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The Knothole, September 29, 1969

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Student Body

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THE
KNOTHOLE
VOL. 20, NO. 2
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EDITORIAL

"We are not now, and never have belonged to Syracuse University!" This was a response to a statement that was made in the editorial of the first issue of The Knothole by an extremely prominent and well-known Professor Emeritus of the College. The editorial, if reread, does not suggest that we are part of Syracuse University; actually it does quite the opposite, it shows how the College is very much not a part of the University complex here in Syracuse. This editorial is not intended to correct that one person's thinking. The response that was made, however, started me thinking if whether or not we are part of Syracuse University.

Every frosh in the College either lives at home or lives in Syracuse University housing. If he lives in SU housing, then he eats SU food, and also has a right to belong to the SU Student Senate. The forestry student is allowed to participate in extra curricular activities at SU, and thus allowed to represent SU at different locations outside of the city of Syracuse. Being able to represent a school would make one part of that school.

Freshmen English is usually taken at SU by the forestry students. In addition, many of the forester's general education requirements are fulfilled on the Syracuse University campus. Taking courses in a school would also make one part of that school.

This all leads to a third and most important fact; when a Forester graduates he is given two degrees, one from the College of Forestry and one from Syracuse University. It seems to me that in order to get a degree from a school, a student has to be very much a part of that school.

Sure, we do not belong to Syracuse University, that is a common belief. But the students at the College are participating, to a great extent, in Syracuse University life; making it a large part of their own. Maybe it is because our College faculty has very little to do with Syracuse University, academically, that they feel this way, for I have run into this thinking with other faculty members around the campus. The student, however, cannot close his life to just the College of Forestry.

-J.B.

The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience has announced its program for the Summer of 1970. Junior, Senior and Graduate students interested in participation may obtain further information and application forms for the program from the Office of International Forestry, 113 Bray Hall. The deadline for submitting applications is December 5, 1969

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GEE
 by William Timberlake

Listen, see, FEEL
 wind news trees
 radio sweet Melinda
 television stars birds
 all whisper softly
 forlorn
 it's all over baby.

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PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome back to campus all those who left for the summer. I hope you all had a good time at summer camp, fighting fires, loafing, or whatever, and that you are all set to hit the books.

Despite the fact that very few students were on campus, the place was really busy. Renovation of Bray Hall started as soon as exams finished, and most of the rooms were completed only last week. Work continued on Marshall Hall, and according to the schedule, work should be completed sometime in November. "Landscraping" of the college was also continued, with much of the work around Walters Hall and Lobby Lab completed. Our College maintenance crew tried its hand at growing grass (the Monocat) and the green patch on the south edge of the quad is the result of their effort. The brown "burned-over" portion of the quad is still under control of the contractors.

The above changes or their results are readily apparent to most everyone who has been on campus before. A few important and highly significant changes took place behind the scene.

The college has a new man in its top administrative position. Dr. Edward E. Palmer was chosen President of the college, and has succeeded Dean Jahn. Dr. Jahn, at his recognition dinner this summer, indicated that he will return to teaching at the College. Another important change was the passing of the new rules and regulations by the Board of Trustees. You may have noticed the new rules in the college handbook which was crammed into your registration packet. Since these rules apply to everyone on campus, I humbly suggest that you read them. I'm sure that in the future you will be hearing a lot about this new set of rules.

Again, welcome back to stumpy-land. If you have any questions about anything, feel free to ask me. The easiest way to get in touch with me is via the Student Mailboxes in the basement of Bray Hall.

Joe Braun
 President
 Student Council

TRADITIONS COUNCIL NEWS

This is the first anniversary of the Traditions Council. The past year was difficult for us. We had no precedents on which to act and no programs or goals to maintain. Gradually we have been evolving these for ourselves. We have drafted our constitution and have had it ratified, and we have begun a series of projects we consider valuable to the College.

We are preparing a publication in which we will include a brief history of the College of Forestry. Our goal in this is to achieve a greater awareness of how the College as we know it, has evolved; to give a greater meaning to our present features.

To enable undergrads to more realistically appreciate how readily graduates of the College are finding jobs, we began a survey of the Senior Class. The findings were startling and are available through the Council.

Furthermore, we hope to initiate some novel projects this year.

The backbone of the Council consists of a dedicated group now in their Sophomore year. We're proud that this freshest and most impressionable group is most active. I hope this will be Traditional. We are a young and enthusiastic bunch with plenty of room for initiative. If you are interested in the history and the traditions of the College, and want to make history here at the College, you're welcome to join us!

Stephen Loomis

A SENSE OF HISTORY, or LIKE IT WAS IS LIKE IT IS

Excerpt from: Commencement address before Class of 1969, Williamsburg High School, Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, June 3, 1969

by R. Heath Larry

I congratulate you upon this milestone in your educational process. And it is a milestone. Yet, you already know, I expect, that your education is just beginning. For this is a fact that you can't escape, whether you go on to a college, enter a military service, go to work-or try to avoid all three. Old knowledge most constantly be relearned and new knowledge must be folded in. So I hope you have learned how to learn; and I hope also that you have learned-or will learn-a sense of history.

From what I read these days, there is quite a student reaction against the traditional disciplines of learning. Such disciplines are said to be no longer "relevant." Thus, it is contended that our systems of education should be transformed into systems of "dialogue" about today's problems, with the students doing most of the talking, and the teachers simply reacting with sympathy, compassion, and minimal or no exercise of authority. A recent issue of Life Magazine reports a Lou Harris poll which shows that students tend today to vote history the most irrelevant of all subjects.

How unfortunate, if true. Think for a moment: if the cumulative total of man's recorded past experience is not relevant to today's problems, on the theory, I suppose, that we are in a world of rapid change, how quickly will a discussion of only today's problems become irrelevant to the changed problems of tomorrow?

I feel that the most important lesson that can be learned, aside from simply learning how to learn, is a sense of history-a concept of what things have happened to and among men, and why over the recorded span of human events which, when understood, can enable anyone at any point of time-yesterday, today or tomorrow-to weigh the problems of the moment in the longer perspective. Yet, how hard a lesson for those in the spring of life to whom all experiences are felt to be as unique in the annals of man as their first love affair.

It has been well said that "those who will not read history are doomed to repeat it."

So, let me repeat, there is nothing more relevant to judging the merits of the aroused emotions of any generation, and today's is no exception, than being able to look at the accumulated experience of those who have felt like-minded in other ages.

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The consequences can then be weighed with the intelligence which only a sense of history can give.

Now, I suppose that what I have said thus far already serves to reflect the generation gap between you of the Class of '69 and none such as I whose commencement night occurred nearly forty years ago.

History tells us that there always has been a generation gap-and so it should be. We should never expect youth to cast aside its energy, idealism and impetuosity, any more than we should expect age to cast aside the judgment and pragmatism which it has developed through years of experience.

We would be less than honest with each other, however, if we did not recognize that this so-called gap now seems to have widened to the point where a disturbingly larger segment of our youth may now be on a collision course with other members of society.

These are mutinous times. They demand frank discussion. No one can view what has been going on, and what is yet threatened to occur-within our cities, on our campuses, and in our work places-without being acutely concerned.

Whether or not those who foment these evidences of insurrection represent a small minority, as some contend, is beside the point. Activist minorities have always been able to overcome passive majorities. The pages of history are full of examples. And as Edmund Burke reminded us in his famous line of several centuries ago, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing"

The thesis of the young activists on our campuses and of the riotous militants in our cities is frankly and openly one of revolution. Behind slogans which are wittingly, or unwittingly, Marxist, they are candidly concerned with power-political power-for themselves. They want it, and since somebody else seems to have it, that somebody, or those somebodies, as being those who are alleged to comprise The System or The Establishment. I am sure they would accuse me of being part of it. I suppose, therefore, I should consider myself a marked man.

Nevertheless, I shall enter no denials upon the record. If the accusation is accurate, I will be proud to acknowledge it. Too often there has been a tendency to run for cover when charges about The System or The Establishment are thrown around-as though some element of undefined guilt were involved. That seems to me both cowardly and wrong; wrong from the standpoint of the best interests of the whole of our society. And let me remind you why.

Every large-scale society has to have organization unless, of course, it is to fall into anti-productive and inhuman chaos. We are no exception here in America. We do have organizations-capitalist organizations. We have business corporations, large and small, competing strongly-responsible to stockholders and responsive to the needs of the market; we have nonprofit corporations which constitute our colleges and universities and constitute also our private organizations which provide a host of services devoted to the betterment of society; we have organized government-federal, state and local-not despotic, but democratically responsible to and replaceable by a free electorate; and contributing to the moral climate in which all of these organizations operate is organized religion.

Together, these organizations apparently comprise the "system"; and those who have risen to positions of leadership within them apparently comprise The Establishment.

Now, I am not going to contend that these organizations have no faults-that there is no room for change and improvement; because they are no more perfect than any other human institutions or the humans which make them up.

But I do want to assert that anyone who becomes so masochistically concerned with the remaining deficiencies in our society as to want to destroy the pluralistic "system" comprised of these organizations-and its leadership "establishment"-had better be prepared to stand a long way back lest he, himself, be covered by the debris of the resulting human disaster, which will take generations to clean up. Too many remain ignor-

ant of the lesson of history that when a social system is destroyed, the resulting chaos is supremely antagonistic to any organized purposes, including the purposes of those who initiated the destruction.

Now what are the contentions of the young revolutionaries who say the system has to go? Fundamentally they prey upon the lurking sense of guilt which the average decent human being feels because he admits to himself that there are imperfections in society and, since he lives in a free society, he can't transfer all the blame to the government. These imperfections are then magnified and distorted into charges like these: The capitalist system denies its fruits to the many; it oppresses the workers and the poor; it sacrifices liberty (including, of course, that of the student) on the altar of order; its power structure foments aggressive wars for its own benefit; it denies minorities their rights.

The "system" is thus made to appear as the root of all evil. And since "The establishment just won't give up its power and its wealth voluntarily," to quote from one young student revolutionary, "it has to be taken away from them by force. It's that simple."

Let's examine this thesis and, as we do, don't dismiss what I am about to say because you think my position in life makes me an obvious partisan. Think, rather, of the fact that actuarially you and your generation have so many more years to live in this world than have I and mine. So consider carefully, in your own interest, how they may best be lived.

We do, to be sure, have a capitalist system. Let's acknowledge it-and with pride. It's a system based on private ownership of property, a system based upon competitive rewards to those who compete best for serving the customer in a free market, and yet a system which has been freely open to ability, talent and creativeness wherever it has appeared.

And what has been the result? A system which has brought greater benefits to more people than any other system in all history. But history is not the focus of our young revolutionaries. They don't want to think in terms of historical perspective. It wouldn't serve their purpose. What does serve their purpose is to try to persuade anyone who has less than somebody else that the "system" which permits such inequality is inherently unfair and inhuman.

They would not want to have to recognize what history shows; namely, that our system achieved a greater wealth than any other; that its wealth has been more widely dispersed than at any other time or place in history; that few, if any, nations have ever used their wealth with greater compassion for their elderly, their unemployed, their disabled, their poor; that no other nation has ever tried voluntarily to share its wealth more widely throughout the world with the peoples of the poor and less developed nations; that no nation has ever made education more generally available in an effort to open the doors of economic opportunity; that no nation has had a more open society with fewer economic and social barriers between groups.

Let's concede that there still are hard pockets of poverty and that some of it exists because economic opportunities have not always been perfectly open. Thus, anyone who works constructively for change and progress in this area is to be applauded. But let us not be taken in by demagogues chanting the oldest fallacy in history; namely, that if all the nation's wealth were somehow to be redistributed equally, all would be beautiful. The Utopian dream of the perfect combination of both liberty and equality has been proven in history-again and again to be the impossible dream.

In their most recent book, entitled LESSONS IN HISTORY, Will and Ariel Durant have distilled a lifetime of study into some classical observations. They have studied what was, so they can "tell it like it is." Here is what they say: "Leave men free, and their natural inequalities will multiply almost geometrically...To check the growth of inequality, liberty must be sacrificed...Even when repressed, inequality grows; only the man who is below the average in economic ability desires equality; those who are conscious of superior ability desire freedom; and in the end superior ability has its way. Utopias of equality are biologically doomed, and the best that the amiable philosopher can hope for is an approximate equality of legal justice and educational opportunity."

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When our young revolutionaries try to make you feel too guilty about some of the admitted faults in our system, remember the old story of the professor who when asked how his wife was replied, "Compared with whose?"

Even when we think in terms of the Viet Nam War, uncomfortable as it is, we must ask the young revolutionaries, who make so much of it, to answer candidly whether the overturning of the capitalist system could give any assurance against involvement in such wars. What can they say about Russia and China and their aggressions, and even their border clashes? What can they say when the Russian tanks and troops have rolled into Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia: How cruelly have these noncapitalist peoples' governments crushed any questioning of their total authority? And what about Israel and the Arabs, or even Biafra? Surely it is fair to say that no nation-no system-has ever used its military strength with less emphasis upon territorial, economic or political aggrandizement than our own.

No wars are not the creatures of the American Capitalistic System, nor are the imperfections of mankind, which lead to imperfect actions by whatever organization, capitalist or otherwise, man chooses to work through. Destruction of the Capitalistic System would not change that.

As John Gardner, Chairman of the Urban Coalition and a renowned liberal not given to reticence in his criticism of the status quo, put it recently, those who argue for destruction of the system have fallen victim to an old and naive doctrine; namely "that man is naturally good, human, decent, just and honorable-but that corrupt and wicked institutions have transformed the noble savage into a civilized monster. Destroy the corrupt institutions, they say, and man's native goodness will flower. There isn't anything in history or anthropology to confirm the thesis-but it survives down the generations!"

He went on then to point out that, "Those who would destroy the system also fail to understand that periods of chaos are followed by periods of iron rule. Those who seek to bring societies down always dream that after the blood bath they will be calling the tune; and perhaps that make the blood bath seem a small price to pay. But after the chaos, no one knows what kind of a dictator would emerge."

One does know that if we do not have a system with all of the pluralism that ours now has, we will either have no system, which would mean complete chaos and a return to the Dark Ages. Or as the only remaining alternative, we will have one all-embracing system in which all parts are government, such as the socialists and the communists have. Those who are uncomfortable with the freedom and opportunity accorded them under the pluralist centers of authority we have now, should ponder carefully the scope of authority which would have to be exercised by such a government.

Up to now, I have dealt considerably-perhaps unduly-with the motivations and methods of today's young revolutionaries. I hope that I have succeeded, at least slightly, in showing how history rejects the validity of their thesis.

Concern for today's problems, of course, produces reactions by young people other than revolutionary. You will readily recognize at least three other types.

For example, some find the whole thing just too much. They profess to find no meaning in life; they become self-centered; they search endlessly and aimlessly for their own identity; they drop out; they seek escape through drugs. They make no contribution, except to the very elements of decay in society which they claim to abhor.

Perhaps it was such a one who recently wrote anonymously in chalk upon the plywood fence surrounding a new construction project near my office in Pittsburgh, these forlorn words: "Because of lack of interest, tomorrow is cancelled." One must regret that such as these have also missed a vital lesson from history; namely, that to get something meaningful from life, one must give something meaningful.

The third group has learned this lesson. It seeks hard for ways in which to make a meaningful contribution. Its members want to and do find means of assisting the poor, the uneducated, those deprived of a fair opportunity in life. Their neglect of history lies only in their failure to have understood the nexus between the work of business and the creation of wealth, which is so vital to the accomplishment of the very ends to which they have dedicated themselves.

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And finally, there is a fourth grouping of our youth—a group which is no less challenged by today's problems but is not depressed by them—a group which, because of a sense of history, finds nothing antisocial in putting its energies and intelligence to work in earning a living, in building the economic base of our society as a necessary steppingstone toward further social progress— a group which feels that freedom with order, morality, individual responsibility and a growing stock of capital are all prerequisites to the highest good of man.

With which one of these groups will you cast your lot? The choice is yours. But as you make it, listen not to me, a confessed voice of The Establishment—but listen, rather to the accumulated experience of all mankind which has preceded you. Have the intelligence to make your judgment from a sense of history.

And may I say, before concluding, that the lessons of history are not alone for the young, but for my generation and that of your parents.

One lesson which we have tended to forget is that never in history has a people attained greatness by self-indulgence. Yet could it be that we, as parents, have tolerated such a growing permissiveness both for ourselves and our families that it is we who have sown much of what we are now reaping? Could it be that we have pursued contentment more often and more strenuously than we have pursued commitment? Could it be that the "generation gap" has been additionally strained by a "credibility gap?"

Ours is a free nation—one in which individual liberty is highly revered. My generation worries about those in your generation who abuse liberty by questioning the importance of preservation of order.

And a proper worry it is, for history has long taught that the more liberty is pursued at the expense of order, the greater will be the ultimate restraints of authority.

But my generation has worried too little about other prerequisites to securing the blessings of liberty. Our founding fathers reminded us again and again in their writings that a free government would be in constant peril unless the people maintained a "Constant adherence to the principles of piety, justice, moderation, temperance, industry and frugality" (The Massachusetts Bill of Rights); and Samuel Adams put it well when he said, "...public liberty will not long survive the total extinction of morals." How morally permissive have we become? Can we not already see the resulting threat to liberty?

On this point, my generation will have cause to be grateful to your generation, if it can hear one message I believe you are trying to give us; that is, that the distance between the virtues we have preached and those we have practiced is too great; that discipline from those who are not self-disciplined is a hard dose to take. I hope we're listening.

I have talked a good deal about history tonight and very shortly your careers in Williamsburg High, and this commencement will be consigned to history. In the years to come, what do you suppose will be written about you and others like you who will be graduating this year:

All groups will not be the same, of course. But as I look at this one, I feel I see evidence of more than a normal amount of common sense and of a courage to match your intelligence.

If I am right, none of my generation has a bit of reason to be concerned with how you are going to measure up. You know you are not the first generation to face tough problems. You also know you are better equipped than those before you to take up the tough ones. I suspect you're going to mature a little faster than some of your preceding classes and, as a result, courage and ambition will again emerge to be companions to your concern and compassion.

And, if so, it can be the destiny of your generation to be that which binds up the wounds of our nation once again—and maybe even closes the generation gap just a little.

