

Forest is still on the attack

Jonathan Mann

Last Thursday's York Centre All Candidates meeting proved to be less than that, but the two hopefuls who did show up were greeted by York's characteristic partisan zeal and four plain-clothed security men hovering just outside the door.

Former York Professor Jeffrey Forest of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), granted special permission to be on campus for the Curtis D meeting, and Liberal incumbent Bob Kaplan addressed the crowd. However, candidates for the New Democrats and Progressive Conservatives did not attend. Instead their campaign managers took the floor before the spirited group of 60 students.

Forest, fired last year and subsequently banned from campus after assaulting a faculty member, was allowed to attend the meeting only by virtue of special permission from university administrators. He complained that his treatment by University President Ian Macdonald and Vice-President for University Services William Small was unfair, in that he was granted permission to enter the campus only once during the entire course of his campaign, and only on the condition that he not enter Central Square.

Small, who spoke with *Excalibur* on Monday, agreed that these were the conditions set for Forest's return, but stressed



Forest (second from right), Kaplan (far right)

that it is Forest's history of harassing members of the York community, and not his ideology, which brought on the administration's stand.

The substance of Forest's speech began with an attack on the multinationals and an indication of how they would be dealt with if the Marxist-Leninists come to power. "Our plan," declared Forest, "is to expropriate the wealth—mines, factories, fisheries, etc.—and use them for the welfare of the people of Canada, and not to line the pockets of the rich."

His final point dealt with the West's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Forest

accused the governments of Canada and the US of "whipping up war hysteria." He condemned the invasion as a "barbarous aggression," but then asked why his party had been alone in condemning similar acts by the US. He listed among these the Bay of Pigs invasion, US involvement in the domestic affairs of the Dominican Republic, and the amassing of troops in 1970 on Quebec's US border. Explained Forest: "We oppose all aggression by any party, by any country."

This point was not touched upon by representatives of the other parties.

Throughout Forest's address and those of the other speakers, there was heckling from the audience, led by a group of students who later identified themselves as members of the Conservative Party. This group also crowded around one of the two microphones set up for questions from the audience.

During the meeting, four men in street clothes were seen loitering at the base of the short stairway leading from central square to the hall. When queried by a member of the *Excalibur* staff, one of them identified the group as "from security."

Contacted on Monday, Security Staff Supervisor Clare Becksted confirmed that there were four members of his staff at the meeting, although he held that "they were only there for a few minutes." One of them, he explained, was a supervisor from the Fire and Safety office present to make certain the room was not overcrowded. A parking supervisor was also among them, Becksted remarked, "to make sure there were no incidents."

Liberal incumbent Bob Kaplan, who spoke second, declared that the best reason to vote for him is that he had bothered to appear, while the NDP and Conservative candidates had not.

The majority of his talk dealt with Joe Clark's "vision of Canada as a community of

communities." Kaplan called the view "false, wrong-headed, and dangerous." He maintained that Canada's history is one of constant struggle between the federal government and the provinces, and that what the country needs is a "strong, competent, well-founded government."

The campaign manager for the New Democrats, Chris Liscio, took the podium following Kaplan, and largely limited his comments to NDP energy policy, reaffirming his party's commitment to public control of Canada's energy resources. Claiming that Imperial Oil owns more of Canada's oil than Canadians do, Morrone declared that "it's not a choice between a privately-owned oil sector or a domestic one."

Chad Bark, campaign manager for Conservative Ann Silverman, spoke last. Of all the speakers, Bark was the most facts-and-figures oriented.

He moved from point to point, criticizing the Liberal energy policy on its complexity. "Maybe you need an MA to understand it. I don't have one." He also claimed that the Liberal's energy subsidy formula would cost each citizen \$350 a year. He concluded by stating that "I hope you believe we're shooting straight. You won't have to take the kind of flim-flam that's been thrown at you."



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