

DUCSU Polls And Reconstruction Of Campus

Comment on the just-concluded DUCSU elections and those in the fourteen Halls must begin by congratulating all student parties that they have made it possible for the first time in some years, to make peaceful university and hall elections possible. We have watched with more than usual interest the run-up to the polls and the campaign run by the contesting student parties. What has impressed everybody is the metamorphosis of sorts in student relations and the sense of humour and the spirit of tolerance and friendship reflected in the sustained festive mood on the election eve. The profounder reason for public satisfaction over the elections is the passing-off of the elections with no untoward incident. The losing rivals pleasantly conceded the defeat, and the winners, with an overwhelming success, kept up their spirit of cooperation that underpin corporate life in a residential university.

We feel encouraged to contemplate this leadership-change on Dhaka University campus (including the Halls) with hope that the first thing for it to devote its energies to is the restoration of campus values that had looked like being destroyed with little hope of recovery in the foreseeable future. Mutual bitterness degenerated at times into lethal mutual hate and rivalry that made the academic atmosphere incomparably dismal-looking. Parents, guardians and non-partisan members of the general public only prayed for sanity to return to the campus.

This return to peace or reconstruction of campus life should go with a serious return to an unmixed academic programme that has been the principal casualty, over the past years—nay, decades—of continual campus disturbances. By the academic programme we mean everything from class attendance to library and laboratory work, of both routine and research natures, to examinations and working for them. In this act of reconstruction of academic discipline and activity teachers are expected to participate with a renewed sense of responsibility. Their part has always been great in the reconstruction of student life whenever it tends to slide seriously.

Incidentally, one rather political fact marking the polls is how unity can work wonders while disunity among the ranks can bring unsucces. The same need for closing ranks in national politics seems as great.

Microcosmically, student events on campus have in the past been related to the macrocosm of national movements. But the need for sober guidance of students and, above all, for the academic obligations never again to be swamped by political involvement, remains as imperative as ever. In what we regard as reconstruction of the campus the immediate pragmatic step would lie in an initiative by the new leadership to get all student leaders together, preferably in a formal or informal meeting; for it to decide on the principles on the basis of which reconstruction should start.

We expect them to start with a pledge given by all that the rancorous past will be a closed chapter and that all student parties, whatever their differences (ideological, political or other) are, first and foremost, an integrated academic entity. Most important, society, for long disappointed over their activity, strongly hope to see that student leaders realise, though belatedly, that their future, tied to the future of the nation, vitally depends on them, to use a wellworn phrase. Yet that is the most critical truth about us as a nation. We can forget it only at great risk to us and our future.

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