

Kashtan campaign in the pink



"I think there is a change of attitude in regard to our party by Canadians. More Canadians want our views to be known so they can judge for themselves." This is the opinion of Bill Kashtan, national leader of the Communist Party of Canada. Kashtan feels that his party is finally making breakthroughs among Canadian youths, and he says that the party is changing from one dominated by older people into one in which young people play a major part.

press reaction

I had a lengthy interview with Kashtan Saturday afternoon, during a campaign visit he made to Edmonton. We began by discussing the party's campaign. There are 31 Communist candidates in this election, and he wishes that there were more. "The press seems to ignore us because they don't think we have enough candidates to make coverage worthwhile," he pointed out. I asked him what kind of people are working for Communist candidates. He said they are mostly young people, non-party members.

Since Canadians seem to be leery of the party's alleged ties to the Soviet Union, I asked him what ties existed. He replied, "We have no affiliation with the Soviet Union or any other country. And in any case, our independence a party is not dependent on who we support but on our opposition to capitalism."

32 hour work week

We moved on to the issue which the Communist Party feels is the most important in the election, jobs. The party platform states that their goal is to create 2½ million new jobs in the next ten years. I questioned him on the methods he would use to obtain this goal. "In the short run, we would create a 32-hour work week with no reduction in pay. We also advocate an increase in pensions so

that people could retire in dignity and open jobs for younger people." "What about long term job increases? Kashtan sees development of the North as a major source of employment. "With respect to northern development, the production and installation of a pipeline would result

resource allocation

in thousands of jobs." But he feels that the oil and gas carried in such a pipeline should be Canadian owned. "If you have a publicly owned pipeline but the oil and gas is owned by the U.S., what the hell does it mean? All this talk of sharing resources is a subterfuge for taking over our economy. Instead of selling our resources as they are we should be processing them here. If there is a surplus, sell some of it, but make sure our own needs are satisfied."

Quebec's rights

I asked him what his party's stand on the Quebec independence movement is. "Our stand is that they have a right to national self-determination up to and including the right to self-government. But we don't advocate separation. The enemy of the French-speaking worker is not the English-speaking worker but monopoly, Canadian or U.S., therefore the two groups should be united as a class." Kashtan further stated that Prime Minister Trudeau's approach to the problem was "simplistic and not solving anything, as can be seen by the emergence of Levesque and the P.Q."

Kashtan told me that the Communist Party is having a problem with another communist group during the campaign, a Maoist party which he says harasses his group by using a similar name (Communist Party of Canada, Marxist-Leninist), running candidates in the same ridings, and performing other confusing actions. Kashtan's party has two candidates in Edmonton, Liz Rowley in Edmonton-Strathcona and Bill Tuomi in Edmonton-East.

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coffee leather and God

by Gail Shute

In April of this year, three leather crafters left the flea market in SUB; a coffeehouse left the basement of a church at 10802-93 St.; and Elisha House was born, all with a little help from some friends of Christ.

Elisha Leather and Coffeehouse was founded by the Edmonton Jesus People and Peoples' Pentecostal Church. The main reasons for the opening of such a place in Edmonton were two. Firstly, a summer outlet for leather goods was needed by the leather crafters and secondly, a better place was needed for the coffeeshop--where more of Jesus' people could do more things together.

The name Elisha House also has a spiritual beginning. In the Bible, Elisha is the spiritual descendent of Elijah and a similar situation applies to Elisha House. In Vancouver the JP had a leather shop called Elijah House and when they moved to Edmonton and started the sequel of that shop the name Elisha seemed to be natural.

Publicly, Elisha House can be termed a success. The main purpose of the store is to tell people about Jesus, but not unless the people are willing to listen. The staff have learned from experience that (to put it in their own words) "You can't push people into the Kingdom of God. They have to decide that they want the promises of God and that they are willing to pay the price for them."

Now, when someone walks into the shop, Jesus isn't mentioned until the customer brings it up or the staff feel he (the customer) has a real problem that should be talked about. Even then the conversation is still kept very general.

Most of the people go to Elisha House for one of three reasons. They want some leather goods, they are just curious or they want to talk about Jesus. Whatever the reason, the shop is open for visitors to drop in between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, as well as 9 p.m. to midnight on Fridays.

There is one popular misconception that the movement is eager to clear up. Jesus People are not just young people, they are the people who have accepted God as their personal saviour, regardless of their age. That is one of the few things missing from this movement, a generation gap.

The names "Jesus Freaks" and "Jesus People" are also misconceptions, they say. These names were used by the press because the movement had not yet named itself. The names have stuck and these "fanatics" have grown in numbers and are now recognized as a separate religious entity.

This faith has become so popular that the Peoples' Church has just started a Charismatic Club on campus. Those interested may call Victor at 488-9490 for more information.

Although this organization wants to remove the formality of the old church, they encourage people to go to church, if not to Peoples' then to the church of their choice. Even so, the pastors are getting static from parents who don't understand why their children have turned from their (the parents') faith to that of the Jesus People. Here is how one of those "kids" explains it:

"When I was 14 I had no practical reason or use for the structured church so I left. I wanted to do my own thing so I turned my back on God.

I started doing drugs when I was 17 and went through a series of things looking for "The truth of Life." Eastern religions psycho-cybernetics, meditation, astrology and numerology left no impression on me so I went to Europe for 3 months. I came back to University and started selling leather goods at SUB. I got to know the competition that moved in from Vancouver and they confronted me with Jesus as a living person and a savior. My belief for God was rekindled and I saw that 8 years of my life was wasted. The change in my life in just 6 months was unbelievable and I wouldn't trade one day of my life now for those 8 years. The price I paid for my purpose, satisfaction and peace are nothing compared to what He paid me as an individual and I don't want to go back. Through Jesus I overcame the stumbling blocks of life."

