

Liberals no different from Tories, says leader



New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent said Tuesday the Conservative party is "busily burying itself again" with its economic policies.

By DERWIN GOWAN
News Editor

Attitudes towards liberty, equality, and democracy mark the major philosophical differences between the New Democratic Party and other Canadian parties said NDP leader Ed Broadbent.

Broadbent spoke to a University of New Brunswick audience last Tuesday morning, sponsored by the student union and the Political Science Students' Association.

Broadbent said there was no philosophical difference between Liberals and Progressive Conservatives in Canada. According to him, they both defend traditional liberalism.

Broadbent said with respect to liberty, "For Liberals and Conservatives... a man or woman is free if we have very few constraints." That is, they each would allow human beings the right to individually pursue their own ends, Broadbent said.

Broadbent said liberal freedom was an important aspect of democratic socialism and that this freedom was lacking in eastern European communist countries. Liberalism was a progressive force in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he said, but from the nineteenth century on, liberals progressed to the idea of the positive state. To the democratic socialist, said Broadbent, the state must foster human potential to develop, besides merely providing the opportunity for development.

Democratic socialists and Canadian parties other than the NDP differ on the idea of equality as well as liberty, said Broadbent.

Liberals and Conservatives mean equality to say equal opportunity to "get richer than someone else." Broadbent said it was "entirely right" from the Liberal or Conservative point of view for one person to try to get ahead of another. Broadbent said this was a "barbarism."

An egalitarian society must provide equality of opportunity to develop one's capacities, he said.

Broadbent said both Liberals and Conservatives accept the liberal notion of democracy, that is, that all members of society are free to vote, organize, criticize, and change leaders. He added that communists do not accept liberal democracy.

However, Broadbent said, "That is essential but you've got to go beyond that." Economic power is

too concentrated in corporate hands, Broadbent said, and you can't "shape your destiny as a people" unless you control economic decisions. Companies move in and out of areas at will, he said. According to Broadbent, corporations have more power than most provincial premiers, General Motors has more capital than most countries, said Broadbent. He drew special attention to K.C. Irving and the New Brunswick government.

The liberal, said Broadbent, sees life as a "continental roadrace" where everyone starts at some beginning point and the objective is to "get to the other side of the continent as fast as you can." The faster ones, said Broadbent, get rewards along the way. The referees' job is to keep peace and not allow to participants to fight with one another. From time to time, people get bogged down and special funds are made available to them so they can keep in the race, said Broadbent.

To the socialist, said Broadbent, life is a "mountain climbing exercise" where the participants are "linked one to the other." Said Broadbent, "Essentially, you move up the mountain together." The mountain climbers have "an obligation to help one another going up that mountain," he said. There is no reward for speed and although some believe differently, there is no top to the mountain to reach, he added. The point of the exercise, said Broadbent, is to "enjoy the climb."

Broadbent said democratic socialists, including the New Democrats, accept the notions of Liberal democracy but build from there a better society.

During the question and answer period, Broadbent said the NDP must grow at the local level. "Social Change does not come from outside," he said. "It's a long process," he said, for people to see the New Democrats as a party with the right policies. Broadbent said of communists, "We are democratic in a way they are not," and he claimed the CCF-NDP has the best record of all Canadian political parties for defending civil liberties.

Broadbent said the Waffle group, a group of left wing renegades in the NDP during the 1960's, had a positive effect on the party in terms of focusing on Canadian economic independence. Although

a two-price oil system, Syncrude, and increased family allowances. However, said Broadbent, "When the break came, the Liberals presented a budget we could not accept."

"The Conservative party is busily burying themselves once again," said Broadbent, on the issue of economic policy by trying to move back to a seventeenth and eighteenth century type free market society.

According to Broadbent, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau should be "delighted" with this as it will make him appear progressive in comparison. They are doing this by "taking a position just to the right of Genghis Khan", said Broadbent.

Tory leadership candidates are much more conservative than former leader Robert Stanfield, said Broadbent. Stanfield, he said, was "basically progressive" on economic matters.

Canada should develop energy resources as a public enterprise, said Broadbent. He accused the Liberals of scrapping Syncrude, the crown corporation for the development of oil resources, or at least relegating it to a minor role. As well, he said the Government was putting up too much capital for the development of oil resources in the Alberta tar sands for the amount of equity they get.

Broadbent said Canada should be more careful when selling nuclear technology to prevent

buyer countries from building bombs. Further, he said there should be a public enquiry into the leaks reported at the Port Hope nuclear plant.

Broadbent said the NDP were more vocal on the Vietnam war issue than the Angolan war because Canada was selling weapons that ended up in Vietnam. "We weren't playing a neutral role," he said. "We were in fact aiding the United States." He said

both the Vietnam and Angolan conflicts were civil wars and should have been handled internally with no external intervention. He denied that the NDP was less vocal on the Angolan issue because of the ideological differences in the two conflicts.

On the student aid issue, Broadbent said the federal government should pay tuition for university students. He also said a better policy was needed for native peoples.

Broadbent said the Atlantic region would be one of the first in Canada to benefit from the implementation of New Democratic policy. "If the market system has fouled up any part of Canada, it's Atlantic Canada," he said.

Broadbent is a native of Oshawa, Ontario. He holds a bachelor of arts in philosophy and a master of arts in the philosophy of law from the University of Toronto. He took his doctor of philosophy in political science at the London School of Economics and Political Science.



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