

letters & comment

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Excalibur*, room III, Central Square. Please type letters, triple or double spaced, and keep them to around 400 words. Name, address and phone number must be included, but name will be withheld on request. *Excalibur* reserves the right to edit for grammar and length.
Deadline Monday 4pm.

Farr's statement on Forest challenged

Vice-President Bill Farr's statement to the university community last week purporting to offer information pertaining to the suspension of Dr. Jeffrey Forest contains misleading information that cannot remain unchallenged.

So much so that it does much to confirm Forest's allegation that the university has conducted a sham investigation designed to confirm a disciplinary action that sets a precedent that endangers the liberties of all at York University.

Farr begins by denigrating Forest's academic status. It is misleading to refer to him as Mr. Jeffrey Forest, a part-time tutor. He is Dr. Jeffrey Forest with a reputable Ph.D. who has been a course director at Atkinson College in three consecutive academic sessions, in addition to being a part-time tutor in the Faculty of Arts.

His performance as a university teacher is beyond reproach. His director and other colleagues in his Faculty of Arts course refer to his teaching as "highly creditable", while his teaching in the Social Science Division of Atkinson College has had favourable year-end student evaluations on two occasions, in addition to having been individually assessed favourably by full-time faculty.

Thus Mr. Forest is far from the wild man that Farr, Becker *et al* are seeking to make out but a reputable member of the academic community.

As such, allegations about his behaviour in the highly charged atmosphere of Central Square

debates about the nature of Zionism should have been treated with great circumspection, as opposed to immediate imposition of disciplinary action following what may be no more than scuffles which could have been contained very easily by the University administration by other means if it had so wished.

Farr's letter notes that I was present at the meeting of November 30 called by Assistant Vice-President John Becker. This information could only be of interest if it had explained why I took the trouble to go.

I did so because I believe that the actions taken against Dr. Forest were prejudiced and raised serious questions relating to the rights of university teachers. Furthermore, I was alarmed by the fact that the administration of Atkinson College in particular was doing nothing meaningful to uphold the rights of a colleague (or those of his students whose academic work has been seriously jeopardized by his continued suspension from class).

I believe that Forest's suspension could only be justified if the university had taken adequate means to satisfy itself that real violence had been initiated by Forest, whereas I had been led to believe by confidential information that this was not necessarily the case, and communicated this to Becker. Farr's statement in no way reflects the receipt of the following attached communications. (See at right - ed.)

The reason that the student wishes

to remain anonymous is that he is an immigrant who is conscious of the fact that his disclosure could lead to police harassment. Since the administration of this university, along with that of most other universities has done nothing to protest and challenge the activities of the RCMP on campus, I think that the student's reluctance to disclose his identity is fully understandable.

If the student is right, it throws

quite a different light on the events of Friday, November 18, specifically with respect to the notorious club which was in the possession of a woman who had been physically intimidated the previous day.

In conclusion, I believe that it is high time that not only the actions of Dr. Forest be fully and impartially investigated, but also the actions of the Vice-Presidents, Employee and Student Relations, Assistant Vice-

Presidents, Student Affairs, and Directors of Security, etc., etc. who threaten academic freedom on this campus, and who are willing to damage the academic interests of students by suspending their teachers on flimsy grounds.

To serve and protect whom, we may ask.

Ian Lumsden, Chairman,
Political Science Department

Ed note: The correspondences below accompany the above letter.

Lumsden vouches for student

John A. Becker
Office of the Vice-President
(Employee and Student Relations)
S925 Ross Building

I certify that this verbatim transcription (see below - ed.) was written in my presence by the same student who spoke to John Becker on Tuesday, November 28 at approximately 3:50 p.m. I have the original handwritten statement in my possession.

The student voluntarily approached me with this information and I urged him to give public testimony

with respect to what he claims to have witnessed at Central Square. He was not willing to do so for fear of the consequences that might result from having his identity disclosed in this manner. He has offered me a full explanation as to why he insists on remaining anonymous, and I am convinced that his caution is fully justified.

Furthermore, I have no hesitation in vouching for the integrity of the student, and in affirming that to the best of my knowledge he has no personal or political affiliation with any of the parties in dispute.

Ian Lumsden.

This testimony was ignored

On Thursday, November 17, 1977 I was present in Central Square when the controversial discussion on the pamphlet titled "Zionism is Racism" took place.

At about 1 pm a few people were around the literature table of the CPC (ML) when a quarrel took place between the lady manning the table and a gentleman, regarding the above mentioned pamphlet.

The incident attracted increasingly more people. At first, the discussion was dominated by the issue of Zionism and later by the ideology of CPC (ML). As the time was passing the proponents of Zionism created a tumultuous atmosphere and demanded from the lady manning the table a definition of Zionism. She in turn was referring to the pamphlet in question and which no one of that group was willing to buy.

I would say shortly after 3 pm the man I have

already described, enraged and very angry at the idea that the portrait of Stalin was displayed pushed his way through and tore it down. Then the lady asked him to move back and leave because he was a disruptor. She actually touched him with her finger and was pushing him but he was not moving.

She repeated that a couple of times while asking everybody to move back. Then he said that if you do that again . . . and raised his hand in a very intimidating gesture. In spite of that she repeatedly asked him to move and give her room as well as pushing him with her finger. Then he hit her and she fell back into the crowd. His supporters booed him and urged him to leave but he would not. This occurred no less than three times. Later Prof. Forest came and started conversing with the crowd.

Hypocrisy astounding

It was good to read in last week's *Excalibur* that faculty associates of suspended lecturer Jeffrey Forest are calling for his reinstatement.

The professors he works with want him back, we read in the December 8 *Excalibur* that his students want him back, it's about time the administration responded and lifted his suspension. Professor Gerry Hunius is right on when he says that "students are suffering, and charges against him have nothing to do with his teaching."

The hypocrisy of the administration is astounding. They suspend Forest without a hearing and then won't let Forest on campus to collect witnesses when they do decide to have a hearing. Apparently the admin.'s witnesses are the only ones the admin. wants to hear.

Then John Becker has the gall to write a letter to *Excalibur* giving a pious, ever-so-liberal defense of freedom of speech, when he has been instrumental in barring Forest from campus! Forest, I guess, is free to speak - as long as nobody hears him.

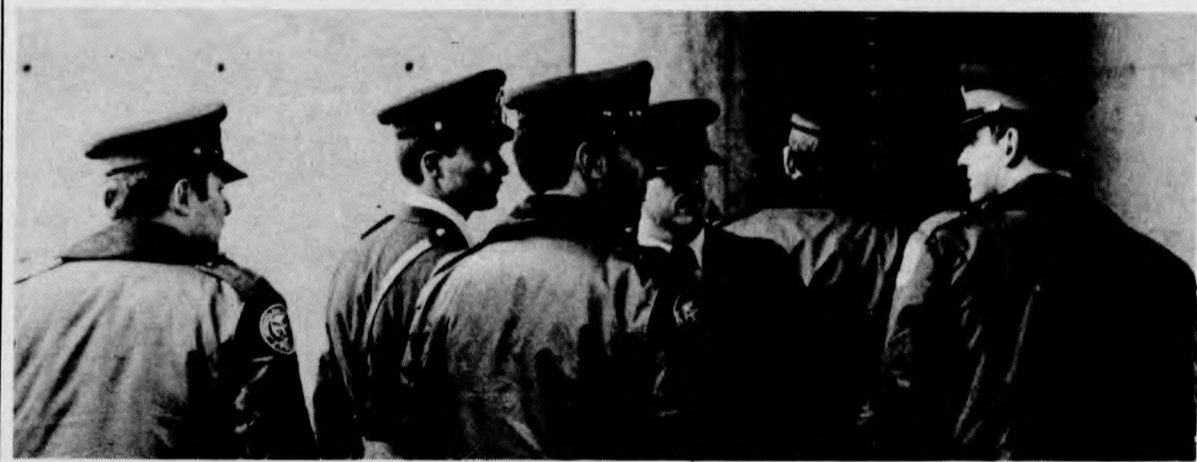
Defending Forest doesn't mean we agree with his political views. We

have vast disagreements with him and the CPC-ML. But we believe that Forest has the democratic right to preach those political views.

The relatively large turnout at Forest's defense committee meeting indicated that there are many other people on campus who have the same perspective, who defend Forest's right to free speech while not necessarily agreeing with his political views. The large turnout indicated that the possibility existed of starting a real grass-roots "freedom of speech for Forest" movement. And only a real grass-roots movement that actively tried to win a majority of the York community to defend Forest's right to free speech would ensure his reinstatement.

The YSM CPC-ML threw away that possibility by arbitrarily preventing people from attending the meeting (the way in which the "Zionists" were screened from coming to the defense meeting bordered on anti-semitism) and by completely dominating the discussion. It turned a lot of people off.

These and other actions and statements have muddled what



Metro cops mulling around under the Ross ramp after Forest's arrest.

would otherwise be a clear case of political persecution. No one at York gets suspended without a hearing after being arrested, except people like Forest. Could it be because he's a communist?

The issue involved is quite simply freedom of speech. The administration shouldn't have the

right to dictate what views we are allowed to hear in Central Square or in the classroom.

But they do have the power. And they will have it until students, staff and faculty of the York community

get together and let the administration know that their political censorship is not going to be tolerated any longer.

Johnnie Balfour
for the International Socialists

Votes of confidence at Radio York

The Board of Directors of Radio York has given a unanimous vote of confidence to the chairman David Chodikoff (CYSF vice-president of student services and communications) and a vote of confidence to the station manager of Radio York (Giulio Malfatti). The problems of communication between the chairman and the station manager have been resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

It has been agreed that no single person was responsible for the problems that existed in the past and it is to be expected that in the future, both parties will seek to anticipate and avoid such misunderstandings.

The Board of Directors of Radio York consists of two CYSF members at large (Gary Simpson and Michael Proudlock) two members of Radio York (Ian Wasserman and Pete McGarvey) the

chairman of student services and communications (David Chodikoff) and one ex-officio member, the station manager (Giulio Malfatti) or the assistant station manager.

Statement of the board.

Red Cross thanks Xcal

On behalf of the North York Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society, I would like to extend my appreciation to *Excalibur* for putting in the *Excalibur* an ad for the India Disaster Relief Fund.

Your continuous support of Red Cross activities is most valued.

Heather Cloth
Youth Director

Editor to the letters

All members of the York community are invited to write letters to the editor of *Excalibur*. Letters should not exceed 400 words, lest they risk being edited for length.

Letters should be typed, double spaced, and must arrive at the *Excalibur* offices, 111 Central Square, before 4 pm Monday for publication the Thursday of the same week.

Name, address and phone number must be included with letters. Names will be withheld on request.

Persons wishing to submit opinion pieces to *Excalibur* should contact the editor-in-chief in regards to length and publishing date. The suggested limit for length of opinion pieces is 1200 words.

