

Which Way to Ottawa?

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Cet article rapporte les détails de la campagne de Doris Anderson alors qu'elle brigait le poste de membre au parti libéral fédéral à la fin des années soixante-dix. Elle partage ses souvenirs avec Doris, qui fut son mentor et une aide infaillible dans sa propre campagne électorale. L'auteure fait remarquer que Doris n'avait qu'un but: faire du parti libéral une institution vraiment démocratique au sein de laquelle les femmes auraient une place à leur mesure. Elle a aussi milité en faveur du changement du système électoral afin que soient reflétées les aspirations des Canadiennes à l'intérieur du Parlement canadien.

On October 6, 1978, in her column in *The Toronto Sun* about Doris Anderson as the Liberal candidate in the Eglinton by-election, Joan Sutton said, "She is and always has been, a Liberal, and she believes that the party is more important than the popularity of its leader." Hmmm, I'm not so sure. In her response to Joan's question to define a "Doris Anderson Liberal," Doris laughed and dodged,

Frankly, I've always had much more trouble defining a Conservative—they're such a divided party. And they're wrong for this country now because they have no base in Quebec. The NDP have the clearest cut policies but they can't win elections. The Liberals are Canada's broadly-based party. They're pragmatists. They take ideas from other parties and I think that's all right: If it's a good idea, I say use it.

This is not the answer of a fervent partisan, passionately proud to be a Liberal, extolling Liberal policies and values. It is the answer of a pragmatist. By the process of elimination Doris found herself with a Liberal capital "L" and a red maple leaf on her brochure. But the word Liberal was missing next to the red maple leaf. Trudeau also is not mentioned except in the reproduced clippings. Her brochure was a study in ambivalence.

One thing was sure, Doris was never conservative nor

a Conservative. Doris was always a small "I" liberal but was never very impressed with the capital "L" Liberal machine.

Doris loved politics and she understood that politics is indeed the art of making the necessary possible. But big "P" politics, party politics was an uncomfortable fit. In fact, "A Short Political Polka," Chapter 13 of her autobiography *Rebel Daughter*, is the shortest chapter of the book by far—even five pages shorter than Chapter 12, "My Short, Unhappy Life of Sin!" In her earlier years, Doris had joined the socialist party, Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and written briefly for the CCF news. Even then she described local party politics as "dreary: the men did all the talking, the women took notes and made the coffee. Disillusioned, I soon stopped attending" (1996: 93). Later, as a former Liberal candidate, she was always identified as a Liberal, but her formal attachment to the party was filled with antipathy and made her relationship with many long-time Liberal Party women at times quite difficult.

In *The Rainmaker*, Keith Davey recalled the by-elections in 1978,

We knew from Goldfarb that our prospects ranged from slim to dreadful.... We wasted Doris Anderson in Eglinton.... [She] was understandably soured by this experience and we were at fault for putting her into such a certain-loss situation. She could have been an excellent MP. (234-5)

Even though, the Trudeau Liberals lost badly in the election of 1979, Eglinton Riding swung dramatically back to the Liberals from the stinging by-election loss. Had Doris run in that general election, she almost certainly would have won and become an MP and nine months later in 1979, a Cabinet Minister.

The question has always been why didn't she run again?



Doris Anderson, just before leaving Chatelaine in 1977.

In *Rebel Daughter* she explained, “By early spring, I had become ambivalent about politics. That short campaign had taught me something about myself. As a journalist, I had had some trouble with being a good ‘machine’ politician” (225).

Doris’s attachment to the Liberal Party can be divided into four sections:

- Married to the Mob
- The Candidate
- The Thorn on the Red Rose
- Yoda

Married to the Mob

I couldn’t believe that anyone could take politics seriously enough to become depressed over it.

—*Rebel Daughter*, on David Anderson’s reaction to the Liberal loss to Diefenbaker in 1957

Doris married a Party animal—a PEI Liberal. In PEI party politics is in the genes. The PEI Liberals think the red earth is partisan testimony. When David Anderson moved to Toronto he dove into Liberal Party politics with PEI passion. He was gregarious and good at it. He loved every aspect of it, especially organizing and fundraising. When they met, he had even run in the provincial election as a candidate. She was warned! But from racing home from

their honeymoon to make sure they voted in the 1957 Federal election to naming their son Mitchell after Mitchell Sharp, the focus of David’s partisan labour, Doris was more than mystified by the religious fervour and at times almost unprincipled loyalty in Liberal party politics.

For Doris, as for 95 percent of Canadians who don’t belong to a political party, the tribal nature of party politics seemed quite odd, at times thoughtless and without proper critical appraisal. Her quick courtship and marriage to David Anderson dropped her into a front row seat to some of the more unsavoury and troubling aspects of party politics. The nomination process was the ugly underbelly. A boy’s game, in which the end always justified the means. Winning at all costs. Rules bent. The favoured candidate of the “boys in the back room” would miraculously have “instant” members parachuted onto a list, bussed into the meeting; the meeting would take place on a date that was best for “their” candidate, often changing the date and/or place without informing the other candidates. Doris sometimes accompanied David to various nomination meetings as an “out-of-riding” member, voting for the chosen candidate. She says in *Rebel Daughter*, “I began to wonder how democratic the nomination process was if people who didn’t live in the riding could be on the voters’ list” (217).

Like her time in the CCF, she was appalled that women were getting coffee and taking the minutes. The election strategy sessions were men-only; the women convened

the coffee parties and did the phone canvassing. Women were allowed to run as the Riding Secretary, Social or Volunteer Chairs but “If they decided to run for president of the riding association or ventured to suggest that they be delegates to a leadership convention, they suddenly became ‘difficult’ and ‘shrill’” (217).

Doris’s advocacy for women within the Liberal Party to demand meaningful participation in the policies and strategies was not well-received. She was disturbed that the women that populated the women’s auxiliaries of the ridings seemed quite content with their subservient roles. She describes after a barn-burner of a speech to Liberal women in North Toronto being chastised by the MP and Campaign Manager. They were furious that she was trying to “rouse his docile female workers into a rebellion” (218). The fact that she was never invited to another Liberal Women’s Auxiliary meeting was to her almost a badge of honour.

She was delighted when in 1962 Pauline Jewett was able to beat the boys at their game. By sheer hard work, she won the nomination and then the riding. She had spent her whole sabbatical canvassing the riding. She knew the issues and earned the respect of the Liberals and then the voters in Northumberland riding.

In 1968, during Trudeaumania, it was clear that all bets were off. When victory is in the air, the men get their elbows up. Winnable ridings go to the men. The increasing pressure to have at least some women candidates, resulted in them being used as cannon fodder in clearly unwinnable ridings. Doris was appalled at the results of that election—not one Liberal woman MP.

The mantra of “it’s so hard to find and persuade good women to run” was wearing thin for Doris. Being married to the mob, she knew the playbook. In 1971, she assigned Barbara Frum to write the famous *Chatelaine* article with the roster of 105 fabulous women who would make terrific candidates. The magazine also included a playbook for women on the realities of party politics. The article warned them of the “dirty politics” and explained the “how-to” of winning nominations like the boys do.

Doris was very proud of that article and the consciousness it raised. Women were galvanized to run and had the tools to fight back against the Party machinery. The blinkers were off and the gauntlet was laid down. The boys in the back room were put on notice.

The Candidate

If you want to send a strong, articulate Member of Parliament to Ottawa, elect Doris Anderson.

—Campaign brochure cover, 1978

Over the years, as one of Canada’s most influential women and a vocal advocate for more women in politics, Doris had been asked to run by all three political parties.

As she finished her final editorial at *Chatelaine*, she was

55 and a single parent. She was no longer married to the Liberal mob but she had now lots of Liberals as true friends. Judy LaMarsh had given her a retirement party attended by many of her Liberal political friends—Keith Davey, Royce Frith, Shelia Kierans, and Jerry Grafstein. In *Rebel Daughter* she admitted, “Having long considered politics as a natural extension of the kind of changes I had been trying to bring about as *Chatelaine’s* editor, and having penned dozens of editorials on the need for more women in Parliament, I was now seriously considering taking my own advice” (211).

Michele Landsberg decried this period in her column in the *Toronto Star* on September 27, 1978:

A year ago, after 37 years in the working world, she retired to write a best-selling novel. There was a four-month camping trip across Europe with two of her teenage sons, and then back home to “the leisurely life of a literary lady. I thought I’d spend mornings finishing my second novel, and then cook, garden, loaf in the sun and clean cupboards” Doris laughs, “I found I wasn’t really that interested in cleaning cupboards. Even writing another “message novel” didn’t use a whole other part of my character and energies.

She was ripe for the picking. Val Sears had said in the *Sunday Star*, October 1, 1978,

Senator Keith Davey, the Liberal slyboots, has been after Doris’s political virtue longer than Daisy Mae chased L’il Abner and neither of them doubt that she was caught at the right time, in the right place, for the right party. Doris is some catch.

He then quoted Doris: “I want to be where the action is.... I got tired of sitting on the sidelines and commenting. I do care about this country.”

Her motivation was clear. Michele Landsberg quoted Doris, “I’m a pragmatist. Ottawa is where everything happens and I do think I can have an impact. Even if we enforced the abortion laws equally across the country, or equal opportunity in federal government agencies, it would be a tremendous step.”

Doris had made the decision that she would run in the next Federal election as a Liberal, but she was clear that she would need to be offered a seat that could be won. The Liberals were almost four years into their mandate, an election had to be called within a year. She told Val Sears from the *Star*, “When I left *Chatelaine*, Keith was after me instantly. I said, ‘All right, this time, I’ll do it. How about Rosedale?’” While she was in Europe, Ethel Teitelbaum sent her a telegram, Donald MacDonald had resigned his seat and Rosedale was “up for grabs.” Ethel was the first woman President of the Rosedale Federal Liberal Riding Association. She knew the riding well



Doris Anderson campaigning in the 1978 Eglinton by-election.

and thought the riding would be good for Doris and that Doris could win. Even though David Crombie would be stiff competition, Ethel believed that feminism was in full flower and women from all over would come and “work like Hell.” The Association of Women Voters was already having serious influence at City Hall. Doris never answered that telegram.

By the time she had returned from Europe, John Evans, the former President of the University of Toronto, had decided to run in Rosedale. Doris was now seriously looking for another winnable riding. She describes a lunch at the Parliamentary Restaurant with Keith Davey, the national campaign chairman and Senator Royce Frith. She was offered Mississauga South or Don Valley West, two seats that at that time were considered Conservative strongholds. She was not amused.

Over the years, I had watched too many women dispatched to hopeless ridings.... Keith didn't bother to hide his annoyance when I didn't jump at the chance to run in either of those two loser ridings. I was still serious about running, though. (217)

In all her negotiations with the party, she was clear that she wanted to reserve the right to speak out. She was a fighter and a reformer and the Party respected that. They knew she was “good goods.” She wanted to go on her own steam.

The ground rules were clear; she was doing this because of ideas and because she had decided she was prepared to try and change things from the inside. She was clear with them that she would never be a “Liberal hack”.

As Doris described in *Rebel Daughter*,

By the fall of 1978, the Liberal Party was in a dilemma: it had been in power since 1974, and there were 15 vacant seats—all requiring by-elections. With both unemployment and inflation running high, and the party's popularity at almost an all-time low, their strategists knew the party faced certain defeat in an election. In a delaying tactic, they decided to hold by-elections on October 16. (221)

All of a sudden, Eglinton Riding was in a mess. Mitchell Sharp had resigned earlier in the year and Reverend Rolande de Corneille had upset the old guard in the riding association with his surprise victory at the nomination meeting. Now, this outsider had committed what Val Sears called “a heinous political sin” of quitting with barely a month left before the Election Day. The election had been called on Sukkot, the Jewish holiday and the Reverend resigned in a huff at the stupidity of Ottawa annoying the Jewish voters, one-third of the riding, in what was clearly going to be a tough by-election.

Doris soon received a call from Jim Coutts, Trudeau's

principal secretary, asking her to consider running in the by-election in Eglinton Riding. He was honest. "He didn't pretend that the odds weren't daunting" (221). By-elections are always the time to send the sitting government a strong critical message, and this government was in particular disfavour because of the economy and high unemployment. She would be running against Rob Parker the glib, saucy former CBC announcer who for over six months had been knocking on doors and working hard.

Doris took a longer view. In *Rebel Daughter* she said, "Eglinton was an excellent riding, the best by far that I had ever been offered" (221). She knew it well as it was the riding where David had helped Mitchell Sharp for all those years. She also knew that the boundaries would be changed and more favourable in the upcoming general election and—"If I made any kind of decent showing, I believed—and the Liberals gave me every reason to understand—that they were so furious with de Corneille that I would get a chance at the seat in the federal election in the spring" (221). Doris admitted to *Toronto Star's* Val Sears: "This is not a good time to be running for the Liberal Party." He commented, however, that she said it "in a way that everybody knows she likes it: The long odds, the long hours, the short, sharp fight." He characterized her campaign as "you can vote for her—and for the feminist and social principles she represents—without committing yourself to either Joe Clark or Trudeau." Her election brochure detailed "The kind of action you will get in Ottawa from Doris Anderson." She is quoted:

Any party or any candidate who implies that he can change the situation overnight is either economically ignorant or deceiving the voter. The Conservatives have promised make-shift, vague solutions to complex problems. Joe Clark is not the man to cope with intricate, world-wide economic problems—nor can he hold this country together. He has no base in Quebec at all, and has demonstrated no ability to attract or hold a deal with Quebec supporters who want to keep Canada whole. His election would be a disaster.

The brochure provided no defense for Liberals or for Pierre Trudeau. It was Doris at her pragmatic best. She was running to fight for the values and principles she believed in.

Michele Landsberg reported that Doris

makes an ideal candidate. Her permanent tone is one of amused tolerance, making a gritty commitment to small-l liberal principles . . . she is unaffectedly herself: a big, self-confident woman who doesn't have to feign an interest in the people she meets. . . . Doris jumped into the by-election because she's concerned "about the dreadful apathy and cynicism of Canadians. Of course, people who have grown up in affluence feel cheated now that we have to curb our expectations.

But I've always been bothered by our throw-away society. Gradually, people are coming around to new attitudes of conserving. Have you noticed that second-hand silk is chic, now?"

Landsberg went on to say,

If she makes it to Ottawa, Doris intends to fight to see that society's underdogs aren't victimized even further by current reactionary attitudes. Affirmative action and decent support for welfare mothers and their children aren't burning priorities in the present beleaguered economy, but "I'm not going to change my attitudes on the importance of those battles."

She was realistic about the prospects of winning in this by-election. To Michele Landsberg she admitted, "Well, it isn't a shoo-in."

In *Rebel Daughter*, she described thoroughly enjoying her "five hectic weeks of pressured, non-stop crises" (221). Others don't remember it that way. Phyllis Smith, her campaign manager, had a totally different take on Doris Anderson—The Candidate. She in fact told me that Doris was "the worst candidate she had ever worked for." The enjoyment that was there for her public face and reflected in all the articles about the Eglinton campaign were not evident to the core team. Campaign schools teach all candidates that trying to be your own campaign manager is a fatal mistake. Clearly there'd been no time for campaign school! Throughout the campaign it was extremely difficult for Doris to refrain from second-guessing all the decisions and strategy. "She was so used to being in charge," said Phyllis Smith. The "lifers" were upset that she didn't seem to really like the superficial nature of a great deal of the tasks of campaigning. Although she was good at the Town Hall meetings, she was never really comfortable with canvassing, mainstreeting, asking people for signs on their lawn, or fundraising. Phyllis thought her background as an elite journalist also brought some baggage—somehow Doris couldn't hide her assessment that the interview with the *North York Mirror* reporter or even CITY-TV was never as important as CBC. The campaign team, however, knew how invaluable the local and Jewish newspapers were in Eglinton Riding. The "Liberal Women" were upset that she was acting like the male "Star Candidates." She expected the Party to do the fundraising and "show her the money" and put in place a machine for her. As Doris describes in *Rebel Daughter*, the party machinery did kick in but not always in ways that she found very helpful: "I was deluged with pounds and pounds of almost totally useless literature" and advice from a "limousine full of bright, young men, earphones permanently glued to their ears" (223), forbidding her to drive her Citroen, almost the only transportation on the whole campaign for her volunteers. High-profile Liberals like Jeanne Sauvé and Monique Bégin, John

Roberts, Herb Gray, Donald MacDonald, Judd Buchanan paraded through the riding. Doris was grateful for the attention that her candidacy was receiving but seemed a little irritated that every day her agenda would have to be altered to accommodate these well-meaning folks. She seemed to resent the need for cabinet ministers to get lots of media profile.

She did, however, often recall how much she loved the voyeurism of canvassing, particularly the couple that would answer the door just after making love or countless others who seemed to be quite comfortable answering the door

about every bill that has ever passed. Sometimes the issue is a city or provincial one, but you have to know all about it anyway.”

Val Sears commented that Rob Parker was trying for a little dignity but that it was “tough for Parker to be ponderous. Now he gets on with speeches like: In everything it touches, this government continues to give failure a bad name. The cabinet ... is the biggest collection of pygmies outside the Belgian Congo, if you don't believe me ask John Turner.”

The campaign was brutal. Doors slammed, especially

She did, however, often recall how much she loved the voyeurism of canvassing, particularly the couple that would answer the door just after making love or countless others who seemed to be quite comfortable answering the door practically starkers.

practically starkers. And she adored the amazing feeling of having all your friends from all parties and parts of your life just show up to help.

However, the overall tone of the campaign was tough slogging. Landsberg eloquently described the feeling on the ground: “As the veteran of many an iffy campaign myself, I could recognize with a chill, that courteous evasive smile. It is the smile of people who wouldn't dream of being rude, but who would rather drop dead than vote for you.” In her column on September 27, 1979, Michele described John Roberts canvassing with Doris, never mentioning Trudeau or the word Liberal once. “She's running to succeed Mitchell Sharp in the October by-election. We need people like her in Ottawa.”

Joan Sutton's column on October 6, 1978, described Doris's approach:

She isn't pretending to be enamoured of the PM, nor is she trying to sell him personally to the voters. What's more, she makes no bones about the stupidity in Ottawa that resulted in a by-election being placed in conflict with the Jewish holidays. She growls, “It's unbelievable—don't they have a calendar down there?”

Most of the Jewish Community admitted that Sukkot was not a very important holiday, but Reverend de Corneille's grand gesture of resigning (many saying just a move of self-preservation in what would have been a clearly losing campaign) had set a standard of support for their community that Doris would now pay for not meeting.

Unlike her Conservative opponent who was well-known for his wisecracking one-liners, Doris took the policy side of being a candidate very seriously as Joan Sutton described: “In between, she bones up.” Then she quoted Doris as saying, “You have to be able to answer questions

in the Jewish parts of the riding, and almost worse, more and more of those telling WASP reactions of faces glazing over with syrupy disingenuous smiles wishing her well, as described by Michele Landsberg in her column. Michele ended that column with “Doris will need all her optimism as she swims against the anti-government tide on October 16. I'm no believer in 'working from within' the present government, but as a friend and admirer of Doris, I wish her well.”

The pollsters were right. Doris received 7,996 votes to Rob Parker's 18,732. The results were very similar to the results in Rosedale riding where David Crombie easily beat John Evans 18,732 to 10,114. Ethel Teitelbaum however, still thinks that the controversy over the Jewish holiday in Eglinton cost Doris the election and that she could have won Rosedale.

In the *Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs*, Tom Traves and John Saywell stated,

Ontario turned out to be a wasteland, as several “star” candidates went down to defeat... These losses hurt the Liberals badly because all their defeated candidates were obvious cabinet material... Despite its size the Liberal cabinet was extremely weak, and apart from his Quebec lieutenants, Mr. Trudeau was obviously short of talented aides. (41)

It was now on to plan for the spring election of 1979. Doris recounts in *Rebel Daughter* that a few weeks after the campaign she went to have breakfast with Jim Coutts at the Park Plaza. She was shocked to find out that she was on her own to fight de Corneille for the nomination for the upcoming general election. As the past candidate she had no special status and at that time the leader had no special powers to appoint candidates. Instead of recognizing that

she could clearly win the nomination fight because all the Liberals were furious with de Corneille, her supporters were suggesting that she try another riding. She was offered The Beaches where the polling was terrible and Rosedale where she would have to run against the popular David Crombie, now a formidable incumbent. She was now rethinking this business of “working from within.”

In truth, many felt that she had made the decision on October 16. Phyllis Smith recalls Doris saying “Never again. This is not for me.” Many politicians have felt that similar blow. Many have never before failed at anything in their

Liberal MP.” That was not to be either.

In the *Hamilton Spectator* on April 12, 1979, in an article on Doris’s first meeting of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, entitled “Wondering ‘what buttons to push’: Can Doris Anderson shake up Ottawa?” Kathleen Rex wrote of Doris’s disastrous loss in the by-election. “If the results had been more favourable she might have considered running again.” But it seems that ultimately her decision was based upon the decision of where she could make the greatest difference, on the inside as a backbencher in opposition, or back on the outside.

“If only” Doris had contested the nomination, “if only” she had run in Eglinton in 1979. How different would the history of Canada have been if the Honourable Doris Anderson had joined Monique Begin and Judy Erola as a cabinet minister from 1979 to 1984?

whole lives. Observers felt that the loss was humiliating for Doris and that she had had enough. Others believed that she had made the cold calculation that the Liberals were dead and that they would be in the wilderness for a time to come. In *Rebel Daughter*, she described her feelings:

I had a nagging feeling of déjà vue. The Liberal Party had run out of ideas and resembled the tired organization I had encountered when I’d first met David nearly twenty years earlier. With a party seemingly headed for sure defeat in the next election, it appeared to be a poor time to be running, particularly in the dubious seats I was being offered. (225)

She didn’t want to take the chance again. The prospect of being a cabinet minister was fast eluding her. She had decided that that would be the way to make the real changes necessary for women and social justice. It was not to be.

In *Rebel Daughter* Doris acknowledged her trouble with being a “machine politician.” As a cabinet minister, she would have been able to lead. However she was quite clear that, “Most successful backbenchers behaved like football players in a scrum—never any dissent or criticism. The concept that the party was right under all circumstances was difficult for me to swallow. If I won a seat, I knew I would chafe under that kind of strict party discipline” (225). It was now very clear that the Liberals elected in the next general election would be sitting in the opposition benches.

Joan Sutton finished her column ten days before the by-election by stating, “But she has already won—now she knows that she loves campaigning and that politics is for her. Win or lose she’ll be back to contest the next general election, determined to become Doris Anderson,

Liberal women were disappointed. The results of the 1979 election had been surprising. The Liberals lost badly all over Canada but in Eglinton Riding, Roland de Corneille was able to defeat Rob Parker by almost 2,000 votes—19,270 to 17,605. The riding has been Liberal every since. There is still to this today an “if only” chorus. “If only” Doris had contested the nomination, “if only” she had run in Eglinton in 1979, “if only” Doris Anderson had been a Liberal MP for as long as she wanted.

The big question was still to some, “How long would she have lasted as a backbench opposition MP?” But Joe Clark had solved that problem; he was defeated only nine months later in the fall of 1979. The “if only” continues still. How different would the history of Canada have been if the Honourable Doris Anderson had joined Monique Begin and Judy Erola as a cabinet minister from 1979 to 1984?

The Thorn on the Red Rose

She was maddening. She continued to criticize—forever. It was unconscionable. She never stopped.

—Ethel Teitelbaum, Liberal Party Activist

Michele Landsberg in her column during the 1978 by-election, wrote: “No tame Liberal, Doris has badgered the Trudeau government for years on its laggard approach to women’s issues.” Joan Sutton had called her “a gutsy woman who recognizes the issues, a fighter and a straight-talker as well as a clear thinker, the kind of person we need in Ottawa.” Even though she didn’t get to be the MP for Eglinton riding, Doris got to Ottawa by another route. She was going to make a difference in Ottawa anyway.

Although perceived by the media as a patronage appointment for a failed Liberal candidate, shortly after

Marc Lalonde appointed Doris Anderson to the helm of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), all those in her wake came to understand that she was no “Liberal hack.” After Doris’s death this year, Canoe.ca stated that Doris’s “departure from the council over the timing of the women’s conference on the constitution effectively silenced those who saw her as a Liberal party hack.”

Anyone who had thought that couldn’t have been paying attention. She had consistently demonstrated her antipathy with the party machine throughout her political life; they should have just asked any true Liberal party hacks.

In *Rebel Daughter*, Doris recalls:

In 1973, when the CACSW was first established, I had been asked to join its board. I would have relished being part of that first, non-partisan feisty council along with such women as Laura Sabia and Grace Hartman.... Under its first chair, Katie Cooke, a seasoned bureaucrat and committed feminist, valuable research was undertaken. Since then, the council has become much more politicized—a reward for women workers in the Liberal Party. (226)

In 1979, Doris was thrilled with the challenge of taking the Advisory Council back to its former glory and an even “more effective tool for women” (227). She felt that this time Ottawa would give her a “box seat” on how government worked and help her once and for all decide whether she would run again for Parliament.

From cutting the staff in order to increase the research budget, to typing her own memos, to moving the translating functions to Montreal, she was annoying a lot of people in the Liberal government.

May 22, 1979, the government fell and she ended up with a new Conservative Minister, David MacDonald. Doris infuriated the Liberals by getting along so well with her new minister. He almost doubled her budget, and agreed that the Council would have input into appointments to the Council. Doris was delighted that this would mean that the Liberal party hacks wouldn’t just be replaced by Conservative party hacks. She fired the Winnipeg speechwriter (and loyal Liberal campaign worker), which irritated Lloyd Axworthy. She agreed with her new Minister on the cancellation of Jeanne Sauvé’s commission on sex stereotyping in the media. Doris was in the Liberal Dog House.

When Joe Clark’s government was defeated in February 1980, she admits that

I was sorry. My brief engagement with the Liberals during the by-election had convinced me that the party needed much more time out of power to renew itself. It returned as jaded and arrogant as before it had been defeated, and out of touch with many parts of Canada, including the disaffected West. (231)

She was also more than a little worried that her new minister was Lloyd Axworthy. She knew, “I had some fence-mending to do” (231). At the initial meetings Doris was impressed with his knowledge of women’s issues and his commitment to affirmative actions, starting with government departments.

She was, however, horrified when she was told by a young man from the Prime Minister’s office (PMO) that Jean Piggott’s process of taking input from the Council for the appointment would be replaced by pure political appointments by regional ministers. “In other words, the party faithful would again be rewarded by being appointed to the Council—forget about expertise” (231). She was clearly not thrilled when Hellie Wilson, the correspondence secretary from the PMO was made Vice President. Even though, Hellie had been very important in securing Doris’s appointment with the “powers that be,” Doris assumed she was a spy. This assumption that Hellie was a “mole” was extremely hurtful to Hellie and some say “did her in.”

The relationship between Doris and Lucie Pepin, now the French Vice President and militante du *Partie Libérale* was never easy.

The infamous confrontation between Doris and the Liberal government on the Charter is well documented. But there were two sides to this story. Within the Liberal Party there are still many voices apoplectic about the undercutting and grandstanding of Doris at this time. They believe to this day that women’s rights were intended to be embedded in the Charter and that it was a breakdown between Doris and inexperienced staffers in the minister’s office that led to the blow up.

It was certainly accurate that the brief from the Council on the necessary wording for any proposed Charter of Rights seemed to have gone missing. The PMO and the minister’s office were extremely upset that Doris and the Council went public with a formal press release reiterating their concerns about the lack of necessary precision in the wording of the draft Charter. They felt that this public embarrassment could have been avoided.

Doris said, “I don’t suppose it helped when I reminded them rather sharply that our mandate was to help the women of Canada, not toady to the Liberal Party” (236).

It became clear that Doris had taken seriously her role as Chair of an arms-length Advisory Council whose very job it was to question legislation on behalf of the women of Canada.

The battle of wills over a national conference or the Minister’s preference for regional conferences is now legendary.

Doris found the support of the Liberal members of the Council for the Minister’s preference appalling. She saw it as a life and death matter on the credibility of the Council.

I tried to keep the discussion on the issue: the au-

tonomy of the CACSW and the harm that would come to it if another conference were cancelled. Most of the Conservative appointees supported me, of course. A few Liberals argued that they were going to vote against the conference because of “the process within the Council.” Others gave speeches on how proud they were to be Liberals.... After almost five hours of discussion, we took the vote, It was seventeen to ten in favour of cancelling, and split almost entirely along partisan lines. I had lost.... What absolutely astonished me, though, was that some of the women, who had just behaved like political ciphers, had the effrontery to try and shake my hand, telling me that they admired me and hoped we could still be friends! (242)

Later at the Ad Hoc meeting, once again Doris was appalled at the role that partisan politics could play when the issue was supposed to be the rights of women and the public good.

Saturday morning started with an inspired speech by Pauline Jewett to a standing-room-only crowd. It soon became clear that even an Ad-Hoc Conference of women could be politicized. Conservative women were there in force, hoping to fan the anger into such a blaze that the whole Charter would be rejected outright.... Towards the end of the afternoon, Maureen McTeer, a Conservative lawyer and the wife of Joe Clark, berated the audience for condemning the Charter out of hand. Pauline Jewett countered.... McTeer lost her temper—and the vote. (244)

Doris had won the war, but the very public battles had left her severely bruised. People worried that she had put at risk the sterling reputation she had built up over twenty years. She described herself as a “pariah” (247) in the business community, no job offers, no offers to sit on boards. “Now I had been forced to cross that invisible line between being a respected, and even powerful, woman of the establishment and being perceived as a true rebel” (248).

Rebels are perceived as dangerous, particularly in politics. Where, as Doris predicted, loyalty is everything. Liberals questioned her judgment, called her actions unconscionable. They felt that she could have achieved her goals by being less anti-government and more constructive and positive on the issue.

Lloyd Axworthy was a rising star and her personal attacks on him bothered a great number of Liberals. For Liberal women like Ethel Teitelbaum, Doris Anderson was the most important feminist in the country and the most generous. “We loved her and admired her. We had huge respect for her generosity, kindness, and intelligence. But she was maddening. She continued to criticize forever. She never stopped.”

They feel to this day that Doris’s perception of lack of sufficient support by the Liberal Party for her candidacy was “quite inaccurate.” At a “Wednesday Women” dinner this spring, the smoldering partisan inferno exploded—Dorothy Davey and Ethel Teitelman needed to set the record straight. Doris had been a regular at “Wednesday Women,” the monthly gathering of feminist women from all political stripes. The Liberal women were tired of the “same old” story. Ethel believes “Politics kicked her in the ass; she didn’t understand that compromise is sometimes required in order to achieve success.”

There is a huge difference between activists and advocates. Activists are invaluable; they stay outside and insist on a well-articulated and uncompromising vision and goal. Advocates have to step inside a little and accept the realities of “baby steps in the right direction.” Three steps forward, one step backwards is frustrating to activists. Doris knew that she was inherently an activist and from now on she would make a difference outside the world of Liberal partisan politics. She was frankly unimpressed with any of the party machines.

Yoda

Master Jedi Yoda is portrayed as the wisest and most powerful Jedi in the galaxy.

—Wikipedia

Like Yoda, in the Canadian feminist galaxy, Doris Anderson was the wisest and most powerful. Because she had run as a Liberal candidate, she was sought out by prospective Liberal candidates, the Liberal Women’s Commission, the Judy LaMarsh Fund, the Liberal Women’s Caucus and whenever and wherever women Liberal party members gathered to have Doris show them the “force.” She was our “Yoda.”

Inspiring, coaching, prodding, cajoling and most importantly, her signature act of what Irwin Cotler calls the “mobilization of shame.” She wanted Liberals to be better.

Those of us who had not been there for her ill-fated campaign in Eglinton Riding and her subsequent term as Chair of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women were for a long time oblivious to the antipathy between Doris and the Liberal Party establishment.

Doris spent a lifetime searching for and supporting women in politics. But like so many careers, recruitment is one thing. She understood better than anyone that retention is equally important.

My personal story is, I’m sure, typical of so many other women pursuing elected office. Doris gave unequivocal support to me running as a Liberal, yet she also provided the essential immunization of the realities of party politics and her bruising experience with it. She understood the insecurities of public life, the competitiveness of the people who are supposedly on your team, the fact that women

were sometimes pretty hard on one another.

She canvassed with me, she donated to my campaigns, she offered her version of media training and communication strategy. She suggested that I should finish my sentences. After a speech I gave at Harbourfront, she took me aside and suggested that I should pause and let people laugh when I say something funny, instead of having them miss the next thing I said.

On the provincial Election Day June 9, 1995, I learned that losing an election is really hard. Doris knew exactly what it felt like. Doris's empathy at that difficult time bonded us forever. She was there for me when those who have never run, never had their name on a sign, or their name on a ballot said things that were very hurtful. She was there for me that summer when I felt so let down by so many friends who simply could not understand. As wonderful as it is to make new friends and have your heart warmed by the small group of your friends that come to help, the "where are they?" of friends that don't care about or understand politics or casually or genetically place their support elsewhere leaves wounds. The engaged partisans of other stripes were much easier to understand.

Doris was able to normalize those feelings for many women who were worried that those feelings were a sign of weakness. She was able to replace the titanium in our spines. She was like the trainer that knew her job was to send you back into the ring for the next round. She was indeed the feminist Yoda: she could help you find the force within, and deliver an infusion of courage. With Doris in your corner, anything was possible.

After my election in 1997, "Lunch with Doris" became essential to my mental health. My office soon figured out how therapeutic it was. Parliament is sometimes a little "grumpifying," especially for women. The culture is foreign—like a male locker room—competitive, winners and losers "gotcha" politics. I soon realized that whenever I got particularly grumpy, a lunch date with Doris would miraculously appear on my schedule. A strategy that clearly got passed on from executive assistant to executive assistant.

Mentoring is never a good enough description of the real coaching great women give to other women. It is never just about career. From work-life balance, to parenting, to whether volunteer activity is truly making a difference, women "mentors" are really just great friends, spanning all generations. With women there is always this amazing respect for the learning that goes in both directions. Doris always made me feel that she was learning from me. I know that I am always learning more from the young women that consider me their mentors, more perhaps than they could ever learn from me.

I remember that after I had been asked to be on the Advisory Committee for Fair Vote Canada, three different times Doris asked if it would be a CLM (Career Limiting Move!). She knew only too well the difficulty that the larger political parties have in advocating for Proportional



Doris Anderson and Carolyn Bennett, December 2001.

Representation because of the seduction of what Doris called the "big win." Doris was watching out for my back. She wanted to make sure I was still "working from within." She knew there was a huge price to pay for being a "rebel" in political parties.

In 2002, after the cabinet shuffle, the Liberal Women's caucus was reeling with disappointment. Of the seven new Secretaries of State, all were men. I was in trouble with the Prime Minister for having spoken out on behalf of the women's caucus. We invited Doris down to Ottawa for our winter caucus. Monique Begin came too. Together, they inspired the whole caucus. Doris, of course, gave a small pitch for proportional representation. Sheila Copps gave a vociferous rebuttal. The media scrum afterwards set the stage for the Prime Minister's real upset. We had suggested, in spite of the fabulous record of the PM, from the number of women senators he had appointed, to the Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin and to the appointment of Adrienne Clarkson as Governor General, that the appointment of the seven male Secretaries of State was

an “unfortunate optic” for the women of Canada. The media only covered the “unfortunate” part, they left out the praise. The next day the Prime Minister exploded at me in caucus and there was a media feeding frenzy as the news of the exchange leaked. Doris was amazing during this time. She advised that I keep my head down for the week and then do one interview with a trusted journalist to set the record straight. It was good advice. As always Doris was there during the tough times, night or day.

Unlike Yoda, Doris was out and about! She supported us all by being at all the events that counted. From guest speaker at Town Hall meetings on electoral reform, to the annual keynote luncheon speech at our Women in Politics Day for the young women in St. Paul’s that take politics in Grade 12, I had to ask only once and she’d be there.

Every year during International Women’s week, I loved watching the faces of the young women as this icon with the gravelly voice spoke to them about Proportional Representation in order to achieve more “women in politics.”

We always have one of the young women introduce each of the speakers. Each year as the student would struggle through Doris’s biography, there would be an almost audible understanding of how hard she had fought for the changes that they had always taken for granted. During the question and answer period, the girls would probe diligently the progress that had been made, and the challenges still to be faced. Often there was a tough discussion on the “f” word—feminist—as so many of the girls had trouble with the label.

Every year I told the girls that they would remember this day. They might be inspired to run for public office, or find a way to participate in advocacy for women and electoral reform, but for sure, they would be able to tell their daughters and granddaughters that they had heard THE Doris Anderson speak in person.

At the Liberal leadership convention in December 2003, aka the Paul Martin Coronation, Doris came to a lunch with other Liberal icons, Monique Begin, Judy Erola, and Lyn McLeod, at the restaurant in the Intercontinental Hotel on Front Street.

Our discussion focused quickly on concerns about the nomination process. Everyone at the table had lived the “managed democracy” of nominations at the expense of women candidates. They rejected the idea that the “back room” could arbitrarily decide that “she can’t win,” and then orchestrate a “managed” undemocratic process that would ensure their so-called “winning” (in no way evidence-based) candidate would win. There was an overwhelming consensus that the nomination process must be about citizenship. The process had to be fair and transparent and accountable. Everyone agreed that for so many women, the nomination process was their first exposure to partisan process—totally off-putting—nametags worn upside down (telling the “instant Liberals” who they will be voting for), buses arriving with passengers not sure of their destination, some thinking that it was a general election and

that they would be voting for the “Liberal.” There was a consensus that nomination meetings should be educational and about real choices, perhaps a single meeting with the ballot issues only after the speeches or, if not possible, at least regional town halls with all of the candidates. There should be explicit instructions that regardless of which team has sold the membership, one should listen to the speeches and then vote for the best candidate.

It was felt that the Liberal Party should work on a real definition of an “active Liberal” so that riding associations would no longer be at risk of being taken over by a special interest like the anti-choice problems encountered by Jean Augustine and Georgette Sheridan. Doris wanted to eliminate the cash—the real culprit in candidates “buying” memberships, in spite of it being strictly against the rules and explicit on the forms. In fact, there is a place on the form where the new member must sign stating that they had paid for their membership themselves—even if they hadn’t. Women were still losing nomination fights as hundreds of membership forms were submitted by the opponents with paperclips attaching crisp bills with serial numbers in sequence. Women hate these tricks. Women have never been as comfortable signing up cemeteries. Although Doris did remind us of Nancy Jackman’s first loss at a nomination meeting. Nancy’s mother, Mrs. Jackman had asked what had happened. It was explained that the opposition had paid for memberships and rented buses to bring in the “instant” members. Apparently Jackman then asked Nancy, “Why didn’t we do that?”

There was unanimity on the fact that the first exposure to the political process should be about inspiring and engaging citizens in a meaningful way. The nomination process should *not* be about using and abusing them as pawns in a game that they don’t understand. Confidence can only be built back by insisting on mandatory identification at meetings, enforcing the consequences for infractions, particularly the payment of other’s memberships. On the CBC Judy Rebick Show, Kim Campbell talked about schemas—operating principles for which there is no evidence, often exercised by men. We talked about the schema that big ugly nomination fights are “good” for the party, building a “team,” and organization is not evidence-based.

The coffers fill but the civil war can have serious negative consequences.

Often the losing candidates and their teams are so angry that they leave and can even be found working for the opposition or staying home on Election Day. Doris had inherited that divided and toxic riding in Eglinton Riding 25 years ago. We were determined to finally make it better. I was able to present the ideas at the “Women in Red” meeting on the afternoon of December 5, 2003.

To the next generation of Liberal Women, Doris, as a previous Liberal candidate was an icon. Doris, however, had no real profile and played no formal role within the party structure. Since her candidacy, she was never a mem-

ber of a riding executive, a women's commission, or the party hierarchy. She never participated in the governance of Judy LaMarsh's fund. From 1979 onwards, she worked from the outside.

Many have described the effect of her influence as making the career of many Canadian women. Ethel Teitelbaum has said that she "helped move more women forward than any other woman in Canada."

For me personally, my run at the Liberal leadership was inspired by Doris. The day I decided to withdraw from the race, I called one person, Doris. She wasn't going to let me off. She thought my candidacy was still important. I explained that arithmetically I couldn't win. I said that I couldn't justify the "ask" of another \$100,000 from my supporters to make a speech at the convention three months later. She understood. But I felt I'd let her down.

At our last lunch, as I approached my tenth anniversary as a Member of Parliament, she was very clear, I was to keep going, there is lots more work to do "from the inside." She was very pleased with the work we were doing to encourage more women candidates. She thought Stéphane Dion's target of 33 percent was important in finally changing the culture if we could just attain that critical mass. She was worried about the success of the Ontario referendum on Proportional Representation.

Doris Anderson will continue to be Yoda for us all ... but especially Liberal women. As the keeper of our "Force," her example and her wisdom will live on. I know I will continue to consult with her. The "Doris lens" will be forever applied on all the tough decisions.

Epilogue

The raucous laughter of Chatelaine editor, Doris Anderson, the Napoleon of modern feminism ... still rings in my ears. Doris comes from a Liberal family and was a Liberal candidate. Doris Anderson made feminism fun, made Liberal politics fun.

—Larry Zolf, cbc.ca, February 12, 2002

Doris concluded the final chapter of her book, *The Unfinished Revolution*, with her signature rhetorical question: "Isn't it time women stopped holding up half the sky and began making at least half the decisions right down here on earth?" (279). She had concluded during the research for the book that Electoral Reform was the only way to realize this dream. But she also understood that the real democratic deficit required other changes as well: meaningful citizen engagement, parliamentary reform so that women MPs would feel that they could truly make a difference from inside, and the every elusive party reform. Without truly democratic political parties, electoral reform would fail in the ultimate goal of getting more women elected.

Ursula Franklin has defined good governance as "fair, transparent and takes people seriously." She has said that if we don't demonstrate the principles of good governance

in our small institutions, our community boards, our riding associations, our political parties, why would anyone think that we would govern that way. Doris's difficulty with the Liberal Party machine was based on principles. She thought the "liberal" party should do better. It should walk the talk of Ursula Franklin's strict definition of good governance. She believed that the Liberal Party of Canada should be a meritocracy. It should exhibit the aspirational goals of all small "I" liberals. It should be able to ensure that qualified women would never be out-gamed by the back-room boys. Arrogance and entitlement can destroy moral authority.

In public policy, the strength of the Liberal Party of Canada has always been its ability to "s'adapter." Doris believed that Liberals must demonstrate their ability to change with the times and be ahead of the curve when it came to Canadian values. It meant that women's voices had to be heard. From childcare to effective approaches to climate change to getting on with same-sex marriage, she wanted Liberals to lead. She wanted us to earn the gender split in the vote. She was right—the "national governing party" should be about principles and a learning culture. She truly believed that they were the party of fairness and practicality.

Doris Anderson was always a liberal. She still had much to teach us about making the Liberal Party a truly democratic institution in which women would take their proper place and a party that would formally support the necessary changes to the electoral system that would allow the wishes of Canadians to be reflected in the Parliament of Canada. Doris continued to push us as Liberal women. She had been at times maddening to the party loyalists, but they also had to admit that her decision to run as a Liberal was indeed a triumph for the party and her willingness to stay a card-carrying member of the Liberal Party of Canada was a good thing. Liberals are extremely proud that Doris was always a liberal. She will forever provide a conscience for the Liberal Party machine.

Carolyn Bennett was Doris Anderson's physician from 1989 until 1997. She has been the Liberal Member of Parliament for St. Paul's riding in Toronto for 10 years. She is still trying to change partisan politics so that women can finally play their rightful role.

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THE MPS WHO CARE AND THE MPS WHO DON'T

Chatelaine, Editorial, May 1972

There's a point to be made, I suppose, that one woman MP to 261 male MPs at Ottawa is democracy at work. After all, over half the voters in the country are women and if that's the way they exercise their franchise they must be content.....

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was left in limbo for months before a cabinet minister was charged with seeing what action might be taken on its recommendations. A debate in Parliament on the abortion question has been promised for over a year and a half—but hasn't materialized. The question of day nurseries is still being shunted around between the federal, provincial and municipal governments with no real attempt to solve it.

To find out how our MPs at Ottawa represent women, we sent a questionnaire by registered letter to every one of them, asking them to state their positions on issues of day care, pensions for housewives, discrimination against women, the Status of Women report, etc. The questionnaire would take, at the most, ten minutes to answer. Eighty-seven replied promptly. Nineteen wrote to say they got the questionnaire but didn't feel they should reply. Two replied anonymously. We've published the results in this issue.

One who didn't have the courage to sign his real name obviously thought the whole thing a fine joke. Signing himself "Joe Blow" from "Scratch-Ass-Tickle," he thought we needed officers in Manpower centres to "counsel women on sex"; that there are already too many women in the Senate; and that we don't need more day care centres but "bigger and better whorehouses." If working mothers need more cash, says this wit, they should earn it in the whorehouses, etc.

It's hard to imagine that an elected MP being paid \$26,000 a year (with a life-time pension after serving six years) thinks he can afford to be so flip with half the electorate—or even that anyone in his office—or in any government office believes he can exhibit, even anonymously, such a degrading and vindictive attitude to women.

We feel the questions we asked were of vital importance to all of society—not just women. We don't feel these questions should be shoved under a pile of bumph in an in-basket, as well over half our MPs obviously did. That kind of thing has been going on much too long at Ottawa. We don't happen to think women and their problems are either funny or inconsequential.

We don't for example, think the fact that thousands of Canadian children who need day nursery care, but go without, is funny. We don't think an abortion law that may work for a wealthy woman who knows a sympathetic doctor and a hospital that will perform abortions—but won't work for a poor woman—is funny. We don't think over 30,000 unwanted babies a year in Canada is funny. We don't think the fact that women struggle alone to raise children in poverty and real need is funny. We don't think invisible barriers that keep women out of certain jobs and positions are funny. We don't think a double standard on wages and titles for men and women is funny.

If you agree with us, take a long look at the man—or woman—you are going to vote for at the next election and find out whether he or she considers the questions above worth attention or not—and vote accordingly.

Doris Anderson, Editor