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INTRODUCTION

This fonds documents attempts by various members of leftist groups in the Maritimes (such as the Communist Workers Party, In Struggle!, independent democratic socialists, Marxist-Leninists, and disaffected NDP members) to form a coalition, with the hope of developing into a political party. The slogan of the Atlantic Socialist Conference (ASC) was "Many voices - a common cause / Bien des voix - une seule cause." The idea was to unite people working for various leftist causes, exchange news about their activities and through their solidarity form a political alternative to the major parties, regionally at first and eventually nationally. A letter was sent out 8 January 1982 to solicit interest in "an Atlantic Conference on organizing a Socialist Movement."

The first Atlantic Socialist Conference was held at the Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University in Halifax 24-25 April 1982 and was attended by some 130 people from all the Atlantic provinces. The conference featured various workshops and plenary sessions. The purpose of the group was to produce and distribute a newsletter covering regional activities serving as a forum of debate on strategies and analyses, to organize a second conference, and to organize forums for debate on key issues in the Maritimes

A steering committee was established to carry out these three tasks and members were elected on the basis of equal numbers of men and women and representation from each province. The committee met about seven times over the next year, five forums on specific issues were organized in conjunction with Red Herring Co-operative Books in Halifax, three newsletters were produced (with a French version of the first issue), and a member of the group participated in a roundtable discussion on socialism at the Political Science Department of Ottawa University. However, things fell apart at the meeting of 26 February 1983, which was held to plan the agenda of the second annual conference of the ACS. After five hours of discussion, the group could not agree on a focus for the conference and decided to disband.

The failure of the ASC reflects the problems which beset the Left nationally in the early 1980s. As members of the group admitted, their membership was limited to white middle-class intellectuals, with no interest from the people they were meant to represent, ie: working class, immigrants, native peoples, unemployed, welfare recipients, etc. Those from a feminist background resented the inherent patriarchal structure of traditional socialism. There was ongoing internal dissension over what the ASC should do. Some were concerned about solving the philosophical crises socialism was undergoing; others were fed up with such agonizing and felt the ASC should be involved in action on real issues, ie: the environment, mine closures, welfare cut-backs, etc. In the end there was no compromise on the conflicting opinions.

The fonds is arranged in three blocks reflecting the career and interests of the donor:

- Halifax Coalition for Full Employment, 1979-1982
- Atlantic Socialist Conference, 1982-1983
- Post-ASC activities, 1983-1986

The finding aid consists of a file list.

ATLANTIC SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

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Vol.	File/Dossier	Subject/Sujet	Date
1	1	Halifax Coalition for Full Employment - lecture notes, articles	1979-1980
	2	Halifax Coalition for Full Employment - minutes, notes on slogans, newsletter	1979-1980
	3	Halifax Coalition for Full Employment - publications, posters	1980-1982
	4	Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - agenda,	Apr. 1982
	5	Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - organization,	1982
	6	Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - International Solidarity Workshop - notes	24,25 Apr. 1982
	7	Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - Trade Union Workshop - report	24,25 Apr. 1982
	8	Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - Final Plenary Session	25 Apr. 1982

Vol.	File/Dossier	Subject/Sujet	Date
9		Atlantic Socialist Conference - 1st meeting - resolutions and tasks	15 Apr. 1982
10		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Steering Committee - formation	Apr. 1982
11		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Steering Committee Meetings - minutes	June 1982- Feb. 1983
12		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Learned Societies 1982 Roundtable CPSA Political Economy Section and Committee on Socialist Studies, Ottawa U correspondence, speech, notes	June 1982 May-June 1982
13		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum planning	May-June 1982
14		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum posters	1982
15		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum #1 - Report on the CLC - notes	24 June 1982
16		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum #2 - Nuclear War Inevitable? and Forum #3 - Housing - notes	15 July & 15 Aug. 1982
17		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum #4 - Unemployment - notes	26 Aug. 1982
18		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forum #5 - Whither the NDP? - notes	7 Oct. 1982
19		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Forums - Summary	1982
20		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Final Meeting of Steering Committee and dissolution	Feb.-Oct. 1983
21		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Membership list	1982-1983

Vol.	File/Dossier	Subject/Sujet	Date
22		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Logo and T-Shirts	1982
23		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Financial records	1982-1983
24		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Newsletter	1982-1983
25		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Newsletter - correspondence	1982-1983
26		Atlantic Socialist Conference - Newsletter - subscriptions	1982-1983
27		Non-ASC publications	1982-1983
28		Cloth banner of the Atlantic Socialist Conference, 1982 transferred to VSA	1982
29		Photographs and negatives of the 1st Atlantic Socialist Conference, 24-25 April 1982 - transferred to VSA	24-25 Apr.
30		Halifax Committee Against Imperial War	1983
31		1985 Peace Movement - notes, pamphlets	1985
32		Senator Jacques Hébert - Fast for Katimavik - correspondence	1986