

# A brief history of CYSF regimes and the colleges



Karen Hood was vice-president under Axelrod.

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Ever wonder what the political bickering is all about?

One politician damns another.

The college councils fight Council of the York Student Federation and CYSF fights back.

More than one student politician has made the comment that working on CYSF is "one of the more frustrating experiences of my life." The CYSF and college councils always seem to be at odds and Council meetings end up ridiculous satires when politicians refuse to co-operate. Councillors who are interested, concern themselves with their own problems rather than campus interests.

A former CYSF worker appraised the different councils and felt that last year's council was the most efficient. "Paul Axelrod tried to make CYSF function on an overall basis." The Koster Council of two years ago was "just meeting the immediate demands of people coming in" and Fletcher "was influenced by the people around him."

## Axelrod elected as activist

Axelrod was elected on an activist, issue-oriented campaign platform. His administration was widely expected to usher in changes on the problem policies of parking, food services, Americanization, the book store, student-academic difficulties, pollution, etc. The list is remarkably similar to present York problems.

One of the first actions of the new Axelrod Council was to launch an inquiry into Americanization. The probe was overwhelmingly approved and funded with \$3,500, plus a mandate to explore any area that they felt relevant. A full time volunteer began work last March and was joined by several other students during the summer. A full report, however, was never submitted. Apparently the interests of the students involved had fizzled out.

The Axelrod council had started off very enthusiastically and maintained itself during the spring and into the summer. But the fall term was the beginning of infectious disappointment. By February, only a few people were still carrying on: the rest had lost their initiative and patience. Axelrod and Vice-president Karen Hood who had already done "an

inordinate amount of work" continued till the end.

Axelrod's administration attempted to instill student interest and counteract York apathy though their methods at times were somewhat unorthodox. In the Christmas of 1970, CYSF decided to throw a party. York was treated to the spectacle of Santa and a rabble of helpers parading around the campus, disrupting classes and dispensing suckers. McLaughlin College threatened to bill CYSF for clean-up costs, but they never followed through. Unfortunately the Santa incident was an isolated one, carried out in a spirit of 'what-the-hell' desperation.

## Little patience for colleges

Axelrod's council had little patience for the college councils. This was due mainly to conflicts between McLaughlin College and the federation. McLaughlin decided to hold an anti-CYSF referendum, and threw itself into the campaign with a deluge of posters and hand-outs. CYSF felt that the attacks were largely anti-intellectual in nature, and responded with laborious point by point rebuttals. McLaughlin's American-style campaign succeeded, yet they decided to retain membership in CYSF. This confirmed the student council's conviction that McLaughlin was just trying to assert its independence and indulge in a little power politicking.

Another bone of contention was Calumet (then College F) college's debate over membership. The college wanted to assert its independence and operate as a free agent. Calumet was forced to accept membership because it was proven through the constitution that as a York college it automatically became a member of CYSF.

Fletcher's council on the other hand seems to lack the initiative and confidence of Axelrod's council. One councillor commented, "I haven't seen anything creative come from this council; they are not critical enough, especially on finances."

Working on Fletcher's Council is like being a member of a select club. Jeff Otis, ex-social commissioner stated, "Council is definitely a clique, I don't doubt they'd welcome new people, but there's a complacency bred by the fact that they're all good friends."



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