

## The “Spoiler” Myth

The so-called “spoiler” argument claims that Ralph Nader and Greens are spoilers because their supporters would vote for Democrats if the Green Party did not exist. The most-used illustration is the 2000 election.

The Democratic Party created this myth and has perpetuated it, but Democratic Party insiders in 2001 quietly admitted that Nader was not to blame for Gore’s loss in 2000. <sup>(1)</sup> Al Gore also has not blamed Greens or Nader.

Repeating a lie often enough does not make it true. None of the facts support this myth, but for the sake of argument, let’s suspend the facts and assume for a moment that Nader and Greens “spoil” for Democrats.

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*Democratic Party insiders long ago admitted that Nader was not to blame.*

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## Hidden Assumptions

The “spoiler” argument rests on several hidden assumptions, among them that

1. what belongs to the Greens actually belongs to the Democrats;
2. Greens have no right to exist independently of the Democrats;
3. our electoral system is not the problem, the problem is those pesky “spoilers”; and
4. the Democratic Party adequately represents the Green Party.

These assumptions are not only wrong—they’re also undemocratic, arrogant, and offensive. To understand why, read on.

## 1: What’s Ours Is Ours, Not Yours

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*We cannot negotiate with those who say ‘What’s mine is mine and what’s yours is negotiable.’* President John F. Kennedy, 1961

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The mistaken notion that Green votes somehow *belong* to Democrats is central to the “spoiler” myth. It’s worse than saying “what’s yours is negotiable; it’s saying “what’s yours is mine.”

Most registered Independents voted for Bush in 2000, as did many more registered Democrats, far more than all Greens combined. <sup>(2)</sup> Bush—not Nader—was the biggest “spoiler” of all.

So ... why aren’t these Democrats attacking Independents and working to deny party status to Republicans to ensure a one-party state? Do Republicans have a right to exist that Greens do not?

## 2: Greens Have A Right To Exist

The Green Party has a right to exist. Political competition is healthy, indeed, essential to democracy. Democracy requires third parties and opposition to the status quo.

If you think that only “major” parties have such a right, then Democrats and Republicans also have no right to exist. They are not true “major” parties, having only about 17% and 14%, respectively, of voters who strongly identify with them. <sup>(3)</sup> This truth leads to our next point ...

## 3: Our Electoral System Is The Problem.

- Only 1/3 of the electorate strongly identifies with the Democratic and Republican parties, so who speaks for the other 2/3?<sup>(4)</sup>
- Holding voters hostage to “lesser-evil” voting “choices” is abusive.
- Lesser-evil voting has been a long-term “strategy” since at least 1980 in modern times. It has been used historically for *more than a century* and offers no hope of ending. It doesn’t work.
- Both the Democratic and Republican parties favor pro-elite, corporate economics and the war industry, which is the right of center by any standard academic measure.
- Other democracies don’t lock out third parties; they include the real center and the left. Limiting every issue to two parties is only marginally better than one-party rule and prone to nearly as many abuses.
- Our first-past-the-post system makes it easy for special interests to buy special influence.

## 4: Only the Green Party Can Adequately Represent the Greens

Many Democrats falsely assume that Greens agree with the Democratic Party platform, but we do not. (See the Green’s platform at <http://www.gp.org/platform.shtml>.)

*The Green Party is no longer the alternative—it’s the imperative!*

--Green Party  
Vice Presidential candidate  
Rosa Clemente, 2008



## The Real Questions

### 1. Why Did Party Leaders Scapegoat Ralph Nader?

With so many factors determining elections, not just the 2000 one, why do Democratic Party leaders single out the Greens? Are they employing divide and conquer strategies among progressives?

### 2. Why Aren't Democratic Leaders Solving the Current System's "Spoiler" Effect?

If they believe the spoiler myth and if it's the big problem many publicly say it is, why aren't Democratic Party leaders putting the issue at the top of their platform and making its solution a priority? Simple solutions, like Instant Runoff Voting, are readily available.

## The Green Party...

- is America's fastest-growing political party;
- has over 200 elected officials nationwide;
- refuses contributions from corporations;
- is America's permanent, independent party for the 21st century.

## To Learn More



### On why we need more than 2 parties:

- \* *The Democrats: A Critical History*, by Lance Selfa. Haymarket Books: Chicago. 2008.
- \* *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: The New Liberal Menace in America*, by Stephen Marshall. Disinformation Company, Ltd.: NY. 2007.

### On the so-called "spoiler" issue:

- \* [www.gp.org/organize/spoiled.html](http://www.gp.org/organize/spoiled.html)
- \* [cagreens.org/alameda/city/0803myth/myth.html](http://cagreens.org/alameda/city/0803myth/myth.html)

### On how Greens view the differences:

- \* [www.gp.org/real-difference/](http://www.gp.org/real-difference/)

### On the Green Party platform:

- \* [www.gp.org/platform.shtml](http://www.gp.org/platform.shtml)

## Contact the Green Party

Takoma Park - Silver Spring  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TPGreens/>  
E-mail: [greentyrtle@gmail.com](mailto:greentyrtle@gmail.com) (301) 891-1288

Montgomery County Greens  
<http://www.mdgreens.org/montgomery/community/>

**For a list of locals in all other Maryland counties:**  
<http://www.marylandgreenparty.org/p/local-contacts.html>  
e-mail query to Rob Savidge / [savdog6@gmail.com](mailto:savdog6@gmail.com)

**For a list of local chapters in Virginia:**  
<http://www.vagreenparty.org/contacts.html#locals>

**For D.C. Statehood Greens:**  
<http://www.dcstatehoodgreen.org/>  
or call (202) 483-4165

**For other states**, see <http://www.gp.org>



## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Al From, chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, wrote in Blueprint Magazine (1/24/01) that, according to their own exit polls, Bush would have beaten Gore by one percentage point if Nader hadn't run in 2000. Was at [http://www.ndol.org/ndol\\_ci.cfm?kaid=86&subid=84&contentid=2919](http://www.ndol.org/ndol_ci.cfm?kaid=86&subid=84&contentid=2919); no longer online.*

<sup>2</sup> *As reported in the San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 9, 2000, and elsewhere, 12% of Florida Democrats (over 200,000) voted for Bush. Gore would easily have won Florida if 1% of these Democrats had voted for him. Also, half of all registered Democrats did not bother going to the polls to vote. The 7 other third party candidates on the Florida ballot received more than enough votes to have also "spoiled."*

<sup>3</sup> *See American National Election Studies, [www.electionstudies.org/nesguide/toptable/tab2a\\_1.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/nesguide/toptable/tab2a_1.htm).*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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*This brochure authorized and paid for by the  
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Think  
Greens   
Are  
"Spoilers"?



Think  
Again!