

# An Easy Way Out

by BEN DOUGLAS.

At the student forum held on October 28 Dalhousie's NFCUS chairman reported on the recent NFCUS conference, highlighting the decision of that conference to dispense with the proposed Russian Student Exchange Plan.

As a result of a referendum the student body had directed its delegate—the chairman—to vote affirmatively on the question: Should NFCUS support and effectuate a Russian Student Exchange Programme.

At the conference, discussion on the subject apparently resolved themselves into: Unity of NFCUS or adoption of the Exchange Programme. Our delegate voted for Unity of NFCUS.

Our delegate claims a reasonable defence in that he was forced into a new situation, one never contemplated by the students, and as communication with the students was impracticable at that point, he was compelled to exercise his discretion as delegate. Granted, it may, however, be argued that while he was compelled by circumstances to make such an independent decision, he might have been more thoughtful, and refrain from making a decision which was in direct contravention with his express mandate. Could he have abstained?

His decision is unpopular with a majority of the students, who have become infuriated to the point of censuring the delegate, and contemplating withdrawal from NFCUS.

Censuring him is pointless at this stage, he exercised HIS best judgment in a new situation. It was within his authority to use his discretion as a delegate; it is unfortunate that this decision has been unpopular, but the act is done, and, moreover, the Forum has adopted his report. Therefore the matter should rest there.

However, there are two observations which cannot go unnoticed:

1. The Soviet attitude of the Minority Universities and
2. The sacrifice of a revered democratic principle on the altar of a purposeless and dishonourably achieved "unity".

The minority universities clearly do not stand in need of any association with Russian students; they are already well tutored in the tactics of the Kremlin. They would have their ideas prevail, no matter what the majority might think. And if in this, they cannot succeed, then they will sever connections with the association.

In the presence of such an attitude, one cannot but reflect upon the practices of men like Mr. Gromyko and Vyshinski, who would exercise indiscriminately and unintelligently the use of the Veto or walk out of Conferences if majority opinions were opposed to their own.

Such an attitude has been relentlessly criticised, and has been regarded with abhorrence by our Western democracy; and here, within our own universities, we have an exact facsimile of this despised practice. And this practice we condone.

The U. N. Security Council may be so constituted as to be rendered helpless when Russian representatives behave in so unseemingly a manner, but NFCUS is not such a "constitutional invalid", why then allow such undemocratic practice to prevail? Why encourage the sin which we so much abhor?

There was one answer forthcoming; The unity of NFCUS was at stake. But must Unity be made to depend upon such "bulldozer" action? And may it not be that a greater injustice and dishonor has been done to Unity by allowing it to fill the role of Excuse for condoning so despicable and discreditable an act?

Then are we so sure that this Unity has been achieved? How about the valiant universities who championed the Right in spite of the "wave of the stick"? Have we stopped to think what might be their measure of esteem for NFCUS as an association?

Our delegate says that in his opinion the aims and objects of NFCUS can be achieved without the assistance of the Universities who threatened to abandon the association. What then was the purpose of crushing their co-operation at so tremendous a cost?—disunity among students, a violation of a well established democratic principle of Western Democracy that deliberations at conferences should adhere to majority rule. This principle has been flouted for the purpose of keeping the ranks intact.

Judging from the report, the proposition of NFCUS unity or the exchange plan was forwarded by the University of Manitoba because, after two other Universities

had signalled their intention to withdraw should the exchange plan be upheld. As a result of the Manitoba questionnaire, eight universities (Dal was one of them), received their stand. As I remember the vote ended 11 to 7 in favor of NFCUS Unity. This means then that the main and original question—Exchange Plan—was to be supported by fifteen out of a possible eighteen votes i.e. the conference would have voted for the plan fifteen to three. However, the result was that the desires and opinions of two universities prevailed of those of 15 universities. Why?

The delegates explain that they did not think they would have a Russian tour at the expense of the withdrawal of the three Universities. But is this the true issue of a disguise of it? The conference was not willing to face the results of a firm stand. It took the easy way out, the consequence then was that greater weight was given to the decision of three universities than that of the students of fifteen universities. And this is dangerous pampering.

It is agreed that more can be accomplished by Unity than Disunity, but it is questionable whether more harm than good has not been done by permitting so disastrous a precedent within the association. Who can guarantee that there will not be a repetition of this juvenile and unprincipled stand? And when it should occur, what will the conference do? It might be on a discussion of railway fares, university fees, cost of books in relation to student financial capacity, what will be the attitude of the conference? "Quake in their boots again?"

But perhaps the most disturbing thing is the readiness with which people of such calibre could desert the Right their willing to trade Rightness for "smooth operation", the marked tendency to ride over problems instead of facing them; this "Oh—let it go" attitude in important matters.

If these associations and conferences exist for any purpose it is to offer training for the greater and more complex problems of future life, and it is pathetic, to say the least, that people who will very likely be the leaders of a nation, and in whose hands may well rest the destiny of others, could betray such lack of fortitude in defense of the Right.

That sense of responsibility to carry out a duty, the true mettle of leadership just seems to be all lost in the mire of desire for a smooth and headacheless life—an easy way out in preference to a grapple with the problems which a fruitful and active life must necessarily pose—

Regrets cannot achieve anything, but one may find comfort in the hope that these comments will create an awareness in the minds of "slipshodders" that they will regard with more profoundness what "prime facie" may be an easy way out.

There is a proposed referendum to determine whether or not Dal. should withdraw from NFCUS. Withdrawal can achieve nothing more than a mere satisfaction of our desire not to be outdone.

# Why Universities . . .

(Continued from page two)

the fitting avenue to the place front of a mercantile people—you know well that in the achievements of science there is not only beauty and wonder, but also beneficence and power. It is not only that she has revealed to us infinite space crowded with unnumbered worlds; infinite time peopled by unnumbered existences; infinite organisms hitherto invisible but full of delicate and iridescent loveliness; but also that she has been, as a great Archangel of Mercy, devoting herself to the service of man. She has labored, her votaries have labored, not to increase the power of despots or to add to the magnificence of courts, but to extend human happiness, to economize human effort, to extinguish human pain. Where of old, men toiled, half blinded and half naked, in the mouth of the glowing furnace to mix the white-hot iron, she now substitutes the mechanical action of the viewless air. She has enlisted the sunbeam in her service to line for us, with absolute fidelity, the faces of the friends we love. She has shown the poor miner how he may work in safety, even amid the explosive fire-damp of mine. Se has by her anaesthetics, enabled the suffered to be hushed and unconscious while the delicate hand of some skilled operator cuts a fragment from the nervous circle of the unquivering eye. She points not to pyramids built during weary centuries by the sweat of miserable nations, but to the lighthouse and the steamship, to the railroad and the telegraph. She has restored eyes to the blind and hearing to the deaf. She has lengthened life, she has minimized danger, she has controlled madness, she has trampled on disease. And on all this ground, I think that none of our sons should grow up wholly ignorant of studies which at once train the reason and fire the imagination, which fashion as well as forge, which can feed as well as fill the mind."

A narrow scientist is just as bad as a professionless artsman. Harmony is essential in all things.

P. O.

Such a step will not see the accomplishment of the Exchange Programme; moreover it may well render us less capable to offer constructive criticism of the attitude of the defaulting Universities. We must be cautious lest we commit the very act we condemn.

If we are motivated by a strong and sincere desire to make known our abhorrence of this unprincipled demeanour of those three universities for the weaknesses of those who sacrificed the Right and the due performance of their duty for a pointless appeasement, then the other side of this desire must be an earnest wish to avoid a repetition.

Perhaps we can do this best by remaining in NFCUS and acclaiming the action of the valiant universities who thought, as we hope all will think that it is not force, but reason; not selfishness, but a broadmindedness, not dishonourable appeasement, but a firm stand for the Right that must always prevail.

Beware of taking an Easy Way Out.

# Thoughts In The Library

Through the windows in the stacks,  
The green leaves are quivering in the Autumn breeze,  
And Who has stirred those leaves?  
And Whose breath is it that blows so gently  
Through the ivy on the wall?  
Thousands of books lie sleeping on Forever in this place.  
Millions of words scratched on dusty pages,  
Millions of words eked out of dust,  
And sweat, and aching heads.  
Thousands of authors forgotten  
In the long dim aisles of the stacks.  
Dust, all gone into dust,  
They that have thought and lived,

They that held the spotlight for a little while,  
And are gone . . .  
And we who are a heady, jostling troop,  
Full of dull "purpose", and "intellectualism",  
Have no conception of the knowledge  
That sleeps on forgotten in these racks.  
Books handed down to us.  
Knowledge, not from the Mind of Man,  
But from a Higher source.  
The Wisdom, the Intuitive Wisdom,  
Flowing through us  
From the great Eternal Now. . .

T. C. S.

# The Working Youth

On June 2nd, 1952, the Grand National Assembly of the Rumanian People's Republic elected Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej, the beloved leader of our people, as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Rumanian People's Republic.

At the news of this election, a wave of enthusiasm swept over the country. At thousands of meetings, by tens of thousands of pledges taken by workers to increase production, in numberless telegrams and letters to the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers' Party and to Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej personally, the working people of our country have shown that they consider this election as the best guarantee that the people's revolutionary gains will be defended against any inimical attack and that any obstacle will be removed from our pathway towards Socialism.

Alongside the entire people, the youth of our country showed their deep affection for the steeled helmets of our working class.

To our youth, Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej is a luminous example of relentless struggle against everything that bars our onward march and for the triumph of the new, bright life we are building today.

A worker's son and a worker himself since early youth, Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej joined the workers' movement at the age of 17.

A fearless and consistent fighter for our people's liberation from the yoke of capitalist exploitation, Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej led the working class in the great struggle waged from 1930 to 1944 for their right to a life worth living and against the royal dictatorship and Rumania's fascism—against the criminal dragging of the Rumanian people into the anti-Soviet war gamble.

The big industrialists, landlords and politicians, stooges of the reaction, looked upon him as enemy No. 1. He wore convict clothes and

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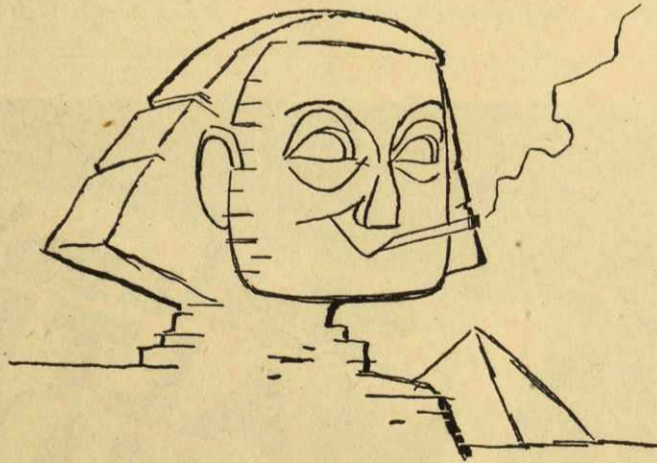
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