

Reader discusses third parties in the US

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I read with interest the recent letter by WDK on the significance of the Green Party and its effect on politics in America. The writer appeared to be concerned with how a third party 'spoiler' might effect the existing structure of the Democratic Prty, which now is little more than a loose hodge-podge of liberally-minded professional politicians who tout 'workers' and 'families' without really supporting either. The problem is that between the two major parties, there really isn't much difference. On the one hand, you have rich people who call themselves liberal, who claim to want to help the 'working class' largely out of a sense of pity. That is, they believe the average common worker is either too dumb or too weak to fend for himself, therefore it's up to the liberals to take up the fight. On the other hand, you have rich folks who identify themselves as conservative, who only want to deal with the working class as long as it takes to pacify or exploit them. What we are left with is a system run by two major parties who end up fighting about theoretical 'workers' while, in fact, their true concerns for maintaining their own wealth and position in the power structure. Attempting to change either of these parties is an exercise in gross futility.

Essentially, the Democrats and Republicans are two sides of the same coin. Between them, they have held power and influence for so long that they have created a culture of opposition, where they more or less 'agree to disagree' while working together to shut out other parties and political beliefs. It is very telling that all attempts at campaign reform initiated by either of the two big ticket parties are aimed at perceived excesses between their parties, and fail to address the real issue of allowing third and fourth parties a fair shake on the ballot. Instead, voters are given smoke screen 'issues' such as flag burning or school prayer and vague talk of 'family values' which are trumpeted by the media, while politicians of both parties work to solidify their hold on the machinery of government. One need look no further

than the Sunday newsmagazines to realize that debates between the parties are well-choreographed word plays with predetermined topics and limits. Professional wrestling is more realistic than political debate in this country.

What is needed is to give up on talk of 'reforming' either of the major parties and to work on building strong third and fourth parties tied into the communities and working for the common good of the citizens. This, I believe, is what is articulated in the Constitution of the US, even though the founders of this country may not have envisioned such a system. It is time to take the reigns of power out of the hands of career politicians who have effectively removed themselves from the people they govern and who are ideologically distant from those who have elected them to office, and to return power to those governed. It is the people who should be telling the politicians what the issues are, not the other way around. Perhaps if such a system were to arise, we would see much more interest in the elections on the part of citizens because they would have the sense that their votes really do matter.

I fully support the efforts of the Socialist Equality Party to establish a labor party devoted to the American worker. It is time for other factions, such as the environmentalists, to break away from the major party tickets and form their own coalitions which directly represent the concerns of those whose positions they promote. Unlike those currently in power in Washington, I believe that the citizens of this country are intelligent enough to support such a movement.

Amletto

See Also:

Significance of the Green Party: an exchange of letters [8 July 1998]



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