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THIS IS OUR SACRED DUTY

We are at War with Japan! How many times we have heard this since Sunday! What has it done to us? How will it change our lives? How will it affect our American plan of living?

So far most of us here at Salem have taken the news in one of two ways. We have taken the extremes and have forgotten about the sane middle course. Some of us have said, "Oh dear, I'm so worried. Jim won't get home to take me to the holiday dances. It does look like the Japs could have waited until after Christmas. Well, I suppose there's no point in thinking about it. Let's play a little bridge."

Others have sat rather hysterically by the radio listening to every news report and believing all of them. They have not taken time to weigh the news or wait for it to be confirmed by real authorities. Their world has fallen down around their ears. They can see no future ahead. They can see no light. They can not see that some good comes out of every evil.

This is no way for thinking people to act. We are the people who must do something about this situation. Not the present, perhaps, but the future depends on this college generation. Upon us will fall the responsibility of building the world of tomorrow. It has to be this way. We must face it. We cannot turn our backs on the world and depend on our fathers to do our thinking for us. We cannot be pessimists and see only darkness and death ahead. We have to hold our heads up. We must look into the future and see victory. We are the people who are being trained to think and we are the people who have the time to think. We have an idea, vague perhaps, but nevertheless an idea of what is wrong with the world. We cannot go out and actually fight for what we believe, but we can recognize propaganda for what it is. We can live our lives as normally as we have been doing. We cannot and must not expect to remain aloof and unaware of what is going on in a mad world. We must think sanely and live sanely. This will be our victory. This is our sacred duty.

—F. Y.

Le Coin Francais

Chères étudiantes,

Peut-être que la saison de Noël est celle que nous aimons plus que toutes les autres. Mais cette année le Noël ne va pas être le même que celui que nous avons connu jusqu'à maintenant. Notre pays se bat, l'Europe est presque entièrement subjuguée, et l'esprit de Noël ne demeure pas sur la terre.

Il est à nous, alors, d'essayer de faire revivre cet esprit qui meure, de nous rappeler que si nous oublions cet esprit il n'y aura personne qui puisse s'en souvenir. Alors, essayons de disséminer de la joie partout. Mais nous ne pouvons pas donner de la joie aux autres si nous ne sommes pas joyeux nous-mêmes. Eh bien, en nous souvenant de la guerre, il ne faut pas y penser trop. Il faut agir comme avant, en tant que ça soit possible, et il faut croire que notre pays va gagner cette guerre, et en être confiantes.

Maintenant, c'est le Noël et nous devrions être heureuses. Soyons-le! Allons chez nous revoir nos amis et nos parents, et oublions la guerre pendant nos vacances. Joyeux Noël, mes amies!

Dear Editor:

Last week the SALEMITE ran a noteworthy editorial on the advantages of a small college. The advantages are very real and worthwhile, as we all acknowledge by our attendance here; but I, like Mr. Poe, think that perhaps the virtues shine out for themselves, and that it is the fault which we must expose . . . and correct.

We might ask, "Is Salem ingrown? Haven't we so lived in our little world of tradition that we have failed to honor this rich tradition by making it a growing thing?" . . . and answer, "Emphatically, YES!" We might ask further, "Have we let our minds become static — have we let ourselves become content to memorize and never question; to copy class notes without a thought, a question, a doubt?" and answer again, "Emphatically, Yes!"

The real answer to these questions, which is a solution of the problem, is that we all — teachers and students alike — have lost sight of our goal. We have forgotten what education is, and are blindly and lazily turning to Medieval scholasticism in a day when education is, perhaps, more vitally important than ever before. Before we can assume the responsibility of being tomorrow's leaders, we must settle this problem of getting the rudiments of education . . . and to settle requires co-operation.

"Students learn what they want to learn" . . . if we ever want to live normal, healthy lives away from the drone of planes and the constant worry of war, we must want to learn.

Questions answered by a cross-section of students disclosed that the courses in which the students want to learn are the hard courses: they are the courses in which students and teachers work with interest and fervor . . . in which students delve in the library and find dusty facts, which become live, meaningful questions in class. The courses which the students termed mediocre were those with interesting material, tough assignments . . . but no real interest from the teacher or the class. The "sleeping courses" were unanimously voted down as dull and worthless . . . the teacher gives, the student takes; there is no common ground, no desire to learn.

This problem of not wanting to learn is more prevalent in the small college than in the universities, because we have fewer scholars, real scholars, than do the universities. We should, however, be vitally interested as college students, as potential leaders in a drive for peace, in making all courses at Salem "best" courses. We should be interested in getting educated rather than "larn'd." If we are interested, we should demand — not more work from teachers — but more interest; we should demand that the teacher review the lesson that she hasn't thought about since graduate school . . . we should demand by sincere interest and hard work that we be treated as normal, intelligent human beings and not like moronic machines . . . we should demand, and we should prove that we are worthy of demanding.

NAMES IN PUBLIC

It's not that we don't appreciate the significance of handwriting on the wall, but when it is on Salem College's walls, we don't feel that it is quite as valuable as it was in Nebuchadnezzar's court, especially a name written many times over. It may be true that it is a beautiful name, but I can't see why it pays to advertise within the walls of Salem College. If you would go over to the Bowman Gray School of Medicine and write your name and telephone number on the wall that would be a different matter and we could understand that. But when your name is written on Salem walls, just remember that this motto holds true: "Fools names and fools faces are often seen in public places."

—M. L. G.

WITH PERFECT SINCERITY

December 18th — a date marked on every student calendar. Even faculty calendars might reveal a row of little X's, as the days fall off one by one. Christmas in college means the anticipation of dates, parties, dances, family reunions, presents, checking on train schedules, hilarious excitement. The last week seems unbearably tedious. Classes are disorganized. If a faculty member gives a test on the last day, his name, rightly or wrongly, is anathema.

That's all part of the preliminaries. It's what the thought of Christmas conjures up in our minds. In varying degrees, that's what Christmas brings to every college and university in the country. This year Christmas means something different. Oh, we'll probably go through the same routine, which is always novel. We may be as gay and apparently enjoy ourselves as much, but underneath is the shock of reality, cold, hard reality.

College is a cloistered world. In a college of this type, students are pretty well cushioned against the facts of existence. It's not our fault, nor the fault of our parents. For it is the nature of parents to protect their children to the fullest possible extent. But we must confess that we have led a comparatively easy life. Since none of us remember the last war, this is our first contact with an issue far larger than ourselves and our own interests. We've read, of course. Some of us could be very bookish and recite statistics, causes, results, etc., of the last war. None of us know what war means.

Our first reaction is emotional; the shock, the horror, we can't believe it! College suddenly seems unimportant. Digging in the library is singularly unreal and profitless. It's easier to have a feverish good time than to keep on with our ordinary tasks.

Well, it's time we grew up and faced the facts. If our education means anything to us, now is the time to use it. College should have aided us in formulating a way of life, a sense of values. Now is the time to retain our mental balance, to maintain a clear perspective, neither plunging into despair nor reckless gaiety.

Every great civilization has made a lasting contribution to world culture, in spite of the disasters of war and pestilence. This is true of the Greeks in the fifth century, of the Roman Empire, overrun by barbarians, some of whom were the ancestors of the present barbaric Germans. It is true of the Middle Ages, devastated by pestilence. It is true of France in spite of Napoleon and the Revolution. It has been true of this country, notwithstanding several wars, and it will continue to be true after this war.

The significant factor in all this is that we are the ones to support this tradition; to ensure its continuance by steady attention to that which will be real, lasting, permanent, when Hitler is only a name in a history text. Remembering our duties and privileges as "defenders of culture," we can still say with perfect sincerity, "Merry Christmas!"

—A. K.

WE MUST KEEP CALM

No one who realizes the cause of war and the results of war wants war. But if war comes, and it has come, we should not get unduly excited or become emotionally wrought up. Letting our excitement get the upper hand over our common sense will help no one. We are all worried — even more so in view of our "isolated" position — we feel like packing up and taking off for home. (Fortunately what we feel like doing and the actions we really take do not conform). The best stand that we can assume is a calm one — Beware of going off on an emotional tangent. Getting unduly excited won't help.

—L. H.