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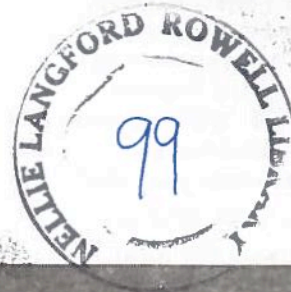
priorities

THE FEMINIST VOICE IN A SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3

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FALL 1995



FOCUS

FEDERAL LEADERSHIP

- QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES

We asked the four leadership candidates 10 questions ranging from women's health, poverty, human rights and their personal commitment to women's equality



- THE CHALLENGE OF RENEWAL

How does a party begin to define itself? Ann Frost on the NDP's federal renewal process.

- FOUR WOMEN TALK ABOUT THEIR CANDIDATE OF CHOICE.

Sandra Bauer on Herschel Hardin

Diane E. Dupuis on Lorne Nystrom

Margaret Mitchell on Alexa McDonough

Sylvia Sioufi on Svend Robinson

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priorities welcomes letters and articles from readers. All submissions must be signed, although publication of names may be withheld on request. The editor reserves the right to edit all copy received in the interest of brevity, clarity and taste. Submissions can be on typed or handwritten on a paper bag - it doesn't matter, just send stuff in!

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"The issues and demands raised by the women's liberation movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist movement. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the women's liberation movement and commits an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

- NDP policy on women's rights

The editor is responsible for the content of all unsigned material.

EDITOR -
Nancy Weaver

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THE CHALLENGE OF RENEWAL

by Ann Frost

Ottawa. August, 1994. Hot and humid. About what we'd expected. What we hadn't expected was

more than 600 eager New Democrats from right across the country crowding into the Auditorium at Carleton for the first Federal Renewal Conference and overflowing into another room upstairs where they watched the welcome and keynote speeches on closed circuit television! Nor had we expected the enthusiastic comments which we received on the evaluation forms the next day. (Yes, there were some criticisms, but they all showed us how to make subsequent Renewal Conferences better. Suggestions like less time for the panellists and more time for participants to contribute, using small groups for discussion, and getting position papers out ahead of time.)

Over and over again, participants said how much they enjoyed the opportunity to talk about real issues, about policy, the future of the party, the hierarchy of the party (and how that should be changed), our relationships with other movements on the democratic left. Many people said it was years since they had had this kind of opportunity.

The pattern for the first Renewal Conference and the two which followed it in Toronto in December and

Vancouver in January was similar. After a plenary, participants moved to one of seven groups: Party Principles, Party Mission, Party Relationships, Party Structure, Social Policy, Economic Policy and Globalization. Each group had a panel of presenters, chosen purposely to offer a wide range of views. Panel co-chairs, who recruited the presenters, were assured by the planning committee that everything was on the table, that there were no "politically incorrect" views. And so we had people like Leo Panych, Maude Barlow and Judy Rebick offering their views of what the NDP needed to do to rebuild and once again become a powerful electoral force on the democratic left in Canada.

Each group had a "drafter" as well as co-chairs, and these three people were asked to distil the results of the day's work and report back to the plenary on Sunday morning. The reports were comprehensive and exciting. Clearly there was work to be done, and great enthusiasm for doing that work. Each of the first three Conferences concluded with a plenary session called "Taking it to the Streets" which was an opportunity for participants to share what they would do when they went back home to continue this most important process.

And things began to happen. Right across the country small and large groups began to meet and talk about renewal. Participants in each of the three initial Conferences were put on a master mailing list and received summaries of the Sunday morning plenaries, as well as new papers as they were produced.

After the January conference in Vancouver, highlighted by a keynote address by Tony Penikutt which had normally staid New Democrats responding like they were at a revival meeting, and a "Taking it to the Streets" session emceed by Patrice Pratt who might well consider quitting her day job and hosting a talk show (she was a sight to behold as she worked the audience with microphone in hand!), the Renewal Conference planning committee met for a weekend in late February in Ottawa to assess where we were at and to look at what should come next.

The first three conferences had provided a lot of input, both from panel presenters and from participants. The committee decided it was now time to put all of that input together and send it out across the country for as broad a response as possible. Each topic area was considered and feedback given to the co-chairs. Each set of co-chairs then produced a draft document, which was circulated to everyone who had attended a Renewal Conference, to Federal Council members and to all federal ridings, asking them to review them and respond.

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FORCE ON THE
DEMOCRATIC LEFT

And respond they did! Some regions held one day conferences of their own. Groups of ridings got together. Individual ridings held meetings. And individual New Democrats from sea to sea to sea took the time to read the documents and send in their responses.

A fourth Renewal Conference had been scheduled for Saskatchewan in April, but their provincial election loomed on their horizon so that conference was cancelled. The planning committee met again in Ottawa in May and, based on the responses that had been received, once again gave feedback to the sets of co-chairs, who then went off to produce yet another draft - this one to go to the Atlantic Conference in Halifax in early June and to Winnipeg in mid June. Does it sound hectic? Well, it certainly was. But it was also extremely rewarding for those of us who were co-chairs. We were hearing from New Democrats from across Canada and we hoped and believed that we were creating documents which truly represented many of their views.

In Halifax, we began to try to combine some of the working groups. Principles and Mission held a joint workshop, as did Structure and Relationships. Patterns had begun to emerge, and they were there again in Halifax and a week later in Winnipeg. Meanwhile, the faxes kept rolling into federal office. When I left for Halifax, I put a brand new roll of fax paper in my machine. When I returned 10 days later, the entire roll was artistically spilling across my family room floor. In retrospect, I wish I had sprayed it with something to preserve it and sold it to the National Gallery as "modern communicative art". If they'll buy a

painting that is a blue band bordered by black stripes for several million dollars, perhaps we might have negotiated for enough to retire the NDP debt for my accidental work of art!

In Ottawa at the end of June, the panel co-chairs reported to Federal Council and presented their final draft paper. All the papers were thoroughly critiqued by Council members, revisions were made and once again, the documents went out across the country.

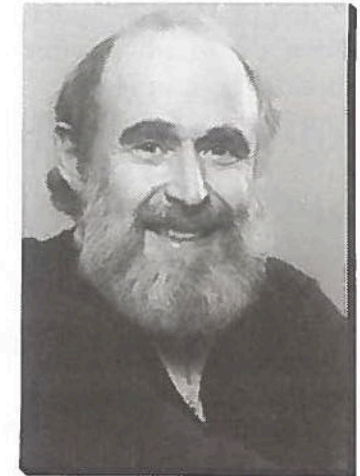
Now it's up to Federal Convention. All of the documents will be up for discussion at Federal Convention in Ottawa in October. The papers on Principles, Mission, Structure and Relationships need to be accepted, or amended as necessary. The policy papers are intended to be documents in progress, and comments and concerns from the plenaries at Convention will be incorporated as we work toward a comprehensive policy document for the next federal election.

What can I say to sum it all up? It was an amazing process. I was astounded and immensely encouraged by the energy and commitment that New Democrats everywhere contributed to this vital process. I don't think, in the history of the party, that there has ever been this comprehensive an effort to find out how grass roots New Democrats feel about the future of the party and what they believe should be done to regain our position as a strong electoral force on the democratic left. My congratulations and thanks go to everyone who participated in this process. I truly believe that our party is alive and well and that it can be renewed. I also believe, for the future of all Canadians, that it must be renewed, and that if we work together, it will happen.

WHY I'M SUPPORTING HERSCHEL HARDIN

by Sandra Bauer

Herschel Hardin's visionary campaign, maintaining the fundamental democratic values but articulating them in today's reality, has won my support for his leadership bid.



The NDP cannot continue with narrow and simplistic platforms that concentrate only on the social safety net, into creating new work, the changing nature of the economy, and dealing with the deficit. We also need to tackle media bias, and unrepresentative media ownership. The media set the framework in which all political debate takes place. They are as much our opponents as are the Liberal and Reform parties. The NDP is at a critical junction. A continuation of the status quo could very well mean a slide into oblivion. Herschel has best recognised and articulated these realities. He is someone who can capture the public's imagination.

Herschel's platform addresses the many problems facing both our party and our country. Two of his key issues, the economy and the mass media, are incontrovertibly vital to our future, and are interconnected. In his own words, Herschel envisions "a Canada with a vibrant, humanist culture, liberated from commercialism... a Canada of democratic mass media." He sees us creating "a world-leading ecological political economy" and "where *socially-rooted enterprise* or *community-centred enterprise*, like crown companies and co-operatives, expand well beyond their current role." In a phrase, "a Canada of economic justice...where people, their communities and their environment come before economic devices." Herschel speaks of a vision for Canada that matches my vision for our party - one that makes real departures - truly a party and a society that have a taste for the future.

Herschel's position supporting ending the affiliate memberships of labour movement locals needs clarification. As an active unionist, I could not support any anti-union policy. However, Herschel's position is not anti-union at all. "One of the fundamental tenets of democratic socialism is", he keeps reminding us, "the dignity of labour." I agree with Herschel's position that the affiliation has served both sides poorly. The party has failed to campaign on the shop floor, assuming that the support of the union leadership guaranteed its members votes. At the same time, Labour has been shocked when its expectations aren't met. An end to affiliation would recognise our differences and reduce false expectations on both sides. The party will realise that it constantly has to earn the support and the votes of the union rank and file. Most important, with everyone joining equally as individual members, the party will be more genuinely democratic. I have been impressed with the degree of support this position has received from rank and file members.

As I prepared to write this article, I re-read Herschel's position papers and felt a renewed excitement and hope. I ask that members read his material, become familiar with his platform and attend the all candidates debate in September before marking your ballot. It is the least each of us as democratic socialists must do. (For further information feel free to call or fax me at (604) 898-3575.)

REBUILDING WITH ALEXA

by Margaret Mitchell

I first knew Alexa McDonough as a respected Canadian social worker and an active member on the NDP Participation of Women committee.

In 1978 we urged Alexa to take on the leadership of the Nova Scotia party, which was near extinction. Reluctantly, but with the courage of Terry Fox, she took on the challenge. She rebuilt the party, was elected Canada's first woman leader, and won a seat in a Halifax riding. She was later joined by two colleagues and became the respected voice of reason, compassion and social democracy in a very conservative province.

Alexa is a passionate, well-informed Canadian, who has travelled widely across Canada. She has been a key person on the national NDP Executive Council for many years and has been actively involved in the renewal process. She has supporters across Canada and is known and respected by the national media.

I know that Alexa's political experience, her maturity, energy, intelligence and proven leadership abilities will help us rebuild our movement to challenge Liberal atrocities and regain party status in Parliament.

Alexa responded to the following questions in meetings with members:

What are the most important problems we face?

"Rebuilding this party, getting more MP's elected and regaining a critical voice in Canada. This requires the participation and contribution of all those who make up the progressive left."

On the Liberal budget

"I refuse to surrender to this brutal economic



feudalism. We must reduce our financial deficit, but we must do so without driving up our social deficit. Social programs can support restructuring of our economy and enable people to rebuild their lives."

On the NDP and Labour

"Our brothers and sisters in labour are part of our family and there ain't going to be no divorce."

Should we have a woman leader?

Should we have a male leader? As a feminist, I think the NDP has moved beyond gender. We need the best leader to rebuild our party and work aggressively to replace neo-conservatism with Social Democratic values in Canada."

What will be the most important campaign issue?

"Job creation and opportunities for youth of this country. This is essential for their survival and to rebuild hope. It is also the best way to reduce the deficit."

I believe our party must choose a leader who can build trust and confidence and respect across this country. Our new leader must bring together many factions to win back seats in the next election. Alexa can do this. As the following tributes prove, she is a

tough experienced leader with energy and integrity, who is skilled in teamwork and has an unshakable commitment to social democracy.

"She is a smart, talented, gutsy politician and the best premier we never had. I have always admired McDonough's integrity, determination and brains."

Regan, Halifax Daily News

"She has the experience, intelligence and stamina. Most of all, she has the commitment to make a strong federal leader."

Editor, Halifax Daily News

"She has been aggressive, articulate, well-researched and absolutely dogged."

Donahue, PC leader

"She is a serious contender for the national leadership, with her 20 year role as key insider on the party's national council. She is widely praised as both charming and intensely hard-working, with a fresh perspective on the party's situation."

Howard, Globe and Mail

x voting info x

1. All members in good standing will have the opportunity to vote for their choice for federal leader.
2. You will receive a ballot and a paper verifying voter id in the mail - both pieces must be mailed to federal office for your ballot to be valid.
3. Your ballot must be received by federal office in Ottawa by September 29. Allow a week for it to get there.



The provincial government's access to abortion services act comes into effect September 18. This new legislation enforces "buffer zones" around abortion clinics and homes of abortion service providers. These areas will now be deemed protest-free!!

LORNE NYSTROM IS DARING TO WIN

by Diane E. Dupuis

"We have an obligation to provide a political force for all progressive people in Canada," says Lorne Nystrom, "that's why I'm running for leader."

The former MP from Saskatchewan is determined to bring the federal NDP back from the precipice of oblivion to once again being a prominent participant on the national political stage. Nystrom's vision, which is rooted to the best tradition of democratic socialism, consists of people working together in a common cause. In this case, the common cause is rebuilding a party in crisis.

Nystrom's knowledge and understanding of Canada transcends regional differences. His 25 years experience as an MP is a crucial factor in leading the party through the rebuilding process and a subsequent national campaign. As MP he held a number of critic portfolios including finance and constitution. He was the party's constitutional critic from repatriation in 1982 until the Charlottetown Accord in 1992. He credits the time he spent as constitutional critic in providing a solid foundation for understanding the rich tapestry on which this country is woven; the uniqueness and distinctness of Quebec, our history in terms of the two languages, the aboriginal peoples, the role of minorities and the diversity of our country. He attributes getting the constitutional assignment to his ability to work well and cooperatively with others. "There is no other issue in the country that requires somebody with the skills to build bridges and work towards a consensus," Nystrom says.

Nystrom is focusing his leadership campaign on what he feels is the most important issue facing Canadians today, jobs and the economy. Nystrom feels that by making jobs and the economy our issue the party will



be in a better position to reconnect with the progressive majority of Canadians who have been betrayed by right wing provincial and federal governments.

Another issue Nystrom is passionate about is Medicare. In addition to jobs and the economy, there must be a real crusade to preserve and enhance national health care in this country during the next campaign.

Nystrom believes there is a vacuum on the left "like we have never seen before," and if we don't seize the opportunity somebody else will. However, "we have to be progressive and distinctly different and give the membership something meaningful to fight for," he adds.

The leadership race is coming at a critical time. As we move closer to a federal election the leader will have to take on the immediate task of rebuilding the party in addition to formulating an election strategy to take us into the next campaign. "What we need now is to build a national party of the left that has a good, coherent, relevant message based on our long time principles to present to Canadians from coast to coast," Nystrom says. Our message has to be based on our values, principles and ideals. "I don't believe we have to move to the mainstream, we move the mainstream to us," he says.

For further information on the Lorne Nystrom campaign or to obtain a copy of his policy book, "Dare to Win", contact Diane Dupuis at 255-6857.

SVEND ROBINSON

by Sylvia Sioufi

Not many political parties are willing to expose themselves to a public soul searching, but that is in essence what the federal renewal process has meant for the NDP.

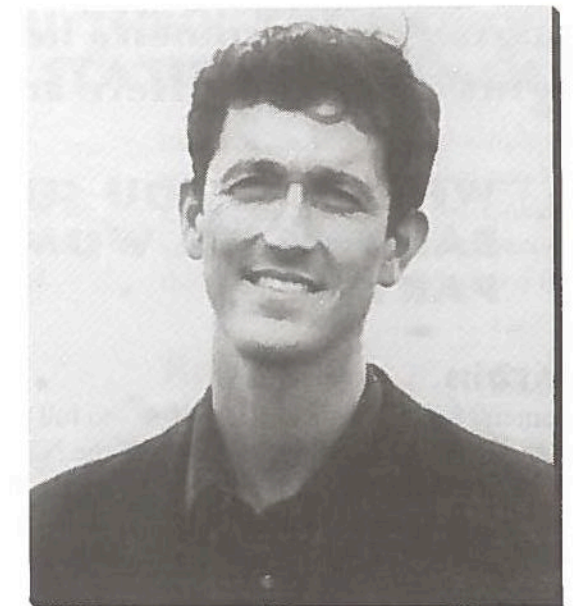
The leadership campaign and election are for me an important part of the renewal process, not because I think that the leader makes the party but rather because whoever is elected leader will symbolize where the party is going.

I am supporting Svend Robinson because he is a strong advocate of democratic socialist principles. As New Democrats we are often made to feel that our policies and proposals are unrealistic and represent the views of a minority. Mainstream media has no interest in presenting an alternative to the corporate agenda. Svend has the presence we need to put our position forward and be heard.

I see Svend as a reflection of what I expect of the NDP: a blend of experience in the parliamentary process and political activism. After all, we are a coalition of activists with the common goal of effecting political and social change.

We need to re-establish ourselves as a party of the Left. A party that works to achieve equality at all levels - social, economic and political - both at home and globally. Svend is committed to rebuilding the Left, to providing a vehicle for those of us who feel the Right is crowded.

I am convinced that by electing



Svend as leader we will send a clear message that the socialist values the NDP was founded on are valid and need to be central to the renewed NDP. Members who have left the party will re-join and many who now feel there is no voice for them in organized politics will join forces with us.

A key to rebuilding the NDP is to ensure we are truly a national party, strong and active in every region. Svend is known across the country and is bilingual.

Svend has proven his commitment to issues I find crucial as a feminist, as a worker and as an immigrant. I sincerely hope to see Svend lead the NDP in the next federal election.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

9 AM TO 4 PM

SATURDAY, SEPT 30
SATURDAY, NOV 30

We hope to have someone who attended the UN Conference on Women in Beijing come to talk to us at the next steering meeting. Call Vicki Robinson at 430-8600 or Jessica Bowering at 876-2830 for details on time and location.

The WRC asked the four candidates ten questions on issues ranging from women's health to poverty, violence, human rights and more. Here are the questions and their answers.

1. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PARTY?

Hardin

Women's lack of discretionary time to get involved and assume responsibility, especially if they are working, raising children and looking after domestic tasks all at the same time; especially if they are low-income single parents.

The efforts of the party to promote and ensure gender parity have been a major step forward.

McDonough

Women's economic inequality continues to be the single greatest barrier to full participation at all levels of the NDP. The party should be proud of its record in knocking down barriers to women's participation, but it is not enough to gloat over past achievements. So long as women's earnings are significantly less than men's, and women's work in the home goes unrewarded and unrecognized, it will remain difficult for women to afford the time, the extra childcare and the transportation costs to participate fully in political life. And we must do more than lower the barriers. We must actively recruit women from all walks of life and ensure that NDP meetings are accessible to all women.

Nystrom

Women face a variety of barriers

to full participation both within the NDP and society at large. The necessary supports to address the economic situation faced by women simply do not exist. The financial barrier posed by lack of quality, affordable child care is just one example.

Within the NDP, the complexity of our structures can itself be intimidating. The tendency of men raised in patriarchal culture to try to dominate organizations is a cultural barrier. The NDP's Participation of Women Committee has a primary role to play in breaking down these barriers. Whether one talks in terms of "affirmative action" or "gender parity", the bottom line is that women cannot fully participate in the party without a structural change and some practical help.

Robinson

While we have made a commitment to involving women at every level of the party, and while we have made good progress towards gender parity in most party structures, we have not yet succeeded in building an organization in which women are on equal footing. If we are going to work for a world in which women are equal, we must ourselves take up the challenge of ensuring that they are equal participants within our party.

Unfortunately, barriers do remain. The day to day costs of being involved in the NDP weigh more heavily on women than on men. The combined pressures of family responsibilities, household work and lower wages make women's time and money particularly valuable. Women are still generally the major care-givers in their families, which can make involvement in the party more of a strain in their lives. We need to work to identify and eliminate those financial and social barriers which may make participation in the party more difficult for women. For example, on-site day care should be available where possible. I am committed to working to ensure we make clear progress towards gender parity in the next federal caucus. Probably the greatest barrier to women's involvement is the least visible one. Just because we are a progressive party does not mean that we are immune to sexist attitudes and behaviour. Sexism silences women. Women who face the added challenge of discrimination based on race, sexual orientation or disability face additional barriers to their participation. The NDP gender parity and affirmative action policies have involved more women in the party and helped raise member awareness of these barriers. We must continue to work to make the NDP a safe, inclusive space for all women.

2. WHAT SPECIFIC THINGS DO YOU THINK THE PARTY SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CANADA?

Hardin

Pay equity, supplementary benefits for part-time work, day care (the day care in turn being affordable and of high quality) and reasonable standards of pay (supported by a solid minimum wage), so that taking a job makes economic sense. A key factor - creating more full-time jobs. A other key factor - promoting increased unionization, because unionization raises basic pay and benefits, hence working women's status.

Reasonable support levels for single parents who are raising children on social assistance.

This leads to other large questions. The deficit needs to be tackled. I would tackle it on the revenue side (tax system reform and innovations) and the monetary side (lower interest rates and other reforms, leading to more employment.) Unless we deal with the deficit, the resources for adequate federal contributions to social services and day care are not going to be available. I believe in a strong Canada Assistance Plan - that is, an active federal role, through cost-sharing, in providing a basic platform for social services across the country.

Even more important is to debunk the mythology that the market is everything and that the public sector isn't quite legitimate and is just a burden on taxpayers. This is a major challenge for the party. Without our doing this, the allocation of sufficient resources

to things like day care is going to be severely constrained, regardless of how much economic and social sense it makes.

McDonough

We must continue to advance those issues which have been on women's agendas for the past twenty years: pay equity, employment equity, education and training opportunities, affordable quality childcare, safe workplaces, timely access to medically-insured abortion services, comprehensive sex and sexuality education for our daughters and sons, freedom from violence, adequate income security programs, effective maintenance enforcement and community support services.

In addition to speaking out as a party, we must collaborate with and support individual women and feminist groups struggling to achieve sexual equality and to advance human rights. Party leaders, male and female, have a crucial role to play in lending their public presence to these struggles.

Nystrom

The NDP needs more women candidates, particularly in winnable ridings. The party needs to promote women candidates internally and provide all logistical support necessary when they are nominated. What we're talking about here is a fundamental shift in our political culture.

In Parliament, provincial legislatures and as a movement, the NDP needs

to advocate and support employment equity programs, violence and harassment free homes and work places and financial supports that recognize the economic barriers women face.

Robinson

Although women have been gradually improving their status in Canada, that progress is inadequate and uneven. While middle class women are slowly narrowing the gap between their earnings and those of their male peers, large numbers of women are finding themselves trapped in low-income ghettos, often in part-time and insecure positions. All women continue to face the daily fear of violence at work, in the streets and in their homes. Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have applied a band-aid approach to the status of women, without ever addressing the underlying problems created by systemic discrimination.

The NDP must develop a comprehensive program to address the specific needs of Canadian women. These policies must address the growing problem of violence against women and must articulate the need for a strong social safety net, including a renewed health care system. They must address women's poverty and find solutions to their continued inequality at all levels of the economy. They must put forward plans for a national day care program and for strengthened pay and employment equity policies. I have provided further details about what these policies might look like in my answers to the remaining questions.

3. HOW SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN?

Hardin

By showing moral leadership as regards the implementation, by the provinces of relevant sections of the Criminal Code dealing with domestic violence; by ensuring that the code and penalties are appropriate; and, not least, by improving the economic status of women so that they and their children are not economic prisoners of intolerable domestic situations.

By providing a basic financial platform for shelters and women's centres, through shared-cost programs.

While such violence occurs regardless of economic circumstances, high unemployment increases its frequency. Reduce unemployment and one reduces the incidence of such violence.

McDonough

The federal government must declare that women and children have a right to live free from bodily harm, and then must take action to ensure that this right becomes the reality of Canadian women and children. The gun control legislation introduced this spring in Parliament may help reduce fatalities and threats of violence. In and of itself, however, this bill is not enough. The government - in concert with provincial, territorial, municipal and band governments - should coordinate the response of enforcement offices, the judiciary, the Parole Board and human service agencies to ensure that these institutions intervene

appropriately in cases of abuse of women. Abused women and children must be protected. Police officers should be required to press charges when evidence indicates that an assault has probably taken place. Offenders must be held accountable for their behaviour by the courts and by society.

Nystrom

Children who witness violence in the home grow up using violence as a means of settling conflicts and/or become acquiescent to violence as adults. When I was in Port Alberni in early August I visited the local women's centre and was surprised to learn they receive approximately 6,000 calls per year. Children have to be educated both in the home and in the school against using violence as a means of conflict resolution.

All members of the justice system must receive training in dealing effectively with violence against women. Funding for transition houses, rape crisis centres and violence prevention programs has to be increased and women from all regions of the country must have access to programs and facilities regardless of where they live.

Robinson

Over the past few years we have finally begun to hear about the problem of violence against women - and yet very little has actually been

done to end it. Male violence against women cannot be seen as a series of isolated tragedies, as those on the right would argue. Violence against women is fostered in our society, as a part of the systemic discrimination that women face. Poor women, aboriginal women, women of colour, lesbians and women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence. Changing the sexist attitudes that condone and eroticize violence will be a long process of education and social change. The federal government does have a direct role to play in supporting that education, and in taking concrete steps to end violence against women.

The government should take full responsibility for funding women's organizations working to end sexist violence. The attitudes of police officers taking complaints from women survivors, the hostile court environment and the often minimal sentences handed to male aggressors all point to the need to challenge the sexism of the police and justice systems. Strong and effective gun control, including a national registry of firearms, is also a vital part of any plan to make our communities safer. We also need to ensure that there is protection for women who survive violence. There should be independent, women-controlled rape crisis centres, transition houses and women's centres accessible to every community in Canada. Finally, we need to fight the conditions that make women vulnerable to violence - by working to end women's poverty.

4. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLAY IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

Hardin

Through cost-sharing, providing a basic platform for secondary education, and more bursaries, across the country, to create more equal opportunity.

McDonough

A strong federal role in funding and standards is essential for ensuring accessible and affordable post-secondary education and training. Cutbacks under successive Conservative and Liberal governments to cash transfers and the changes in Bill C-76 recently pushed through by the Chretien government are doing immense and lasting damage to Canada's universities and colleges. This in turn hurts Canada's economic prospects and the quality of Canadian society itself. Instead of off-loading onto the provinces and heaping a greater financial burden on individual students, the federal government ought to establish adequate and stable funding through transfer payments as well as national standards guaranteeing accessibility and universality for all Canadians. Vocational training must be evaluated more stringently by the federal government to ensure that it is job-related, but not exclusively market-driven. Above all, the goal for post-secondary education and training must be the full realization of human potential.

Nystrom

Since all of society benefits from an educated work force, education has to be accessible to all Canadians, not just those who can afford to pay.

Child care has to be recognized as an essential service. We must reform our current system of taxation to ensure the responsibility for education and training is dispersed equally among all stakeholders. A shift in the financial burden to students will not open access. It will deter many who already find access difficult. Increasing non-repayable grants is a positive step toward increasing access. Eliminating the belief that we cannot afford education is perhaps the best way we can combat problems to access.

Lifelong learning is essential to competing in today's technological work place. There are many socio-economic barriers to post-secondary education and training. The current Liberal government's plan to reduce transfers to the provinces will result in students facing a tripling of tuition fees. For women, who traditionally earn less than men this will result in a debt load that is difficult to repay. The federal government has to ensure that dollars designated for education are going into education, not to building roads. Financial barriers are a psychological barrier to higher education and individuals from low income backgrounds will be deterred from going on to attending a post-secondary institution because of the fear of not being able to pay back the loan.

Robinson

While provinces are responsible for administering post-secondary education and training, much of the

funding is federal. Over the past decade, successive Conservative and Liberal governments have cut post-secondary education transfers by over \$10 billion. Our first priority must be to reverse the changes made in the Canada Health and Social Transfer and to begin to reinvest in education and training.

Women face particular barriers to access to education and training which we must work to eradicate. The federal government must increase initiatives to improve women's participation in programs where they are under-represented, through, for example, the National Science Research Council and the Social Sciences Research Council. Segregation at universities and colleges reinforces segregation in the work force, undermining women's social and economic standing. Women continue to be under-represented in graduate schools, and still only make up a fraction of university faculty. The federal government must make major changes to the Canada Student Loan Program. Inadequate financial support for part-time students hits women particularly hard, since they make up almost two-thirds of the part-time population. The federal government should not consider an income-contingent loan system, since it would place an unfair burden on women, who earn less than men on average, and so would end up paying far more for their education as they repaid their loan, with interest, over a much longer period of time. We need

to look to successful European educational models in which there are no fees charged for education and training programs. Ultimately, post-secondary education and training should be accessible to people based on ability, not affluence.

5. WHAT ROLE SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLAY IN FUNDING, REGULATING AND SAFEGUARDING WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES?

Hardin

Again, through transfer payments maintaining national standards, providing a solid platform for services across the country and the provision, as part of the arrangement, of basic women's health services. Ensuring that access to abortion in law is a matter of choice. Helping to underwrite women's centres (see question 3) also applies here, since such centres play an important referral role in health matters.

McDonough

The federal government must uphold the principles of Medicare and insist on national standards and universally accessible services throughout the country. Specifically, the government must continue to finance health care through a negotiated arrangement such as EPF. It is only through financial leverage that the federal government can enforce the principles enunciated in the Canada Health Act. The federal government should regulate human reproductive technologies based on those same principles. It is imperative that the federal government set research priorities that meet the needs of the entire population, and ensure proper assessment of any new drug or medical device. There is a need

Finally, we must make campuses safe and comfortable places for women to work and learn. Campus safety initiatives are often the first programs to be threatened as budgets are cut. We must work

for a strong federal role in the redesign of our health care system to one that is community-based, encourages citizen participation and develops holistic approaches to the health care needs of the population it is serving. Rather than privatization and layoffs, the federal government ought to be investing in high-skilled, well-paid caregiver services within the public, cooperative and non-profit community sectors of the economy.

Nystrom

Regardless of where they live, women across Canada must have equal access to health care. The first responsibility is for the federal government to ensure the five principles of the Canada Health Act - accessibility, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and public administration - are applied equally across the country. British Columbia's Medicare Protection Act is an example of the kind of legislation provinces can pass to strengthen Medicare.

Women must be able to access all medical services free from harassment and intimidation. Those who infringe on anyone's right to harassment free health care should be dealt with most

to make the climate in colleges and universities a receptive one for women. As long as women do not feel comfortable in their learning environment, they will not be able to participate as fully as their male colleagues.

severely. The BC government's recently proclaimed Access to Abortion Services Act, which will provide "buffer zones" around abortion clinics and the homes of abortion service providers will enable women to access reproductive health care services in a less hostile atmosphere. The federal government should develop a national communications strategy to inform women about all their legal rights and health care entitlements.

Robinson

Along with all Canadian citizens, women are finding that one of their most valued social rights is under attack. This government is posing the most serious threat yet to Medicare. As cuts are made to our medical system, women are often the ones who pick up the slack. Many women find themselves spending more time in their traditional roles as care-givers for the sick and the elderly as government support diminishes. With over 20% of Canadian women living in poverty, they are particularly vulnerable to the health problems associated with low incomes. One of the most effective ways of preventing ill health is to eradicate poverty.

6. HOW SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPOND TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN OTHER COUNTRIES?

Hardin

With conviction and principle, following the example of the late Olaf Palme in Sweden.

McDonough

The federal government should tie the availability of aid programs to the human rights records of other countries. We must not permit torturers and abusers to profit from our aid and development programs. The federal government must be vocal and unequivocal in its condemnation of human rights abuses in other countries, both at the United Nations and in the international media. It is only when "the whole world is watching" and aid is not forthcoming that many despots can be shamed into retreating from barbaric practices.

Nystrom

Our approach to international diplomacy should be to work towards improving living standards and democratic rights (which is quite the opposite of what happens with globalization policies.) Canada should also be a vocal critic of repressive regimes in forums like the United Nations.

Where the Canadian government is satisfied a repressive government is at least on the road to reform (even if progress seems slow), it should seek increased trade with that country as long as progress continues. We cannot change any country overnight, but the federal government can, and should, encourage democratic reform

wherever there is a need.

Robinson

The federal government's policy on international human rights has recently done an abrupt about-face: the Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that Canada will trade with countries "irrespective of whether they have dictatorships or...political governments that do not espouse our own beliefs." This radical change in our foreign affairs policy can only hurt women suffering from human rights abuses in other countries.

We need to reestablish a clear link between trade and human rights records, and strengthen the terms and conditions for Canadian aid. We must ensure effective implementation of the new guidelines that allow women to claim refugee status because of persecution based on their gender. The last budget slashed overseas aid and eliminated all funding for development education in Canada. Our commitment to meeting the United Nations target of .7% of GNP directed to development aid must be reaffirmed. We must make development aid a higher priority; a country whose people are economically independent are far more able to defend themselves from injustice. Equally importantly, we must ensure that aid goes to support international and local non-governmental organizations which empower communities in developing countries to rebuild their own lives and which take on projects that are environmentally sustainable.

We need to ensure that development organizations place women's rights at the very centre of their projects, rather than ignoring them, as so many have done before. We have learned that if women are given the training and the tools that they need to improve their lives, they also improve the lives of those around them. Canada's funding to the International Planned Parenthood Federation must be restored, and we must continue our work to support the goals of the Cairo Conference on population. The United Nations must be strengthened. International financial institutions must be reformed since they too often impose harsh structural adjustment programmes causing greater poverty and human rights abuses. We have a moral responsibility as a nation to work towards equitable international development and social justice.



The NDP has long realized that one of the keys to women's equality is their control over their own bodies. We must continue to support women's right to free, safe and accessible abortions, particularly in the face of strong opposition from the right. As new reproductive technologies create new options and new risks to women's health, we must

ensure that they are limited and regulated in a way that makes women's health interests central to any policies. We need to empower women as health care users and to encourage self-healing, women's health groups, feminist counselling and therapy, community-based clinics and more female doctors, surgeons, pharmacists, midwives and nurse-

practitioners as an antidote to the too often authoritarian, hierarchical and paternal methods of traditional medicine. We need to focus on preventing illness and promoting health, rather than on technological quick-fixes. Above all, we must ensure that we support a public, accessible and universal health care system and we must fight two-tiered, Americanized health care.

7. WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TAKE TOWARD ERADICATING POVERTY FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN?

Hardin

See the response to Question 2, above. Changes to the tax system and through cost-sharing, to improve the situation of parents, should be so arranged as to benefit women who are raising children on welfare equally to women who are working. The role of universal pension plans, specifically the old age pension and supplementary benefit, should be strengthened to give impoverished elderly women adequate resources (along with the extension of supplementary employment benefits to part-time workers, so that women part-time workers in particular have additional resources when they retire.)

Shortening the work week, and hence spreading employment and income over a larger population, will help out greatly, for employable women. So will alternative training programs and "active labour markets", moving more women into better-paid jobs. Women are currently overrepresented in low-paying service jobs.

McDonough

The federal government must be forced to act on its declared commitment to eradicate poverty in Canada by the year 2000. A fair tax system would not leave 1.3 million Canadian children in poverty. The massive assault on federal health and social transfers must be halted and national standards enforced. If these steps are not taken, women and children will suffer a further drastic increase in poverty. Elderly

women suffer disproportionately because of their longevity, on top of their unpaid, underpaid and unpensioned work. Effective maintenance enforcement is critical. The best program for eradicating poverty remains a healthy economy, strengthened labour legislation (increasing opportunities for women to organize, pay equity protections and benefits for part-time workers) and a national affordable, accessible child care program for all who require it.

Nystrom

There are several things that can be done to tackle the poverty that so many women and children suffer. Priorities must include: enforcement of court ordered child support and maintenance payments, a national child care program, employment equity programs in both the public and private sectors and closing the "wage gap" between men and women. Women need basic supports like safe affordable housing, to fully participate in society.

In Canada today, women are owed \$1.5 billion in child support payments and we are no closer to eradicating child poverty than we were six years ago when the federal government made the pledge to do it. The time for talk is over and the data is in - it's time for the federal government to take meaningful action.

Robinson

I have combined questions 7 and 8 for my response. [*The question would therefore read What steps should the Federal Government take towards eradicating poverty for women and children and towards achieving economic equality for women?*]

The NDP's economic policies must give women real choices to determine what they want to achieve in our society, to be free from exploitation, to ensure that their work is valued equally. Equality of opportunity is not enough; out analysis must be systemic and must recommend and implement fundamental, structural changes. The goals of our democratic socialist economic policy must be full employment, equality, redistribution of wealth and power, and environmental sustainability.

In Canada, the poor are overwhelmingly women and children, particularly older women, single mothers, and single women in general. 60% of single mothers live in poverty, as do 64% of single women between the ages of 15-24 and 56% of single senior women. Poverty is a women's issue. We need to focus our activism against poverty and for social justice, fair taxes, creating decent, stable jobs, increasing minimum wages, and ensuring safe workplaces. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives *Alternative Budget* is a good model for this kind of action. It should be emphasized that the

victoria

Monday Sept 18

7 - 9 pm

VICTORIA UNION CENTRE
2750 QUADRA ST
for information contact
CAROL JUDD 595-8818

prince george

Tuesday Sept 19

Civic Centre

7-10 pm

for information contact
Alex Michalos 960-6697
Alexa will also be meeting with the women's caucus in Prince George. As well, there will be a potluck meal. Call Alex Michalos for information.

All

CANDIDATES

MEETINGS

lower mainland

Sunday Sept 17

10 am

Richmond Inn

7751 Westminster Hwy

Friday Sept 22

New West/Burnaby
fundraising dinner

tickets \$40

FIREFIGHTERS HALL
6515 BONSOR AVE

no host bar 6:30

dinner 7:30

speeches 8:30

for information contact
Ray Agnew 431-5926

Saturday Sept 23

BLUE BUTTON CLUB

5505 Kingsway

brunch

with the four candidates

10AM TO 12 NOON

for information contact

Jessica Bowering

876-2830

Vicki Robinson

430-8600

neo-liberal agenda of reducing government funding for social services, reducing government's role in the redistribution of wealth, reducing the "size" of government, and blaming people living in poverty and unemployed people for their poverty, hits women hardest. This is because women and children are the most vulnerable; they are often in part-time low-paying and insecure non-unionized jobs which don't provide benefits or pensions; they face systemic barriers to employment; they end up taking care of those whose social assistance has been cut. Often too, with cutbacks in the public service, the first to lose their jobs are women and those who have been part of employment equity programs.

We must have strong pay equity legislation. This is very important but not a complete solution, since it does not help the poorest of women (for example, immigrant women) who often work in unregulated industries. Employment equity programs are critical to breaking down the systemic barriers to women entering and advancing in the workforce. The NDP must be the party that calls for the restructuring of work in Canada, including a shorter work week, reduced overtime, early retirement, longer holidays, pay equity, employment equity, better educational and parental leave, benefits and protection for part-time workers, and voluntary job sharing. A national childcare program must be seen as a central component of any employment or economic platform. Policy and discussions of restructuring work must recognize the imbalance that exists between women and men's participation in household duties,

and the situation of domestic workers.

The connection between child poverty and women's poverty must be clearly established, since poor children have poor mothers. We must develop new ways of assessing GDP that take into consideration the participation of women in the workforce, so that the issues are central, not secondary, to our understanding of Canada's economic performance.



The NDP must be clear that the organization of women workers is a key element of improving the economic situation of women. We need new labour laws to make it easier to organize casual, part-time and temporary workers and to organize in workplaces where women constitute the majority, and we need federal anti-scab legislation. We must work closely with our

sisters and brothers in the labour movement to realize this goal.

We must fight changes to pension legislation recognizing that reductions in pension income disproportionately affect elderly women who are more likely to live in poverty and to have no other sources of income or support.

Sexual harassment must be seen as a serious barrier to employment, and effective processes for dealing with harassment must be put in place. Violence and harassment can make the workplace a hostile environment for women, with terrible personal consequences but also real consequences to economic performance. The issues of violence addressed in question 3 must also be seen as economic issues, and the connections must be made between imbalances in economic power and violence against women. Furthermore the direct connections between environmental issues and the status of women and poverty, as so pointedly stated by the April 1993 World Scientists Warning to Humanity, must be emphasized. We must continue to ensure that our analysis makes the connections that prevent the marginalization of economic issues relating to women and children.

The issues raised in question 4 must also be seen as part of economic policy. As well as better access to education and training, low interest loans to cooperatives and small businesses must be available. Furthermore, it is very clear that the ideas addressed in question 2 with regard to the status of women in Canada impinge directly on the economic situation of women and children. Social justice and economics must not be seen as separate fields.

8. WHAT STEPS DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE TAKEN TOWARDS ECONOMIC EQUALITY FOR WOMEN?

Hardin

See the responses to questions 2 and 7. In addition, within the federal civil service, ensuring that the route to promotion, the culture of promotion, hiring policy and providing the necessary training and experience for promotion actively play a role towards the full participation of women at all levels.

McDonough

The struggle for economic equality is much the same struggle in 1995 as it was in 1975. Women still need to be encouraged in fields not traditionally entered by women; we still need equal pay for

work of equal value; we still need training and promotional opportunities. And we still need a national child care system which offers accessible and affordable care by trained and well-paid child care professionals. The goal of equality requires the integration of economic, social and sustainable development. It also requires government to foster and encourage the kind of creative solutions flowing from the women's community for local economic development, community entrepreneurship, self-help initiatives, sustainable development,

cooperative workplaces, family responsibility leave, and a shorter work week.

Nystrom

Economic and cultural equality are "flip-sides" of the same coin. Economic equality for women will not be possible until we have quality, affordable child care, employment and pay equity, full access to education and a society that has "zero tolerance" for violence, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse.

Robinson

[See response to question 7.]

• C O U R A G E • P R I N C I P L E • E N E R G Y •

Svend Robinson

"Svend has shown that he has the energy, the stamina and the ability to get things done - all qualities that will be handy to have in a leader."

Barbara Copping, MLA

"This country badly needs a different moral and ethical vision in its economic policy, and Svend can provide it."

Marjorie Griffin Cohen

"A seat in the House, fluent French, a national profile, clear progressive policies; Svend is ready for the job. That's why a majority of POW Reps are supporting him for leader."

Sylvia Sioufi, BC POW Rep

"It would be hard to find anyone in public life whose record of standing up for workers and fighting for principles can match that of Svend Robinson. Svend's leadership on a whole spectrum of issues makes him uniquely qualified to bring Canadians together to defeat the corporate agenda."

**Carmela Allevalo
Secretary-Business Manager
Hospital Employees' Union**

"Svend has an incredible ability to build excitement and energy. His charisma and courage are mobilizing young people - they have a vision of an NDP led by Svend that is dynamic, relevant, and fun."

**Balraj Athwal
YND Womens' Coordinator**

"We need a leader with a clearly progressive vision - someone we can count on to give feminist issues a high priority. From gun control to choice, Svend has always been there when it matters most."

**Merrilee Robson,
WRC Past Chair**

"A team is coming together across the country to elect Svend leader...long-time NDP organizers, people from labour and social movements, and a new generation of activists. Svend is able to bring their issues together into a common vision - that's leadership."

**Gillian McDonald
1993 Candidate
Cariboo-Chilcotin**

BC Campaign: 254-9631 or 1-800-95-SVEND. P.O. Box 28620, 406 South Willingdon, Burnaby, BC, V5C 6J4

9. HOW DO YOU SEE THE NDP'S RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS WORKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?

Hardin

A positive, open relationship, within the framework of a broad, populist political approach which touches the public at large and of a party which is responsible to its members at large.

McDonough

As co-chair of the Panel on Party Relations for the renewal process, I appreciate the input of a great many New Democrats on this matter. Although the renewal process must be continued and expanded, I believe the recommendations going to Convention from the Party Relations panel are an important beginning and a significant contribution for enhancing our relationship with groups on the democratic left. The full report is available in the renewal document. However, two statements from that report serve to summarize my views on this matter:

- People who organize to advance equality, protect the environment and fight for social justice and human rights are engaged in common cause with us and should be considered as allies and friends.

- We should hope that individual members of these organizations will support us actively when we have defined a genuine political alternative to which they also aspire.

Nystrom

The NDP is both a movement for change and a political vehicle which is committed to an ideal of democratic socialism. In so far as

any group striving for goals consistent with our ideals, we are willing to work with them. However, to succeed, our party will have to be more than just a flag of convenience for special interest groups. We need to build a party of people who understand that all of the goals we seek (from quality, affordable child care to medicare to a violence-free society) stem from a commitment to democratic socialism which recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every human being.

Robinson

The NDP is Canada's party of the left, the clear alternative for people seeking progressive social change. Many people in our communities choose however to work for social change through various social movements. Many New Democrats, and many of our long time supporters, work in the social movements, and many of the people leading the social movements are party activists. At election times, the NDP expects our friends in the social movements to be front and centre in our campaigns, and we're often disappointed when they don't arrive. Likewise, we often disappoint our friends in the movements when we don't fully address their concerns immediately upon our election as government. This situation of high and yet unclear expectations is a serious problem for our party and our movement.

As part of my campaign for

leader I have consistently said that we must maintain and build bridges to the social movements. To begin that task, I convened a meeting in Vancouver this past July with over 70 activists from social movements to discuss this very question. The themes that came up were simple - people involved in the social movements want the NDP to act on principle, not for political expediency. They want to know that the policy process of the party has integrity and that it will be respected. And like all of us, social movement activists ask for a strong voice to link our experiences into a common vision that will challenge the right. This work must be constant and ongoing - we can't just talk to each other just before elections and just after them. The NDP must communicate effectively with our friends in all social movements, including women, labour, environmentalist, lesbians, gays and bisexuals, people of colour, seniors, students, people with disabilities, poverty and anti-racism activists, and others. We must ensure that the very serious concerns addressed by the social movements are not dismissed and trivialized, either in the party or in society, as "special interests", and that our friends in these movements are not marginalized as "one issue" people because of their particular dedication or expertise. I believe that democratic socialism provides a broad context for effective social change and that our movement can provide both a broad analysis and a political home for activists from a wide range of social movements.

10. AS A MEMBER OF THE NDP, HOW HAVE YOU ACTIVELY DEMONSTRATED YOUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY FOR WOMEN?

Hardin

In my social activism and writing on broadcasting, I raised the issue of the biased and sexist portrayal of women in television commercials. In my history of VanCity Savings Credit Union (almost completed), I paid special attention to women's issues, such as lending to women in their own names, VanCity's first woman branch manager, etc. On a personal level, I have been a feminist going back to the days when such a position was still unconventional.

McDonough

In my fourteen years in the legislature, the first three as the only woman and lone New Democrat, I have presented briefs, petitions, resolutions, private members bills; I have asked questions in the House of Assembly and in the local and national media; I have spoken out and demonstrated sisterhood and solidarity in support of women in a wide variety of causes, including: decent wages for childcare workers and transition house workers; pay equity and employment equity; effective maintenance enforcement; same sex benefits; increased family benefits; reproductive health and abortion services; programs to eradicate violence against women and services to support victims of violence; and core funding for women's resource centres and transition houses.

Nystrom

I have always been an advocate of affirmative action and employment

equity programs.

In 1981, as constitution critic, Pauline Jewett and I fought to have women's equality rights entrenched in Sections 15 and 28 of the Charter of Rights.

In Parliament and in my riding, I have supported transition houses, rape crisis centres and anti-violence programs as measures to reduce violence against women and children.

Since 1969, I have supported a woman's right to choice on abortion. This has not always been a popular position to take coming from a riding in rural Saskatchewan.

Robinson

Since my earliest involvement in the NDP, I have been a strong supporter of women's rights. In 1972, my first speech at a New Democratic Party Convention was in support of the establishment of a BC "Ministry of Women". The first Private Members Bill that I introduced after my election to the House of Commons for the first time in 1979 was a bill to repeal Section 251 of the Criminal Code, on abortion. As Justice Critic, I led work in Parliament to strengthen laws against the sexual assault of women, and as Solicitor General Critic I worked to address issues relating to women in prison. I have consistently advocated tougher gun control and have voted to uphold that policy. I have spoken out against the sexual

harassment of women, including the difficulties faced by employees on Parliament Hill. I have also supported measures to promote gender parity in the party and in caucus. My work on equality issues, particularly those related to aboriginal rights and sexual orientation, is well known. I have also worked to support extra-parliamentary efforts to promote women's rights. I have been an Honourary Director of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL), and have attended court several times in support of Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

I also believe that we need to fight discrimination within our own party structures; I have established a "Campaign Workers Charter of Rights" and appointed problem-resolution ombudspersons in my current leadership campaign. This charter (which is based on work done by CUPE's Strategies for Equality Class and used at the CLC Harrison Winter School) recognizes the need for campaign workers and volunteers to work in a harassment free environment. My campaign has also encouraged the participation of women at all levels, with particularly strong representation of young women.



Personally Screaming

by Nancy Weaver

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet ...

Not so, Juliet old girl. Words have connotations that are firmly imbedded in our consciousness. "Ooze" or "skunk" couldn't possibly mean the same thing as "rose".

I may be behind the times, but it is only recently that I have really had difficulty, in casual conversation, identifying and referring to the person I have lived with for 17 years. I know this discussion has been going on for years but we simply have not come up with a substitute for, in my case, husband. And I definitely know that don't want to be referred to as a wife anymore.

But why? Why do I feel like a black robed spectre from the last century, or Donna Reed, when I refer to Don as "my husband"?

Thy rare qualities ...

Thy meeknesse

saint-like, wife-like -

(Shakespeare, Henry VIII)

The OED identifies the first time *wyfe* is used in written form was in 725 AD. The definition is a woman of "humble rank" or "of low employment, especially one engaged in the sale of some commodity such as a Fishwife, Alewife, Tripwife". The definition later includes "a kept mistress or concubine" and later "mistress of a household, hostess". Other examples are given to help us form the big picture - **wife-bound** (bound to a wife, married) and **wife-ridden** (tyrannized by one's wife) are a few. The Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue published in 1811 defines wife as "a fetter fixed to one leg".

Now, *husband* is defined in rather different tones. The word showed up in written form in 1000 AD, in the bible (Matthew 20). The definition - "to till (the ground), to dress or tend (trees and plants), to cultivate (the mind). To administer, to manage. Sparing, economical, parsimonious. Thrifty. The master of the house, the male head of the household." A husband is he "who manages his affairs with skill and thrift; a saving, frugal or provident man, an economist". Sounds pretty boring, really, but better than being called a fishwife, what?

The words we have tried to use instead just don't work. I have friends who refer to their "lover". This, I find gives me far too much information and sends my mind off into realms where it really doesn't belong. "Spouse", besides sounding like something you'd use to plug the sink or something has odd connotations - the OED defines this Middle English word in a very religious sense denoting marriage, betrothal, wedlock, bride, bridegroom and includes "women of religion - who have taken religious vows in relation to God or Christ". "Partner" has a chilly corporate connotation. The Random House Dictionary defines partner as "a person who shares and is associated with another in some action or endeavor ... a person associated with another or others as a principal or contributor of capital in a business or a joint venture, usually sharing its risks and profits ... people who dance together." The dancing part sounds OK, but the rest just doesn't work. The first time partner was used in a personal relationship sense was in 1611 in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* - if it hasn't taken yet, it just won't.

If wife had a connotation like the description of a woman in Kate Millet's *Flying* - "a great lusty Wife of Bath woman" - if the word conjured life and birth and roundness and earthiness - all that good stuff - then I'd be perfectly happy being referred to as "wife". But it doesn't. So I'm not.

SPEAKING OF NAMES ...

Some people believe strongly that you are your name, that your name is your destiny. I don't know about that, but thought it might be interesting to see what the names four federal leadership candidates said about them.

HERSCHEL

A diminutive form of Hersch, from the Yiddish means "a deer" and has the connotation of swiftness.

ALEXA

The feminine form of the Greek Alexander, meaning

"helper of mankind". Queen Salome Alexandra, ruler of Judea from 76-69 BC was one of the early prominent personalities to use this name.

LORNE

"Especially Canadian" says the Concise Dictionary of First Names. A variation of the Latin Laurence and the Scandinavian Lorens or Laurens meaning crowned with laurel, which is the symbol of victory.

SVEND

Variant form of Sven, means "young man" and "a crown".

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- REGIONAL REPS -

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392 - 5609

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