

editorial

York's no-show at rally: apathy begins at home

CYSF President Chris Summerhayes has attempted to cultivate his image as a quiet low-key backroom political negotiator who recognizes the ineffectiveness of the politics of confrontation.

While he has succeeded in becoming low-key, Summerhayes has simultaneously become invisible to his constituency and therefore has lost his only real political leverage—the power of public opinion.

Witness the OFS rally held last Friday at Queen's Park. Approximately 1,000 students from all parts of Ontario gathered to protest the provincial government's policies about the funding of post-secondary institutions.

Did you hear about the rally? Most students did not since CYSF and OFS could not get organized enough to publicize the rally at York nor arrange for a bus to transport interested students to Queen's Park on the day of the protest.

While universities from as far away as Peterborough and Kingston were able to arrange for busloads of students, York University—a mere 10 miles from downtown Toronto—sent one official representative.

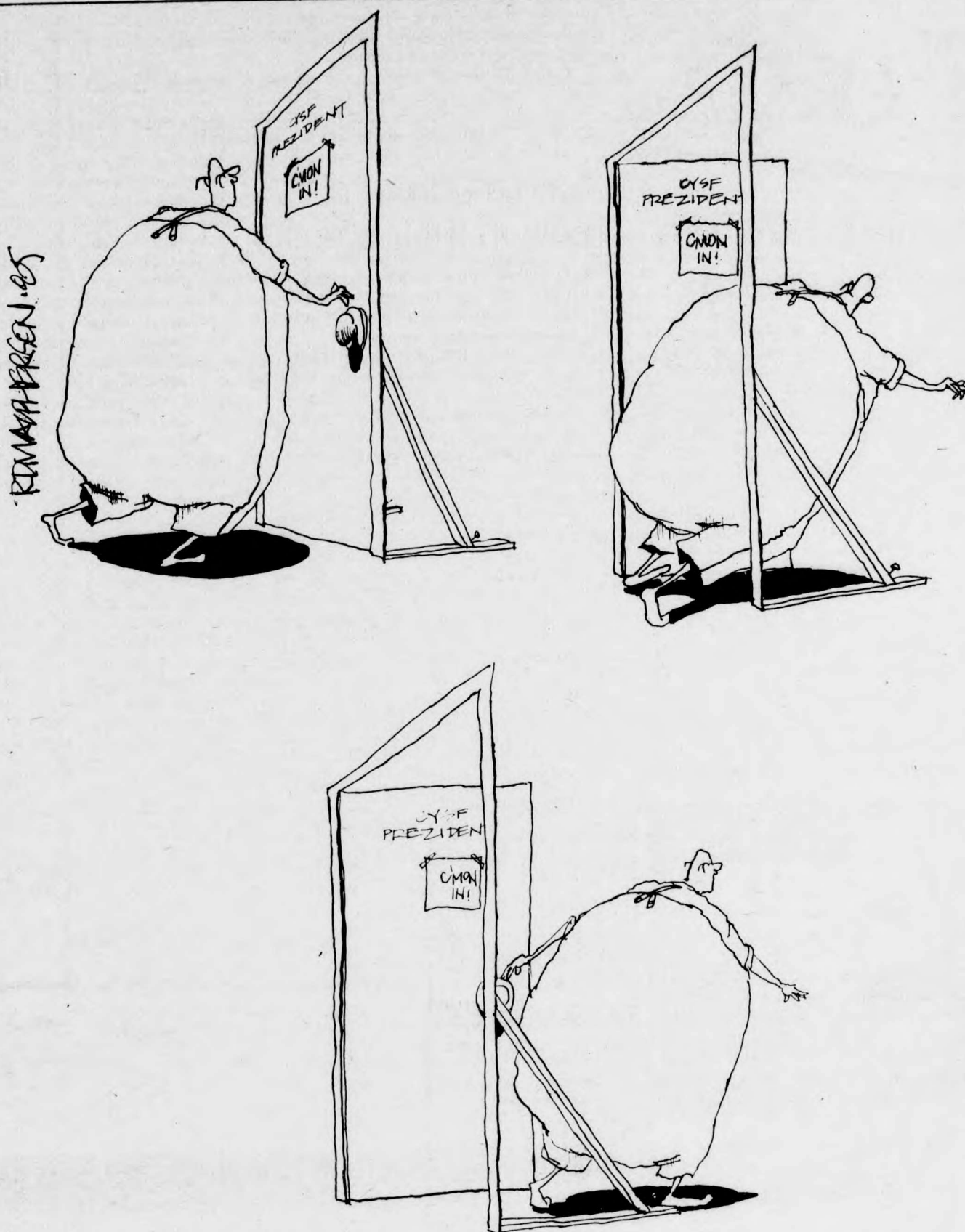
Queen's students number 360 while eight busloads came from Ottawa's two universities. Laurentian packed two buses while tiny Trent University managed to fill six.

"I wasn't particularly interested," Summerhayes said of the rally, "why be just another body in a mass crowd? I don't think mass rallies are the way to go. If they (OFS) gave us effective lobbying maybe we wouldn't need this kind of mass rally. I mean if someone ordered a mass rally against me, I wouldn't care."

While we certainly don't feel that quiet lobbying should be discarded as a political strategy, it is also important that our elected leaders encourage students to take an active role in providing a show of support for OFS and its goals of ending underfunding and making education more accessible.

Without this public demonstration of strength, OFS will be hopelessly ineffective in its lobbying efforts. What government will listen to an organization that is unable (due to negligence or laziness on the part of its individual members) to show any support from its membership?

The worst part of this whole situation, however, is that by neglecting to work to support OFS, CYSF has not only let down its own constituency, it has also failed all other students in Ontario who would quite rightly expect York to live up to its role as a part of the student movement in the province.



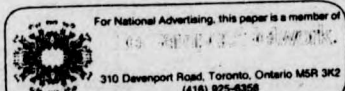
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letters

Chris calls for Marshal's law

E.C. Richards, University Fire Marshal, D38 East Office Building:

I am pleased to see the University's fire marshal has relaxed the policy concerning corridor widths (I refer to the new benches now located in the southeast corridor). I am not really surprised to see that when the University wishes to mount an endeavor the rules are relaxed, but when the students have a concern only after months of discussion can a compromise be reached.

In September 1983, your office decreed that due to overcrowding in Central Square the bearpits would no longer be available for assemblies. After much discussion your office produced "Fire safety guidelines, Bearpits, Central Square" (see enclosed). This document stated that use of the bearpits would be allowed provided a "continuous 12 ft. clear aisle space is maintained" (item d).

In your memo (84-01-26) you state in item 1 that 12 ft. aisle space has been extended to include the southeast corridor. If we require further historical information we may refer to two letters from the North York Fire Department (December 1, 1983 and March 17, 1978) which reiterate that 12 ft. aisle space must be maintained. While I am all for more and better seating in Central Square, I find providing such a controversion of both University policy and the law unheard of.

If in fact there is new information which supercedes the above mentioned memos and letter could you please send me a copy and assuage my fears that the University is in violation of not only its own laws, but also the laws of the land. Please do not leave me with the impression that there is one set of rules for the University and one set for the students.

—Chris Summerhayes
President, CYSF

Course outline Gomme with the wind

Dear Prof. Turriffin:

We are writing in reference to the course description for AS/SOC 2110.06B (Conformity and Deviance) which is contained in the recently issued Sociology Supplemental Calendar for 1985-86. That description reads in part:

Many of you are doubtless intrigued by the exotic world of pimps, pervers, queers, nuts, and sluts. Descriptive and explanatory material on these "unique" creatures and their "unusual" activities is contained in the text.

... it is the stuff of which scintillating party conversations are made.

This course will be taught by Ian Gomme, who wrote the course description, and we understand that Professor Gomme did not mean any harm by his words, writing them in a light-hearted

and cheerful spirit. Nevertheless, we consider his choice of words to be both harmful and highly objectionable, as they are a slur against women and other minority groups.

It is interesting that Professor Gomme feels entitled to use pejorative words to refer to homosexuals, women and psychiatric patients and go on to suggest that discussing the lives of these people is entertaining (i.e., not to be taken seriously). We doubt that Professor Gomme would feel as free to refer to "creatures" such as "kikes" or "niggers" since these references, which are anti-Semitic and racist, would not speak well of York University's public image.

Also, York's commitment to women's studies is seriously undermined when faculty members are allowed to reinforce prejudices which devalue women.

The fact that this course description was able to appear in print and be distributed throughout the campus raises questions of a broader nature regarding the credibility and academic respectability of the Sociology Department. Specifically, how can the department be committed to the advancement of learning when it offers courses which are meant to entertain with sensationalist tactics?

Surely the goal of the department is not to pander to the pre-existing prejudices of students in an unscientific, unprofessional and pedagogically unsound manner, but is rather to question and hopefully remove prejudices.

To a great extent, the damage has already been done. We demand, never-

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