), Dorothy Hughes (Liverpool), Dora Mockett (Hull), Violet Maund (Bristol), and Gladys Hollingsworth (Coventry) all wrote about their personal relationship with the war effort. 'Will we keep our pledge to Poland?' wrote Mary, 'Everyone seems to hope so, all wishing to see Hitler and the Nazis wiped off the face of the earth'. Although their attention was usually focused on Germany, after 1941 some looked to the empire's fate in the East: 'Our troops have left Rangoon – defeat after defeat – when will it end?' The world indeed seemed to be falling apart: Dorothy looked to the Russo-Finnish Winter War and wrote '[t]he way things are going everyone will be fighting everyone else'.³³ In the Manichean world view that dominated Britain at this time, those who resisted invasion, like the Finns, became heroes, but those who collaborated were reprehensible villains. Gladys went so far as to paste a photograph portrait of Belgium's King Leopold in her diary and write 'TRAITOR' on his forehead. Total resistance was critical to the prosecution of total war, and Bessie Skea emphasised that this included the rehabilitation of the pre-war order: 'Germany has made a peace-offer to Britain – an insult – but Britain is not looking for peace on her terms. We will fight until Poland is restored'.³⁴ Nefarious Russians quickly became good friends whenever international events shifted, as Dorothy Kahn described, in her diary, far-off events like personal victories:

Many important events have taken place since the last time I wrote. Russia has now come into the war on our side and although Germany thought it would only

be a matter of a few weeks before Russia would have to give in, they are holding their own very well and giving the Germans more than they bargained for.³⁵

The linkage of foreign battlefields with personal struggle was not totally irrational: the achievements of a far-off army could, in the age of air power, translate into greater safety at home as it destroyed the enemy's ability to launch air raids. Gladys had a sense that German control of continental Europe would bring disaster to Britain: 'FRANCE CAPITULATES. The whole world stirs . . . Hitler and Mussolini to Meet. DARK DAYS AHEAD'.³⁶ Even with the enemy knocking at the door, however, ordinary people felt the need to stay positive and support their country's efforts. In Hull, Olive Metcalfe engaged in argument with an older man over the course of the war in Europe:

Mr. Rathbone very loud-mouthed saying we were losing the war, which I hotly contested, because even if we were, saying so and getting people down doesn't help. And what's the good, these days, of doing anything that doesn't help. I always try to be full of spirits when I am round home.³⁷

Like so many ordinary citizens in the Second World War, Olive felt strongly that one had to be 'full of spirits' and supportive of the war effort, even if the country was losing. This of course included Axis citizens; the commitment of ordinary people on both sides meant that they sent their loved ones increasingly into harm's way.

Indeed, Japanese citizens were making the same grand statements about 'total commitment' which were often exacerbated by a perception of personal connection to the war effort. Ishikawa Chieko, a teenage student drafted into the labour corps of Chiba military factory, embraced the view that her forced labour was actually part of a battle against the US bombers that were laying waste to her home town:

At last our mobilisation orders have arrived. We were inducted at Soga's Hitachi aircraft plant Chiba home office. They have great expectations for us. We got off at Soga station at 9:05am at the main entrance. The women workers all lined up to greet us. Incidentally, the other day a group of B-29s flew over just as we were setting off on parade. We're going to build planes to nail those bastard B-29s.

When news arrived of the total annihilation of Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Chieko wrote an angry passage in her diary, tying her forced labour to the memory of the troops: 'We must work. We must show those soldiers who sacrificed themselves for Japan's final victory'.³⁸ Unless individuals were already sceptical of the war effort, brutal air raids did not suppress ordinary people's enthusiasm for it in Japan, just as GAF 'terror bombing' failed to suppress war fever in Britain. Seeing corpses, losing loved ones, and watching one's home nearly destroyed made some

Japanese citizens, like their counterparts in Britain, pull more closely together. After the firebombing of Shizuoka, Tanaka Osamu wrote:

[F]ortunately, our family was unharmed by the raid, but what could one say to console the multitudes who had endured sacrifices? There were no words for it. We invited them into our home – those who lost their own houses and had nowhere to sleep. At a time of deprivation and shortage, we said we had to ‘endure until victory’ (*katsu made wa to mo ni kurushimō*), and handed out futons and tea.³⁹

Japanese communities had mobilised to support their members since the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, and were well practised in using such platitudes and ritualised support activities to paper over the terrible demands that a wartime government made.

Enemy attacks on the family expose the fundamental conflict between the interests of the political and economic leaders who can benefit from war, on the one hand, and the ordinary people who overwhelmingly profit from peace, on the other. At first, family members tried to put on a brave face and support the war effort, often with fatal consequences. On 24 November 1940, a Bristol baker named James Osborne ignored his son’s desperate pleas to stay away from the bakery during the vicious German bombing of the city. Osborne said, ‘People will want their bread tomorrow, whatever happens tonight’, went bravely into the city centre, and was killed before he even reached the bakery.⁴⁰ The talk of war was first misconstrued by young people as some exciting new event; one survivor recalled that, during the destruction of Coventry, ‘as I walked home my eyes scanned the sky for THE ENEMY. After all I was still at school and the war represented excitement, something different from the everyday run of things!’⁴¹ This exhilaration gave way to fear, particularly as young and old realised that leaders, foreign and domestic, were inflicting violent deaths on them. Yoshida Fusako watched her father take her younger brother to relatives in the countryside, and she confessed in her diary that at night ‘I am so, so afraid. I can’t sleep’.⁴² One British mother recorded her little boy was awakened by air raid sirens at 2am, whereupon he was ‘very nervous and sick in the tummy’.⁴³ Young people had to confront violence on a regular basis. Schoolgirl Patricia Donald wrote in her diary of witnessing a female relative trying to save a foreigner: ‘A Canadian got a bit of glass in his chest, and she tried to help him and gave him some water, but it was in a fatal spot’.⁴⁴ As the violence increased, it included friends as well, which sometimes triggered hysterical responses. Hosokawa Kikue’s school was in Kure, near Hiroshima, which was a port town full of military industries; her schoolmates were drafted into factories, where they died during heavy bombing raids, and

she remembers students crying in despair, 'If we're going to die, we should just all die together in a shelter!'⁴⁵ Adults, too, had to accept the fact that the war they supported was killing babies. In Wallasey, near Liverpool, a rescue party was fortunately able to hear the cries of an infant buried under the rubble; wiping dust out of the little girl's eyes and mouth, they ascertained that she had been trapped there for days after her parents had been instantly killed.⁴⁶ Government exhortations to fight were acceptable in the abstract, but when the air war came home, the prospect of actual violence terrified people to the point that they were physically ill.

The air war targeted civilians, and in so doing purposefully destroyed the family networks that sustained urban life. Dora Mockett, who normally was supportive of the war effort, was very disturbed when she ran into a friend who had been devastated by the loss of three of her four children in the severe November 1940 air raids.⁴⁷ First aid responders witnessed, and dutifully recorded, how the assault on the city necessarily meant the destruction of the family:

One of [the First Aid post volunteers] came upon a huge mound of earth blocking his path, the sign of a land mine having exploded. Hearing a woman shouting he climbed over the soil and debris and went to her. She took him to the rear of a badly damaged house and pointed to the body of her dead son . . . First Aiders found an air raid shelter had been struck by a blast and there were four injured people inside. One had serious head injuries and when her daughter saw her she was so shocked she also had to go to hospital . . . Screams were heard from a very badly damaged house and two First Aiders went into the ruins and found a man trapped in burning debris. The man died but his daughter, badly injured, lived . . . A woman's voice could be heard saying she was under the stairs with three children and they were unhurt. Rescue workers were lowered down from the top of the house into the ruins but they started vomiting because gas was escaping . . . All was in vain, the mother and children had died before being released.⁴⁸

During the 1945 firebombing of Himeji, Ichikawa Shōjirō, who was only a pre-schooler, ran out as fast as his legs would take him while carrying little boots full of uncooked rice: 'The reason my mother had me carry rice', he recalled, 'was so that, even if [our neighbourhood] was incinerated and we were separated, "You find one of our relatives and they can at least fix you a bowl of rice"'. Who would cook the rice for Shōjirō, however, if the entire city was burned? The experience would haunt him for years after the war: 'I'm nearly fifty now [in 1988], but the red blaze of [Himeji] on fire – I cannot forget it. Even if I die it cannot be forgotten'.⁴⁹ For those who were too young to remember the murder of their families clearly, the reluctance of others to discuss it left a gaping hole in their

personal history. Patricia Bovill, who was only six years old during the November 1940 'Hull Blitz', only vaguely remembers being buried alive, rescued, and then vomiting over her pyjamas in the hospital; her parents were killed instantly. Even more painful, however, was her grandparents' refusal to help her know her parents. 'I would like my children to know more about their grandparents', she wrote after the war, 'but my grandparents were devastated by it and couldn't bring themselves to talk about it'. The personal history was most important, but Patricia also added, 'I feel that our children and grandchildren should know more about dear old Hull and perhaps have more respect and love for it'.⁵⁰ The loss of the city and the loss of the family were difficult to disentangle: parents instructed their children according to the personal networks that had evolved within urban spaces, but the attack on the city targeted the kith and kin who composed its most important human connections.

For the wartime generation, enemy attacks reinforced the paramount importance of family. By 1945, eight-year-old Sakazume Hiromi had become accustomed to the sounds of B-29 air raids over Tokyo's Sumida Ward; she fled into the shelters at a moment's notice, experiencing the contradictions of singing patriotic war songs while the Americans were systematically destroying Japan's imperial capital and its citizens. She and her loved ones had been fortunate for many months to escape injury, but on 9 March 1945, a particularly terrible raid over Tokyo finally reached them. When the siren began ringing, her mother packed all of the family's valuables, insurance policies, family seal, cash, and about a litre of white rice into two cloth sitting mats and took Hiromi to the shelter. Her father, 'because it was considered a man's [job], remained behind to the very end in the house'. Mother and daughter blanketed their heads with futon covers and fire hoods, weaving through the burning neighbourhood to arrive at their appointed shelter when:

... from the entrance, a powerful wind blew the door out. This is when things got really bad. Through the hole where the door once was, like snow falling through, smouldering embers came in the shelter. At the entrance, three or four Neighbourhood Association members struggled to extinguish them. Inside there were people chanting Buddhist prayers, children crying, and there was even one middle-aged man saying, 'This strong blast is surely the *kamikaze* – the Divine Wind of Japan [that expels invaders] – so we will be saved!' At that point, a man came to the shelter with a rucksack, which was on fire, shouting, 'Help me!' The Association members were confused and afraid, and told him to take off his rucksack first, but he wouldn't. That's when I thought: 'My father is dead.'

Inside the shelter, panicked women and children were ordered to urinate on their futons and blankets; these were packed into ventilation

chambers in order to prevent the shelter from burning down on top of them. Hiromi was able to briefly look through one of these flaming channels outside at Tokyo, which she described as 'like the inside of a boiler chamber. When I remember it now, I can't help but wonder how I survived it'. Pulled out of the shelter by soldiers the next morning, 8-year-old Hiromi saw widespread devastation. In and out of the shelter all day, she walked by an army horse that had been burned alive, and human corpses were scorched so badly that one could not distinguish men from women. Then her mother said, 'Your daddy might be dead'.

I saw the body of a man, burned to death, curled up outside of our shelter, and I thought he looked like my dad. When I looked more closely, he was the man who had come the other night with a rucksack on fire, asking for help. I froze, paralysed by the thought, 'That could be me'. Then I heard a man shouting loudly: 'Are there any Sakazumes here?' It was my father's voice. Without thinking, I blurted out, 'Banzai!' My father was alive! He had nothing on him, and was soaking wet. The family was saved. He had endured until the last moment, when the house caught on fire, and he knew it was finished. He ran to Oshikami station and jumped into the river, waiting there until morning.

Hiromi and her family went on to a military rations depot, which had also been largely destroyed, but was dispensing what little food remained to whomever wanted it. 'We felt lucky to get anything', she recalled, but was deeply haunted by seeing families that had been burned alive, their corpses still locked in embrace.⁵¹ Bearing in mind that, in the early twentieth century, families were much more likely to concentrate in the same city, or even the same neighbourhood, bombing that aimed at massacring civilians was far more devastating than it would be today. It was clear to young people, if not always adults, that the war on the city was inevitably a war on the family.

Circling the Wagons: Families Respond to Bombing

When the enemy attacked residential areas, most urban citizens abandoned their jobs, homes, and material possessions in order to hold on a bit more tightly to their loved ones. Bertram Elwood recorded a radiographer from Coventry recalling scenes from hospitals during air raids, writing about 'a woman who insisted on being wheeled to her little son, and later to her young daughter, to soothe them to sleep although she herself was suffering with a fractured humerus and thigh'.⁵² Rescue workers in Britain and Japan regularly recovered the bodies of parents and children, locked in embrace at the moment of death. Witnessing death and severe injury all around them, it was only natural for children

to imagine the same fate befalling their family, and for parents to cling to their children even more fiercely than normal.

As air attacks began, citizens instinctively reached for their loved ones, even though they knew that their arms were no defence against an explosion. Mothers ran into their children's rooms first, husbands looked for their wives, siblings held hands, and children worried for their slower, more vulnerable grandparents. When the bombers reached Bristol and explosions rocked family shelters, one man recalled his wife turning to him and saying, 'Put your arms around me, dear'.⁵³ During the fire-bombing of Takamatsu, a regional city on the island of Shikoku, school-girl Akiyama Shigeko and her siblings held on first and foremost to one another:

When I saw the flames, I began to shiver and shake uncontrollably. Everyone said the children should flee quickly, so my elder sister took my younger sister on her back, and I grabbed my little brother's hand as we fled. We ran to the fields, ever further south – the darkness is where the fields will be! – fleeing as if in a dream . . . My mother wrapped my 6 month old baby sister in a futon and ran toward where she thought we had gone . . . A baby's neck isn't very strong at that age, so she had to be carried in that way, and I remember my mom sometimes saying how heavy she was. Grandfather, dad, and my eldest sister stayed in the house, and then took whatever they could into the fields.

Unfortunately, Shigeko's grandmother was hard of hearing, so she was too late to escape the conflagration while the Akiyama family divided the tasks necessary for abandoning their home. In Japan, co-habiting grandparents often did the lion's share of childcare, so young people like Shigeko formed powerful attachments to them. The night of the air raid was the last time she saw her grandmother, prompting Shigeko to write that her grandmother 'died in fear, and if there had been no air raid, she would have lived much longer'. After enduring years of food shortage and deprivation, she eventually married after the war, noting that her husband also lost his mother, elder brother, and three sisters in the destruction of Toyama by Allied forces. 'Any future war', she wrote despondently, 'would be awful for me'.⁵⁴ Husbands, whether by cultural conditioning or instinct, were protective of their wives. On the Isle of Dogs, Bill Regan was escorting his wife Vi home when a massive bombing campaign on the working class area of East London began. He held onto her hand tightly, to keep her from being dazzled by the flares but also so that he knew where she was in the dark. When he heard bombs coming their way, Bill dragged Vi to cover with him.

The first one exploded somewhere close, hours later the next one, closer, the third one was whistling straight for us, and I was pushing Vi back against the wall,

and it was taking a long time, and this thing was still coming at us, and I wondered if it was going to take very long to die, then the whistling stopped, then a terrific thump as it hit the ground, and everything seemed to expand, then contract with deliberation, and stillness seemed to be all around.

When they finally arrived home, Vi prepared for dinner and spoke to their friends. 'Everyone thinks Vi is wonderful', he wrote half-jokingly, 'no one even thinks about me'. Vi had once told him that she did not fear dying; nevertheless, Bill had a tight grip on Vi's hand all the way home.⁵⁵ Family structures, gender roles, and notions of romantic love have changed radically throughout history, but the bonds of familial attachment produced instantaneous responses.

Whereas before the war individuals might, as they do today, put career ahead of family life, the war pushed the importance of wealth and advancement into a very low tier of consideration. Consequently, Gladys Hollingsworth described the scene following the infamous bombing of Coventry on 14 November 1940:

It was terrific, [but] we escaped with shattered windows and leaking roof. Ambulances from Birmingham, London, and USA. Fire engines and rescue workers from every corner of British Isles. Went to get wages, then to Simms at night. The memory of this will last forever in every citizen's mind. Places still burning. Soldiers digging for bodies. Hundreds crowding round Council House, which is still standing, to get news of missing relatives.⁵⁶

The wartime generation was taught a terrible lesson in how warfare would not spare their loved ones, which made other considerations seem petty by contrast. After a terrible raid on Chiba, near Tokyo, Inaba Fuku and her family fled to Kikuma, a short distance away. Her father went missing for an entire day, only to arrive on a bicycle with Fuku's little sister, Kazuko. 'As soon as I saw her', she wrote, 'I was overcome with anguish from the war. She was cold . . . Coming all the way to Kikuma on a stretcher, she had suffered terribly. We took her to the doctor, but it was too late'.⁵⁷ Seeing non-combatants, including children, die from enemy air raids triggered attacks of fear and anger in those who associated these losses with their own loved ones' vulnerability. One woman in Coventry wrote that her husband, who retrieved dead bodies from the ruins, saw that 'one of the victims was a baby, almost the same age as our youngest daughter. This upset [him] very much'.⁵⁸ Not all losses were directly attributable to enemy action, however: one's own government was also a threat to family integrity in the form of compulsory labour and military service. As the state demanded more and more people from the family, the stress could be cumulative and subtle, as Frederick Goodridge noted during a long air raid in Southampton:

There wasn't much said in our shelter, what could be said? But our mother suffered so, and around 11 [pm] she couldn't help crying out almost in disbelief 'When is it going to stop, is there to be no end to this?' It hurt me in knowing how it affected my mother, she had enough to bear as it was with three sons in the Army and a daughter in the WAAF.⁵⁹

In addition to blood relations, the war robbed many of their closest friends, who could be considered as dear as family. On V. E. Day, Coventry policeman Ted Bloomfield took his wife Mary up to the top of the battered Coventry Cathedral tower and told her of his loss:

Remembering the bomb that threw him against the Council House walls, killing his best friend Ken Rallings who was going to help get people out of the debris in Much Park Street, and flinging his large body over the wall of the Miss Patricks shop, where his colleagues were forced to stand by helpless and watch him burn. Can we ever forget? Should we ever forget?⁶⁰

Whether by evacuation or by direct bombing, the war was an attack on the structure of human communities, including families, just as bombers aimed at deconstructing electric, water, gas, and transport networks. These assaults were not just the result of enemy action, but the demands of one's own wartime government.

One of the social structures that was tested by the war was Britain and Japan's persistent patriarchy. Many older men in Britain and Japan adopted the role of patriarch in their homes, which conferred authority over others in the household (including other men), but also nerve-racking responsibility at a time when uncontrollable disasters were striking regularly. After the war, Matsui Ryūichirō discovered a diary by his father, who worked for the newspaper *Yomiuri* when Shizuoka was firebombed. From 7 April to 11 August 1945, the elder Matsui recorded the ruthless attacks on civilians in the city and surrounding areas. When he left his family behind to go to work, he was assailed by fears of losing them; he regularly saw or heard about people he knew perishing, or losing their entire family. 19 June was a particularly terrible aerial attack, in which Matsui had to balance his life at the office with the threat to his home:

Tonight, at 11:30pm, the enemy arrived. The alarm was comparatively [illegible] and so I was at ease, but by 12:30am things quickly worsened. . . . I left the family in charge of the house and went to the office. Then the air attack came [in earnest]. The whole city turned into a sea of fire. We protected the roof of the company [from fire] until morning. By dawn, the inferno was still raging, and the city was glowing red. Fifteen of us worked to save the company building. At dawn you couldn't spot a single shadow, just a burnt plain as far as the eye could see. The old town centre was completely lost. Twenty thousand homes, three

thousand lives, all lost. It is the most horrible and devastating experience of our age. Worse comes to worst, [illegible] our home is totally destroyed, [but I hope] at least the family is alright. Tonight onwards, we've nowhere to sleep, and this thought breaks my heart.

Matsui wandered back home through the ruined city, living out the next few days with his family, struggling to find food to eat. 'It's a pathetic existence', he recorded in disgust.⁶¹ Women held up slightly better, perhaps because they were inured to hardship in a patriarchal system. Marjorie Brodie, who had fled into the countryside with her baby, returned to Coventry to find her parents' house the only one standing in a block otherwise flattened by the German assault. The bombers had blasted a hole in the roof of the kitchen, where she found 'my mother . . . cooking something on the cooker with her umbrella up. Nothing was going to stop her from getting something for dinner – bombs, rain, or anything else'.⁶² Still, not every victim of the bombing war focused on the family. For those male bourgeois types who lived a charmed life in the city, the destruction of urban consumption produced privileged resentment. In Coventry, one man was heard to complain:

Coventry is a hole – there's nothing to do [after the raids] – I can't even get a drink I like. The pubs are always crowded . . . I know what I'd like, a nice chicken and some champagne, what about it? . . . Damn this war, nothing will ever be the same again.⁶³

While urban professional men complained about the finer things, others kept their focus on the family. Remembering her father on the day of his death, Mitsuko wrote in her diary: 'the fact that my sisters and I, always far apart, were able to meet today is some sort of divine miracle. Just being able to meet your sister, whom you may never see again, is a source of joy'.⁶⁴ While single male urban professionals could see the decline of their lifestyle as a legitimate casualty of war, patriarchs, married men, and women largely focused their grief on the losses in their family.

The Second World War, like the First World War, also disrupted intimacy, which men and women of that generation recorded only fleetingly; nevertheless, writing about such matters sometimes provided one of the very few safe outlets for sexual feelings and frustrations.⁶⁵ For example, many women wrote subtly about their feelings for departing partners. Recalling the moment she said goodbye to her husband as he shipped off from Takamatsu to war in China, Iriye Hisae wrote, 'I was pregnant at the time, and I suppressed all kinds of emotions to send him off with a smile. I watched his large frame from behind, so dependable, kind, and sad . . . I can still hear the sound of his boots as he walked away'.⁶⁶ As the war accelerated, Japanese women of all ages were

expected to lose even more of their husbands and lovers 'for the nation'. In Hachiōji, 43-year-old Takizawa Toki made sure that, during her husband's departure to the Pacific, she 'did not cry, and sent him off with a smiling face'. Striving to respect her partner's wish that she 'take care of things for him' (*ato o tanomu*), this kind of dutiful separation unintentionally served state interests in mobilising the general public for war:

At that moment, all the emotions I'd been suppressing exploded, and I just cried and cried. But that was pointless. Everyone thought it was 'for the nation', so I just found strength, found my resolve, and thought, *I'm going to overcome everything for my children and parents* . . . My husband put his life on the line for the nation, so I have to as well. Even though we're a thousand miles apart, our hearts were one – or so I thought, getting by day by day. Then, on 5 April 1944, my husband arrived unexpectedly. He just appeared at my bed, so I was shocked, woke my parents, and spent the evening as if in a dream. The next day, I went with five children to the station to see him off. I didn't know that this was our final moment on this earth. We waved at him, furiously, until the train could no longer be seen . . . Going home, I was returning to my life of solitude and the children saying, 'Mum, I'm hungry!'⁶⁷

Sacrificing as much as possible, Toki took care of the children and her husband's parents while, unbeknownst to her at the time, he was killed by US troops in Guam. Despite bombing and evacuation, her husband's departure remained the defining moment for Toki. Similarly separated by the war, Olive Metcalfe wrote to her husband Christopher about some of the more acute aspects of being away from an intimate partner:

I always relate sex questions in books to the only study of sex I know, and that is you . . . I realize too that the marvel of sex in you, that controlled, wonderful thing, that I always took for granted as the usual and the ordinary, is by no means so, but unusual and extraordinary in its cleanliness, fineness, and its approach to the ideal . . . Life has been very kind to me in giving me you and not some other man for I cannot imagine any man who could approach your standard.

While sex remained important to their marriage, when she became pregnant, Olive, like Takizawa Toki and Iriye Hisae, felt her husband's absence even more keenly. 'You cannot know how I long for your presence sometimes – just you to take over and shoulder things', she wrote to him while listening to German bombers attack Hull, 'Often I feel like a climbing plant that has lost its wall and is trying to stand alone'.⁶⁸ Hisae's longing for her husband Harumi came to her strongly when she gave birth to their child; she named the baby girl Harue, taking characters from both parents' names: 'I just wanted him to know [his heritage] as soon as possible'. Little did she know, her husband Harumi had been killed in China during the brutal fighting with the Chinese

Nationalists. In her post-delivery delirium, she saw his figure in the house, asking 'Where's my baby? Where's my baby?' She pointed to the next room, where the baby was sleeping, and he gazed into Hisae's face, disappearing slowly into the darkness. 'I don't know if it was real or a dream', Hisae wrote, recalling how she was later notified of his 'heroic' death in battle, 'but when you are truly sad, you do not cry'.⁶⁹ Despite popular foreign beliefs about Japanese women happily serving the wartime state, they missed their partners just as desperately as their British counter-parts, and both sides were equally committed to continuing the war effort.

The destruction of the city was thus not limited to the eradication of unknown, impersonal concrete structures and other people's homes. Bricklayer and rescue worker Bill Regan found a chunk of stone in the ruins of his east London neighbourhood that still bore the initials of local girls, which had been carved by a boy he knew in 1916. Encountering the stone amid a pile of rubble gave Bill pause to think of the girls, and he later wrote, 'I wonder where they are now. This became a depressing journey . . .'⁷⁰ This devastation linked city, neighbourhood, and family loss, creating a sense of shared sadness in both Britain and Japan. Mizutani Shin'ichi pondered in his diary the end of the city he knew, and how the destruction of urban space was an attack on his family:

The last month [March 1945] was chaotic. My life and, indeed, the life of this great city Nagoya, has been completely transformed. Following the air raid on the 12th, 19th, and 25th, a quick succession of attacks has reduced the city centre to ashes, my father's house [in which the family lived] was destroyed, and my wife and daughter have both been seriously injured.⁷¹

The destruction of the city was the end of a space that citizens had built over centuries, and recognised as home. Fifteen-year-old Ono Kazuo was completely disorientated by the annihilation of his neighbourhood in Takamatsu, trying to navigate heretofore familiar streets that were suddenly covered in destroyed houses, downed power lines, and ruined institutions such as schools, hospitals, train stations, and shops.

No place to rest. In the middle of a thin veil of smoke, the blackened figure of the Mitsukoshi [department store] appeared. I went from Memorial Road to the Tourist Path, where I saw blackened and swollen bodies, and I felt like I was instantly transported to some far-off battlefield . . . It didn't matter how long I searched, our home was no more. I stood atop the scorched earth and fallen tiles when, suddenly, tears poured down my face. My mother and father had worked and worked without rest, always putting their wants and needs last, to build this one bit of wealth; how many tears of rage must they have shed at this, how it was stolen from them through no fault of their own.⁷²

The shock and full meaning of the loss of 'home', then, did not fully grab hold of the city's residents until they touched the corpses of their houses, belongings, and old neighbourhoods with their own hands. 'I don't remember anyone crying', wrote Bill Walsh, recalling the destruction of his home in Hull, 'this came later when we went down the terrace and stood on the still warm mound of bricks and plaster which seemed to be so small for what had been quite a large house'.⁷³ The destruction of city and family inspired resentment as well. Even after the destruction of Shizuoka, Matsui was awakened by American planes flying over them, on their way to attack Kōfu, Hirono, and Kiyomizu; he could hear the rumbling of explosions and see the light of far-off fires as others met the same fate, or worse, as he had. Matsui became frustrated and depressed as the war situation worsened:

In May we lost Mieko, in June the house burned down, in July my mother passed away, the Numazu [relatives] family home was destroyed, and in August Terao has become seriously ill. I just want to die myself. I [just] cry. I wish I could break through this ring of misery, even for one hour.

As head of his household, Matsui felt strongly that he had to see his family through the war safely. By the end of it all, Matsui's frustration with this situation had evolved into wrath; he poured out his feelings into the diary when he heard of the war's end: 'Why didn't they at least tell the citizens how weak Japan is? When I think about that, it's just excruciating. Those military thugs and their impulsive, barbaric ways dropped Japan right into the nadir of this suffering. Who is going to take responsibility for this?'⁷⁴ The Onos, Regans, Mizutanis, Walshes, and Matsuis made urban life possible by their collective efforts, so the enemy attacked these families in order to bring the urban cores to their knees. In Britain and Japan, families could not exist without the city, even if they did not always see that the reverse was also true.

While most urban residents 'circled the wagons' of family and friend networks in order to survive, enemy bombers' destruction of the city sometimes removed the restraints of law and common decency. Despite calls for national unity, when a family was bombed out of their home, they frequently encountered the 'hospitality' of urban residents: H. B. Monck described how an acquaintance arrived in Liverpool speaking of 'the selfishness of people', including the cynical price-gouging of desperate refugees for temporary accommodation. It 'gave you an idea', he wrote in his diary, of 'how some people's sense of public duty and citizenship was practically non-existent'.⁷⁵ Takeuchi Toshitoyo discovered that, following a bad raid, some citizens of Nagoya were robbing the corpses of cash and pocket watches.⁷⁶ In response to exploitation and

lawlessness, some citizens felt compelled to take matters into their own hands. The situation in London air raid shelters quickly deteriorated, with locals claiming 'pitches' with bedclothes, fighting with one another over space. C. A. Piper noted how the conditions in Liverpool air raid shelters exposed rampant callousness and brutality in British society:

The more respectable people or, if you will, the less assertive and the more timid, had little chance of accommodation in the public shelters. This selfish monopolising of shelters was, partly at least, broken up by a group of young men, composed of Catholics and Unitarians; armed with short staves not unlike policemen's batons, they visited shelters which had the reputation of refusing admission to the stranger; they appeared to do this with the connivance of the police; I am bound to say that I did not feel a very urgent call to withhold my blessing. Many a bully received a cracked head; some of the crusaders did not escape injury; but this selfish monopolising of shelters by small gangs came to an end.⁷⁷

Attacks on the city thus undermined networks that enforced certain values in daily life, begging a response from vigilantes and self-appointed local authorities. The state was hardly better, however, in its treatment of families. When Kobayashi Takako's mother learned that her son, who had been drafted into the army, died in the Pacific, she cried out, 'Even though our home was burned, if your elder brother came home alive, we could have rebuilt it somehow. The house can burn, but I just want my son returned to me!' Takako's mother cried and mourned for the young man for two years like this, finally demanding the boy's remains to be interred; unfortunately, there were few bodies coming back to Japan directly after the war, and Takako's younger brother had to bury an empty box. Only much later, one of her elder brother's war comrades returned from a prisoner of war camp with a braid of the young man's hair and a broken watch. 'I am deeply struck', she wrote, 'that he had been trained three years ago, and called up three times. But then we finally had his remains [years later], we were able to lay him to rest at home'.⁷⁸ In the war against the family, the enemy and the government seemed to be partners in crime, and this made many citizens callous and bitter about the fates that their loved ones met.

In the end, however, personal grief over the loss of family was not enough to stop the madness of total war. In Bristol, a woman described how an incendiary bomb struck her husband while he was helping his neighbours put out the flames. Her son ran out to his father immediately, but a nearby ambulance was already filled with casualties, all of whom shortly died. 'The bombs were dropping and the guns were firing', she wrote, 'but my boy would not leave his dad. A sailor helped to lift him in a small car, and my boy and I held him, terribly injured, all the way to the

hospital'. A few days later, the man died of his wounds. Instead of inspiring the boy to flee, he 'joined up' two years later: 'His last word[s] to me before he went [were]: "I'm taking up where dad left off."' Mrs. Weston considered her boy 'a hero'.⁷⁹ Similarly, when Yoshida Fusako lost her younger brother Toshio, she was initially distraught. At the time she was an ordinary 15-year-old girl living in Tokyo, afraid of air raids and the dislocations of the war. Toshio's death briefly eclipsed the chaos of bombing as a subject of importance in her personal story.

Oh, my little boy, I couldn't have, in my worst nightmares, imagined what would happen to you. Why did this happen? You were so happy and healthy only yesterday, it's so horrible. Today I saw a dead person for the first time. Oh, you poor little boy. Mom and dad are also grief-stricken.

Her diary was suffused with sad and angry passages about the passing of her brother, such as when she 'spoke rudely' to his doctor on the phone because 'I was not myself'. Her mother stopped tidying the house, a gloom settled over the family, and she felt constantly distracted by her sense of loss. Struggling to finish school and prepare for work placement, Fusako wrote:

When I see things like Toshio's friends, I immediately feel like Toshio is playing with them. I have a ton of studying to do, but even when doing my schoolwork, I just remember playing with my little brother, I get distracted, and I can't focus. No matter how much I grieve, my little brother won't come home to me.

Fusako's depression over her little brother's death persisted for about a month, but soon she was pulled into the state's mobilisation campaigns. Air raid drills, exams, and work training all consumed her adolescent self. While participating in a service for the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine, she wrote, 'Even though I'm only fifteen, I may have to graduate [a year early] with the final year students. I can't really say that's going to be a bore. It's for our nation'. She threw herself into the war effort, working even while she was ill. These declarations can be misleading, however, in light of the enduring power of the family. At the end of the Second World War, when the Soviet invasion of Manchuria made Japan's surrender inevitable, Fusako reflected on the early nationalist philosopher Sakura Azumao: 'Sakura once said that "One should offer oneself up to the Emperor out of respect for the parents who brought you into the world", and I had strengthened my resolve. But, deep in my heart, I am secretly wishing to hurry up and be with my mother and father again'. At the very end of the war, on 15 August, she walked over four miles back to her home, woozy from illness and malnutrition, later writing: 'I came back dizzy with exhaustion. It was extremely hot and

I bore a heavy rucksack, so I really struggled walking, [but] I thought: there's really no place like home'.⁸⁰

Conclusion: 'Family Values' under Aerial Bombardment

Despite the incessant propaganda, families usually put their survival ahead of national victory. Consequently, after seeing how the enemy and the state took away their loved ones, families focused on and celebrated survival whenever they could. Having lived through the worst of Coventry's bombings, Mary Bloomfield felt fortunate to have her relatives with her.

We were in very good spirits, in spite of the terrible sights that we had seen. Our homes were intact, our husbands and family were safe. We were so thankful to be still alive, unhurt. The relief was so tremendous, we couldn't be downcast. We were more awe-struck than anything. We were practical women.⁸¹

For John and Elizabeth, who were separated only by the sprawl of greater London and Kent, the fires following the air raids of September 1940 inspired fear and longing. John referred to the fires' 'lurid glow', which made him worried for Elizabeth. Elizabeth, in turn, found herself worried for John:

On Monday night I was quite sleepless and terrified, with the result that last night, after feeding Charlotte, I fell into bed and slept like a log until 6, waking momentarily when the all-clear went at 4:45. I hope I shall be able to again tonight. I often think of you, my darling, out in a cold trench when I am warm in bed. Please try to sleep there, if it is humanly possible . . . I pray that all or none of us may survive this war; but not one or two . . .⁸²

To rub salt in the wound, some rejected the importance of family over the state to the dismay of their loved ones. Hirai Kiyoshi, a student from Sendai who was attending Tokyo Imperial University, was constantly harangued by his mother to switch from humanities to an applied science programme – particularly one like medicine or agriculture, which would keep him out of the army. 'She's getting increasingly insistent', he wrote in his 1944 diary, 'because I'm her only son whom she raised up and she doesn't want my life thrown away on the battlefield . . .' He resisted her entreaties, due to the investment he had put in his education thus far, but 'it was like a madness for her'. Anticipating severe air raids over Sendai, he added:

. . . she is just earnestly crying and begging me. She argued with me back and forth, looking at the issue from every possible angle, in her effort to persuade. At first she invited me to consider my future after university, and her ideas only

concerned the benefits [of such a degree], but now her instincts are telling her that the war is after her son's blood. Surely, she's foreseeing 'death' in my future ... In her heart she's crying and praying, but on the surface she just smiles patiently, and I have to face my mother's sad face and plaintive cries ... Mother, I know how you feel. But this era and what we have been taught cannot permit me to heed your words. Please forgive me, I am a bad son.⁸³

Unfortunately, Kiyoshi was killed in an air raid shortly thereafter, confirming his mother's worst fears. The loss of family was so devastating that it permanently changed lives and outlook at the same time. In Hull, Rita Daniel, then 12 years old, recounted how her family had allowed their vigilance to lapse as repeated air raid warnings were followed by no attacks. Then, when the bombing began, they ran to the shelter with pillows over their heads, wearing only nightclothes and carrying no provisions.

The screaming noise of the bombs as they fell, the noise becoming deafening as they got nearer, suddenly one was covered in rubble with dust choking you. Gerald [brother, aged 16] had been blown clear and began recusing us; he got Margaret [sister, aged 6] out first and then me. I stood on the pavement and a flash lit up where he had put Margaret on the other side of the road, got her to our side (where the shelter was) and then he managed to get the rest of the family out ... The building nearby was a brewery and we huddled in there, kneeling among the hops with Mum's head on my knee.

Her mother complained of having no feelings in her legs. All around them, rats ran among the hops and Rita worried about someone trampling her now disabled mother. She began to sing the hymn 'Abide with Me' to calm her mother, changing the lyrics to 'Abide with Us', when she heard her father, normally a calm and polite man, growl, 'You German bastards'. After the ambulance came and collected them, her mother died in the hospital and the family was separated. 'We had a houseboat on Hessle foreshore where we went to live', she wrote, 'vowing never to sleep in a building with bricks and mortar again'.⁸⁴ The war and its demands broke apart, reconstructed, and reinforced the family, leaving a legacy that is difficult to comprehend.

For the most part, the war reoriented the values of that generation in ways that are alien to us today. The citizens of the city in the Second World War watched the enemy massacre entire families, and those that emerged were much less likely to put career or politics above relations; in both Britain and Japan, the families that survived the war built welfare states and social democracies that were the envy of the world. For those of us who had grandparents from that generation, their (sometimes parsimonious) personal practicality, on the one hand, and unstinting

generosity for family members, on the other, is much easier to grasp when we understand what total war had done to them. Olive Metcalfe, who had to endure the destruction of Hull while separated from her husband and pregnant with her first baby, was so poor that she spent her rent money on timber to make shelves for children's clothes and 'necessities'. Complaining that nappies were 'dear items', she made her own cot and pram and even used her husband's waterproof cloak as floor cover when bathing the baby. She went for days without bathing, due to a lack of money for coal in the winter of 1940–1941, and was dangerously underfed at the start of her pregnancy, causing her to feel faint and ill. Ruefully considering her options, and rapidly declining cash reserves, Olive then wrote to her husband: 'It has just occurred to me how much we shall love this youngster when it is finally ours. The greater one's struggle, the more personal one's affection, no less yours than mine'.⁸⁵

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Our diarists often felt the pang of family loss. Sometimes, the story of wartime families has a happy ending such as Fusako's, but often the people of the city had to accept that their loved ones were sacrificed for 'victory'. In the long aftermath of the war, many children would live without their fathers and mothers, sometimes starving or suffering abuse in the early post-war period due to a lack of adult protection. Sisters lost brothers, sons lost mothers, wives lost husbands, and mothers lost daughters in the total war against non-combatants. When students were pulled out of university to serve on the front, Takahashi Aiko overheard one young man on a train remark bitterly, 'So, they used to say a man's life numbers fifty years, but it looks like ours will be just twenty-five'.⁸⁶

For our diarists, the annihilation of family often went hand in hand with the systematic destruction of the city piece by piece. Young people, such as teenagers Kenneth Holmes and Inohara Mitsuko, were still fledglings from their parents' nests, either living at home or alternating between staying with family and striking out on their own. Kenneth sought his family immediately following the horrifying attacks of German V2 rockets on Kensington.

Today I witnessed the nearest escape I have so far had, once again I thanked God that my family and myself were untouched though a little shaken . . . It was about 5:15pm and I was slowly strolling down the road, passing a street shelter when I saw a vivid flash just above me. Thinking it was lightning, as it was raining, I took no notice, but immediately after there was a tremendous explosion, followed by the sound of breaking glass. I at once threw myself against the shelter (or was I blown?) and covered my neck and face the best I could with

my hands. At the moment I thought the end of the world had come. The earth trembled, the very air seemed to vibrate, my ears seemed to be deafened, and a buzzing sound was passing through them. I cannot adequately describe my feelings, I thought I was accustomed to hearing 'bangs' and 'explosions', but never have I heard such a deafening sound, and it is surprising what one's ears can receive and remain normal . . . I was only a few yards from my home but I covered the distance in record time to see if my family were safe. I found my Mother and Father quite safe, and Dad busy inspecting the damage and though no words were said to the effect, I sensed by the look on my Mother's face her relief that at least I too was safe.⁸⁷

A short time later, but thousands of miles away, Mitsuko was seized by the same fears. She was safe in a dormitory for young conscript labourers in Itami, but Osaka was visible from the factory. As the Allied bombing campaign systematically burned large portions of her home city to the ground (with civilians trapped inside), she was filled with fear and dread:

At half past eleven, the sirens rang low over Osaka. Then, I could hear a loud rumbling noise, and our neighbourhood sirens gave the warning as well. I thought, 'here it comes'. After two or three warning sirens, they signalled the arrival of a huge squadron of bombers. We were already hiding in our assigned bunker. We couldn't help but shake and shiver all over. We were slowly freezing, going numb, but trying to shake life back into our legs.

Anti-aircraft guns started blasting non-stop. Occasionally the sky would light up suddenly from what were obviously incendiary bombs. The enemy planes came in droves. I was so, so tired, but I couldn't sleep. When I could, I would just nod off for a moment, and then snap awake. Everyone kept saying, 'The sky is red! The sky is red!' At two thirty in the morning, I went to relieve myself. I was shocked. The entire sky was red. I bet Osaka is in a sea of flame. I began to worry about my parents at home. Then, it started to rain. Was it a blessing from heaven, coming to suppress these fires? . . . The next day we learned that Osaka's Ten'oji and Nishinari Wards were utterly destroyed. After breakfast, I went back to bed, but I couldn't sleep. I have no energy, not until I know my family is safe.⁸⁸

For those who remained at home in the cities, however, the end result was hardly much of an improvement. As fires, rockets, and bombs tore Britain and Japan's urban spaces apart, there was nothing left to call 'home'. Aiko recorded in her diary the bitter moment when her family barely saved their house, only to watch others be utterly destroyed.

The incendiary bombs break apart before your eyes, spewing forth fire. We soaked everything in the house with water. In spite of pouring water on our clothes, at some point they dried out. While carrying more water, my husband said in a high-pitched voice, 'It's no use. Go on, just look at the house'. The neighbourhood association alarm bell was ringing wildly. Suddenly, someone was running around shouting that someone's house in the neighbourhood was on fire, and everyone should all get our buckets in hand . . . That our own house was

saved was truly like a dream. Just a few houses away, countless incendiary bombs had fallen and through the fire-fighting efforts they were just barely saved. When it was all over, I looked around the neighbourhood and our house was at the centre of a block that, as if drawn straight on a map with a compass, had been [the only one] spared by the flames.⁸⁹

The assault on the city was therefore not just a crude, impersonal destruction of property, like a child kicking down a sand castle. The war pulled our diarists away from their loved ones, destroyed their homes, and tore apart the bonds and conduits that linked a human community together. The sense of isolation and anxiety that suffuses many of the diary accounts demands a closer look at the emotions that the diarists tried to put into words. Even the most level-headed narrator surrendered to strong feelings under such conditions. It should come as no surprise, then, that being targeted by the enemy led directly to irrationality, and extreme behaviour that would have rarely occurred during peacetime.