A Challenge to the Green Party on Syria

written by Stanley Heller | August 5, 2016

The uprising and fighting in Syria have gone on for over five years and your platform doesn't say a word about it. Delegates to this weekend's convention, how about adding these five sentences?

1. We stand with the Arab revolutions and uprisings for democracy that started in Tunisia and Egypt
2. Syrians have a right to reject the Assad dynasty
3. We support the democratic forces in Syria against all reactionary killers from Assad to ISIS to al-Qaeda and others
4. We demand that the great powers abide by the promises to airdrop food and supplies to Syrian areas under siege as of June 1, 2016 #DropFoodNotBombs
5. We denounce any deal by the U.S. government with Russia that makes cooperation against ISIS dependent on giving Assad, Russia and Iran a free hand to crush the Syrian uprising

This should fit in perfectly with your principles, but I admit it may be a hard sell. It conflicts with the reigning Conspiracist worldview on the Left that everything is the fault of the U.S. including Syria. On the face of it Russia and Iran (and plenty of other countries outside the NATO orbit) are grasping capitalist powers on the make, but in the Conspracist worldview they're all just poor victims of imperialism and if they appear to stomp on their own citizens or some other nation it's really a U.S. plot.

Jill Stein's pick for vice president, Ajamu Baraka, certainly sees Syria that way. He thinks Syrians voted for Assad to continue running the country after shooting down peaceful demonstrations and torturing to death thousands of prisoners. Continued opposition supposedly is the fault of the U.S., Saudis and Turkey. Look at this July 6 piece on his website http://www.ajamubaraka.com/

He even says ISIS is a creation of the West that went a little sour. Here are some of his claims in that July 6 article.

> "This was evident when the Bush administration and then the Obama administration decided to re-empower these radical jihadists as part of their strategy to put pressure on the al-Maliki government in Iraq and effect governmental change in Syria. In short, they encouraged a jihadist invasion and then framed it as a 'civil war.'
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> "…the Administration didn't appear to be too concerned when ISIS broke off from al-Qaeda and began to establish its own independent economic base once it captured the oil fields in Syria. It all seemed like part of the plan, especially when it became clear that NATO member Turkey was being used to get the Syrian oil to world markets.
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> "…But this Frankensteinian strategy turned farce into disaster when ISIS double-crossed their benefactors by breaking the rules and attacking the 'good Kurds' in Iraq. The strategy appeared to be more concerned with holding territory in Iraq and Syria than carrying out their assignment to overthrow the Assad government and completing the

> dismemberment of the Syrian state – the strategic objective of U.S. and Israeli policy to counter the regional power of the Iranians."

So according to him the U.S. fostered ISIS to pressure Iraqi government leaders. They then lost billions in money and weapons and half the Iraqi army in the process, but that was OK because ISIS' job was then supposedly to get rid of Assad. This is nonsense.

Jill Stein's position is only somewhat better. In Moscow (of all places) she said "US pursuit of regime change in Libya, Iraq, and Syria created the chaos that promotes power grabs by extremist militias." So there was no popular uprising. It was all a U.S. plot against Assad.

I heard her speak in CT in February and she said more or less the same thing, lumping Syria in with Iraq and Afghanistan as being just another U.S.-inspired disaster, no mention of Assad's torture-to-death prisons, no anger over the 1,400 killed by sarin gas, no outrage about what the Russian and Iranians were doing, no demands that the sieges end. Instead she issued a call for diplomacy to settle things. I've heard that song many times from the U.S. leaders talking about Palestine. It goes, "Continue with the peace process and ignore the horrendous human rights abuses. All will be well."

Her analysis is not only wrong, but naïve. The enemy of our enemy is not automatically our friend. Instead we have to realize we're walking in a minefield with mines and pits and enemies all over the place and we have to figure out how to navigate it and how not to lose our souls in the process.

Green Party convention delegates, you all determine party policy. How about standing up for an Arab people undergoing horrific violence? How about voting in a section on Syria on the Green platform like the five points I propose above?

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