

Canadian Greens & their Twisted Democracy

[June 5, 2012 at 12:13 pm \(http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/06/05/canadian-greens-their-twisted-democracy/\)](http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/06/05/canadian-greens-their-twisted-democracy/)

Green activists accuse the government of waging a “war on nature and democracy.” But there’s nothing democratic about claiming to speak for future generations.



[\(http://elizabethmay.ca/\)](http://elizabethmay.ca/)

Elizabeth May’s website @ 8am June 5th, 2012

Yesterday was a day of protest here in Canada. Hundreds of mostly green, mostly left-leaning groups darkened their websites to draw attention to [what they view \(http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/blog/john-bennett/blackoutspcakout\)](http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/blog/john-bennett/blackoutspcakout) as our federal government’s “war on nature and democracy.”

The event attracted ample media coverage, but it’s far from clear how many ordinary Canadians even noticed. In May 2011, this country elected a majority Conservative government. On that occasion we also elected our very first Member of Parliament from the Green Party. Her name is [Elizabeth May \(http://elizabethmay.ca/\)](http://elizabethmay.ca/). She’s the party’s leader and it was her third attempt (in riding number three) to gain a seat.

Some people believe that the only reason she was finally successful is because she ran in one of the most left-leaning corners of the country and spent the lion’s share of the marketing budget on her own electoral race, thereby leaving the other Green Party candidates underfunded.

Overall, her party received 3.9% of the vote – [down from 6.8% \(http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/results.html\)](http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/results.html) in the 2008 election. That’s an eye-watering plunge of 43%.

By no stretch of the imagination, therefore, can the Green Party claim to speak for Canadians. When we last got close to a ballot box we sent the Green Party packing in 307 out of 308 ridings.

But judging by the overblown rhetoric associated with yesterday's protest, the greens should rightfully be running the country – voters be damned. **According (<http://www.sierraclub.ca/en/blog/john-bennett/blackoutspeakout>)** to John Bennett, the executive director of the Sierra Club Canada, Canadian greens have launched a campaign to:

force the government to restore the environmental protection and democratic participation...

Force. That's an ugly word. Anyone who thinks it belongs in the same sentence as *democratic participation* bears close watching.

Bennett also declares:

This is it – the war has begun. The future of the Canadian environment is truly at stake. We need to take a stand now – future generations are depending on us...It's now or never. [backup [link \(<http://www.webcitation.org/68C67WlqA>\)](http://www.webcitation.org/68C67WlqA)]

Truth, as they say, is the first casualty in a war. The Sierra Club believes it's engaged in a war. Ergo nothing that organization says can be trusted.

It turns out that Bennett is fond of war rhetoric. In April he penned a blog post in which he discussed an e-mail he wrote to supporters last December:

Much like watching troop movements across the frontier, I could see an impending invasion. The email, in fact, documented the beginnings of an all-out assault on environmental protection in Canada – and the protectors...After several months of front-line scimmages and saber-rattling, and then the now-infamous “radicals” **rant (<http://sierraclub.ca/blog/john-bennett/now-im-radical>)** by Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver, the troops came storming across the border last Thursday. The war was officially declared with the **federal budget (<http://bit.ly/sierra-slams-budget>)**...War analogies may be going too far, but I am at a loss to put the budget into a different context. [links in the original; backed-up [here \(<http://www.webcitation.org/68C7J9VAO>\)](http://www.webcitation.org/68C7J9VAO)]

Greens really are the worst sort of drama queens. If red-tape-cutting measures in the federal budget amount to an all-out assault, how would Bennett describe a decision to, say, shut down the federal environment ministry altogether?

As Ben Pile, who blogs over at Climate-Resistance.org points out repeatedly, greens have **no sense of proportion (<http://www.climate-resistance.org/2012/06/reinventing-precaution.html>)**. Everything is a crisis. Any government policy they happen to disagree with is the beginning of the end. Any attempt to enforce existing rules about charities and political activity is interpreted by them as an attack on “our freedom to speak, our freedom to assemble and our freedom to participate” to quote from the same Bennett blog post.

That post is illustrated with a confusing, un-captioned image which, I've discovered, has the following file name: **big-brother.jpg (<http://www.sierraclub.ca/sites/sierraclub.ca/files/images/big-brother.jpg>)**. Groan.

It's also illustrated with a quote from Henrik Tikkanenen, a Finnish writer who died in 1984. **Wikipedia says (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henrik_Tikkanen)** he was “known primarily for **anti-war (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-war>)** literature.” So, yes, a blog post that employs war rhetoric is citing an anti-war writer as an authority.

Here's what that Tikkanenen quote says:

Because we don't think about future generations they will never forget us.

If one is looking for people behaving anti-democratically, this is surely a prime example. Having been unable to secure more than 1 out of 308 seats, greens are trying to move the goal posts. Forget the pesky voters who've already told them to take a hike. Green views must prevail because greens speak for future generations.

This argument represents nothing less than an end-run around existing democratic institutions. Earlier this year, Brendan O'Neill authored a superb column in the *Telegraph* titled *The incredible megalomania of the Green Party: now they want to speak on behalf of the 'unborn'* (<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/brendanoneill2/100127578/the-incredible-megalomania-of-the-green-party-now-they-want-to-speak-on-behalf-of-the-unborn/>). It began this way:

Having utterly failed to win over people in the here and now to their miserabilist agenda...Greens are now claiming to represent a constituency that doesn't even exist yet: "the unborn".

He continues a little further along:

It takes a special kind of megalomania to assume the authority to speak on behalf of people who have not yet even come into existence. You cannot democratically represent people who don't exist. You cannot have a democracy without a demos – actual living, breathing, thinking people who tell you what they think and what they want.

...[Greens are] turning "future generations" into mouthpieces for their own political outlooks. We could all play that game. I predict future generations will want to live in a world of plenty and luxury...where Ferraris will be as commonplace as flies are today. [backed-up [here](#) (<http://www.webcitation.org/68CEs1pqq>)]

Exactly. No one, but no one, has the authority to speak on behalf of future generations. It is impossible to know how the people of tomorrow would vote. On any issue.

Ordinary people have a voice in this democracy we call Canada. That voice must be respected.

Anyone who implies that the democratic choices of today's Canadians are trumped by the totally imaginary voice of future generations is attempting to drive a stake through Canadian democracy.

Fellow Canadian blogger, Hilary Ostrov, *discusses the website blackout protest here* (<http://hro001.wordpress.com/2012/06/05/tall-tales-from-the-dark-side/>)



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