

THOUGHTS ON GREEN PARTY EXCLUSION FROM CBC TV DEBATE!

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When the leader of the Liberal Party called the C.B.C. decision to give full status to the Liberal point of view in the television debate a "victory for democracy", I thought of Bernard Crick, a British writer who thought "democracy" was the most promiscuous word in politics. "She is everybody's mistress and yet somehow retains her magic even when her lover sees that her favours are being, in his light, shared by another". When the Liberals were excluded, they felt scorned. Suddenly all is well in the land. However, this victory is a Liberal victory. Democracy would be served by yet broader representation.

When Angus Reid discovered a major shift in the thinking of the electorate two years ago, his long experience suggested to him that this change was historic. All across the industrialized world, he said, for the first time, roughly 15% of the electorate said they "would definitely support" a political party that "made preservation of the environment its primary objective", and 50% of the electorate "would consider" supporting such a party. These figures emerged in B.C. as well.

The Green Party is the only political formation in the world whose "primary objective" is preservation of the environment. Greens will not be represented in the leaders debate, and for that matter, will not even be represented in the televised debate focussing on the environment. This is a bitter pill for Greens, and it can only lead to further damage to the credibility of public media in a democracy.

The Green movement must shoulder the blame for the ridicule, hostility, repression, and misunderstanding that the Green Party faces. Our most vital spiritual leaders scorn political life and question whether political leadership is possible at all. Our best speakers refuse to be associated with a political formation in its infancy saying, they "need something more substantial".

Many of our most capable activists deal with political formations hostile to fundamental ecological principles and say that the scraps from the tables of power are infinitely better than nothing. Many others refuse to support any political party as if this made their political activity more pure. So much of the greatest Green intellectual talent is standing aside, because they believe real change cannot occur until the average person walks outside and witnesses the trees and the grass dying under a suddenly malignant sun, that the analysis may fulfill itself. In common with the experience of other political organizations finding themselves in the political wilderness, the Green Party tends towards unresolved factional dispute as energy turns inward rather than outward.

A Green voice cannot be heard unless the movement finds unity, allows its talent to assert itself and demands to be heard. The Party has so far found it impossible to make its case to be included in the debate as effectively as Gordon Wilson's Liberals have done.

Still, the C.B.C.'s judgement can be questioned. The question before C.B.C. management in choosing who they will allow into what could turn out to be the crucial event of the campaign is not whether the political parties involved have a chance of forming the next government, but rather: do the political parties chosen represent all substantial points of view? They do not.