

STEAK STEAK

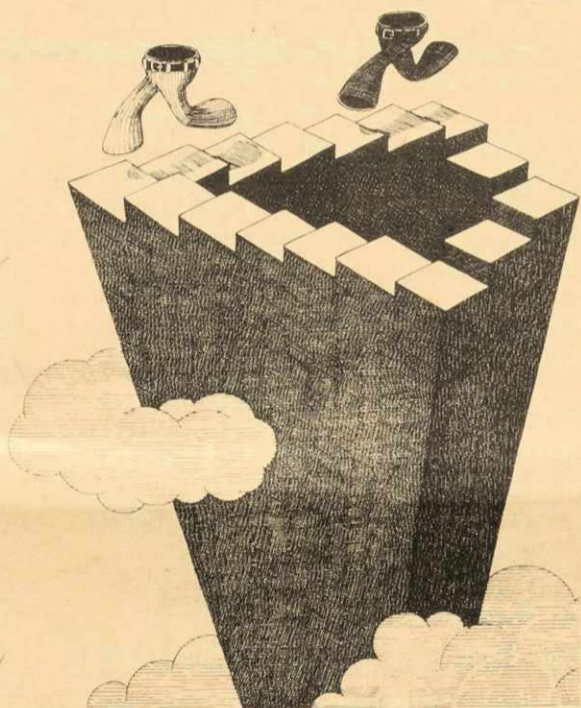
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N.D.P. Convention

by Catherine Dyke

Approximately 140 delegates from around the province spent last weekend at the United Steelworkers of America Hall in Sydney. They argued and debated passionately and furiously, they reminisced, they planned for the future and they renewed their convictions.

I'm writing about the Nova Scotia Provincial NDP convention to which each constituency sends a number of delegates, that number depending upon the population of the constituency. This was my first convention in Nova Scotia although I can hardly remember when I didn't go to NDP meetings in Saskatchewan. I was curious to find out whether the two provincial parties had different attitudes considering their different situations. I found few dissimilarities, granted the issues were different but what I did notice was the optimism and vitality of a growing political movement which Saskatchewan lacks since the NDP is so well established in that province. The faces were all new, except for Roy Romano the Attorney General of Saskatchewan and a guest speaker at the convention, but the principles and policies were founded upon the same belief in democratic socialism. What Nova Scotia is missing is the great heritage of the CCF-NDP which Saskatchewan has. Many of the delegates were young though some especially from Cape Breton were not. It is those few old people which give the N.S. NDP the added credibility it needs and which Saskatchewan takes for granted. Specifically it is not just the party of young radicals that it is often wrongly accused of being.

I'll stop my eulogizing a while to go over some key resolutions that were passed at the convention. The most hotly debated issue of the convention was one which got right down to the nitty-gritty which of course is money. The constituency of Halifax submitted a resolution number 132 entitled **Party Financing**.

WHEREAS in order to preserve the political independence of the New Democratic Party it is necessary to avoid having our funding for election campaigns and organizations **dependent** on business corporations, and whereas in these days of heightened public conciousness about political corruption it is necessary that the NDP preserve the **appearance** as well as the **reality** of political and financial independence from business in order to remain credible as an alternative to the old line parties.

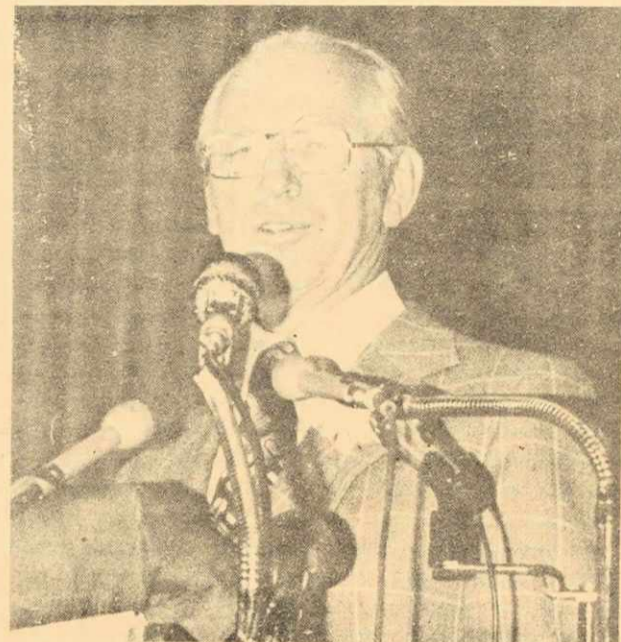


Photo by D. Kingsley

RESOLVED 1. that the New Democratic Party of Nova Scotia will not accept contributions from corporations, whether by cash or by cheque, and

2. that the Nova Scotia NDP will not accept contributions of more than \$500 total in any one calendar year from any individual without formal approval by either the provincial or the provincial executive. **NOTE:** In the case of small business men, many of whom are consistent and valuable supporters of this party's policies and principles; it is financially advantageous for them to give as individuals, and not as corporations.

The debate lasted for three hours with one side arguing that money is money and that in the words of Jeremy Ackerman the leader of the N.S. NDP the party cannot be bought by any person, corporation or whatever because "this party is not for sale!!!" The other side took a more extreme stance arguing that if the NDP prefers to be a working class party how can it accept cheques to which there are inevitably strings attached. It was also noted that considering the new elections act the motivation behind a donation from a corporation, which is not eligible for a tax rebate, would be highly questionable. Eventually a compromise was reached amending the resolution in part by saying that only small corporations can donate money to the party though they, as with individuals giving over \$500 are subject to review.

Other resolutions were brought to the floor of the convention ranging from land and industrial development to social assistance plans such as pharomicare and denticare. Many of these were a rehashing and updating of old and long-standing issues but

there were also quite a number of new and exciting progressive resolutions.

The election of a new executive and council were on the agenda for Sunday. Joanne Kahort from Pictou was elected as the new president of the party for Nova Scotia. She was by far the most progressive and dynamic candidate for the office and her election was a warning to the establishment and elected members of the party that this party will remain a socialist party and will not be just another old line party. Five vice-presidents, five executive members at large and 10 council members at large were also elected. One very disappointing aspect of the elections was that slates were prepared and distributed first by the establishment moderates and then by the more leftist wing of the party. Luckily the council did end up with members of both slates being elected providing an accurate cross-section of opinions. Floyd Shaw from Halifax Citadel and Allen Marchbank from Colchester and the past president of the party were elected as representatives to the federal council. Jeremy Ackerman was uncontested in his bid to again be the leader of the party in Nova Scotia.

Father Andy Hogan, the newly elected NDP Member of Parliament from the federal constituency of Cape Breton East Richmond gave a report to the convention from the federal caucus. He said that in all honesty the caucus meeting in Ottawa was a very depressing and heart-rending affair since both the elected and defeated MPs were present. He is looking forward however to representing his constituency in Ottawa and working closely with it. I have only one final optimistic observation to make; the NDP is alive and well, living in Nova Scotia.