

Challenging the Myth of Non-Partisanship and the NPA's Stability

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Friday, October 24, 2008

<http://politicsrespun.org/2008/10/challenging-the-myth-of-non-partisanship-and-the-npas-stability/>

Two nights ago during dinner, one of the candidates for the Vancouver Park Board phoned me. He is running with the Non-Partisan Association, the NPA...a group that I have written before [see "[The Lie of Non-Partisanship](#)" from July 8, 2005 at <http://PoliticsReSpun.org>]. In fact, the NPA is anything but non-partisan, being all conservative and neoliberal. And it turns out that partisanship is the theme of this article.

Now, I won't go into who from the NPA ranks phoned me the other night, mostly because I block out trauma, explaining to him that I would never in a million years vote for the NPA. He was jovial, wanting to engage with me despite our differences of opinion: a total waste of time.

He said he phoned me because my sister gave him my number and that I would consider voting for him, so he should call me. Right. I have no sister. Maybe the woman he said who came into his store and gave him a phone number wrote it down incorrectly and this hapless fellow phoned me. Or maybe the NPA candidates are cold-calling people in the phone book because that's where they're at now.

The phone book seems to me to be the best explanation. It reflects how desperate the NPA is, poised to lose all their seats on city, school and parks boards as they are, what with the COPE-Vision-Green coordinated slate. Well done Mayor Sam Sullivan, destroying the NPA brand in but one term.

But the synchronicity arrived this evening at dinner time when a pollster phoned. It was Innovative Research Group, another group I've written about before [see "[Racist Survey Questions on a Survey about Multi-Culturalism](#)" from October 15, 2007 at <http://PoliticsReSpun.org>]. A year ago I wrote about one of their omnibus online polls that asked me many things, including to rank how I felt about a variety of racial groups living in our multi-cultural Canada, on a scale of 0-10 on whether I have a favourable or unfavourable impression of each race. I included a screenshot of those poll questions in my article last year.

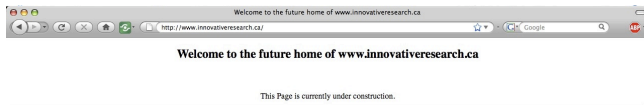
Tonight's IRG poll asked about my awareness and voting intentions in the Vancouver election. And while the poll wasn't as offensive as last year's, it did ask one question that bothered me: was I concerned about the number of Vision and COPE school board candidates who have been education union members.

The poll didn't at all ask how I felt about the number of business owners or candidates with corporate connections in any of the parties. This reflects an ongoing, ingrained mentality in our society that there is a "normal" group of people, and then there are the special interest groups, like unions. This is the same mythology that the NPA has perpetuated for decades, pretending that they are neutral, objective or somehow not beholden to any ideology or group. This is nonsense. Everyone has a bias. Pretending you don't is a lie.

And while it was far from clear that the NPA commissioned tonight's IRG poll and loaded it up with that union question, the presence of the question indicates a mindset that special interest groups are treated as marginalized.

Now with the global economic meltdown in full swing and former US Federal Reserve Bank Alan Greenspan testifying before Congress this week that deregulated, neoliberal capitalism doesn't work, I think that questioning people with corporate connections should be fair game.

An interesting twist came this evening when I swung by the website of Innovative Research Group: <http://InnovativeResearch.ca>. It turns out they've gone off the radar. Here's a screenshot of their website tonight:



When you click on the image you can see that their entire website consists of one page saying "Welcome to the future home of www.innovativeresearch.ca. This Page is currently under construction."

Maybe it's semantics, but honestly, they used to have a full website functioning at that location. Thanks to the marvels of the Way Back Machine, you can see various incarnations of their past websites at http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://innovativeresearch.ca. There could be lots of reasons why they've gone under the radar, no longer promoting the coverage of their polls or letting people easily contact them. But their lack of presence, especially because they used to have one, just looks fishy to me.