

United States Presidential Election: Democrats Move to Suppress Green Party Vote

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Voter suppression has become a real issue in recent years. The major discussion has been centered on Democrats correctly accusing the Republicans of disenfranchising people of color and working class people.

But now the Democrats are actively seeking to keep the Green Party presidential and vice presidential candidates, socialists Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker, off the ballot in a number of states.

They have been backed in this effort by the liberal media. A case in point was a September 23 front page article in the New York Times titled “The Green Party’s Biggest Fan? It’s Often the Republican Party”.

“In Wisconsin,” the article says, “a GOP elections commissioner and lawyers with ties to the Republican party tried to aid attempts by Howie Hawkins, the current Green Party presidential candidate, to get on the ballot there, which were ultimately unsuccessful.”

First of all, the Green Party was on the ballot in Wisconsin in 2016. The Democrats this year knocked the party off the ballot.

This is what happened. The GP submitted more than enough petitions to get on the ballot this year. During the petitioning period, Angela Walker changed her address. The GP notified the Wisconsin Elections Commission of her change of address.

The Commission notified the campaign to include a notarized statement of Walker’s candidacy with her new address when the petitions were submitted. This was done.

After the petitions were submitted a Democratic Party spokesperson filed a challenge, claiming that the change of address invalidated some of the petitions.

The hearing on the challenge before the Elections Commission had all the trappings of a kangaroo court. The Democratic challenger huddled with the Democratic chair of the Commission to successfully plot to greatly restrict the testimony of the Green Party attorneys.

The Commission upheld the challenge, and the petitions in question were invalidated, so the signatures on those petitions were also invalidated – conveniently enough to keep the socialists off the ballot.

The Greens filed suit in the Wisconsin Supreme Court where the Democrats hold a slim majority. The Greens lost, 4-3.

Democrats openly celebrated. “Progressives” joined in.

The hypocrisy of the Democrats is obvious. The national Green Party said in a statement, "By kicking Howie and Angela off the ballot in Wisconsin and then celebrating this naked act of self-serving disenfranchisement, the Democrats have made plain their intention to 'save Democracy from Trump' by killing it themselves first and then dancing on the grave."

The Times article said nothing about the Democrats, falsifying by omission what really happened.

The Green Party has nothing to do with Republican electoral shenanigans.

"In Montana," the Times wrote, "State regulators found the GOP violated campaign finance laws as part of an effort to aid the Greens in five down-ballot races, including for senator and governor."

This is what really happened. The Montana Supreme Court removed the Greens from the ballot five months after the Secretary of State determined that the Greens had qualified.

The Democrats somehow got copies of the the Greens' petitions. They then went to people who signed to put the Greens on the ballot and demanded they repudiate their signatures. On this pretext the Democrats sued to reverse the Secretary of State's decision.

The Greens were not a party to the suit - it was between the Democrats and the Secretary of State. Consequently, the Greens had no opportunity to defend themselves before the court that ruled on the suit, and the court upheld the Democrats' challenge.

The Secretary of State appealed to the Montana Supreme Court, which upheld the lower court in a 5-2 vote.

In Pennsylvania the Democrats went to the state's Supreme Court to remove the Hawkins/Walker ticket from the ballot. They were victorious on the flimsy technicality that the Greens did not submit signed filing papers in person but mailed them.

In Texas, the Democrats sued to remove Green Party congressional and state office candidates for not paying filing fees, in spite of a state court having ruled the fees unconstitutional. The candidates were knocked off the ballot.

In New York, Hawkins has run for various offices. In 2014 he ran for governor, and received five percent of the vote. That is very high for any candidate running to the left of the Democrats.

The Green Party is automatically on the New York ballot because it has maintained enough votes to comply with a state rule that kept the party on the ballot.

Earlier this year, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill greatly increasing the number of votes needed for third parties to retain ballot status. While not affecting the ballot this year, it is likely that the Green Party will lose ballot status for the future. The bill also raised the number of signatures needed for third parties to win a place on the ballot in the future.

The Times article also once again raised the time-honored arguments by the Democrats against earlier socialist parties and now the Greens being on the ballot. These arguments boil down to the charge that the votes for these parties are actually votes for the Republicans, because these votes - they claim - rightfully belong to the Democrats.

The background to this goes back to Stalin's "popular front" politics in the 1930s. In most countries, this meant that Communist Parties would form alliances with capitalist parties that were more left, and even to join capitalist governments led by such parties.

In the U.S. the popular front strategy led the CP to support the Democrats. The Socialist Party followed suit, both parties abandoning their historical position of never voting for capitalist parties.

Most socialist organizations in the U.S. have continued to support Democrats since, for 80 years, often with the argument that they are the “lesser evil” to the Republicans. The broader left takes the same position.

So socialists who run independent of both capitalist parties, like the Greens today, are swimming against the current. People who vote for the Greens today do so with their eyes wide open to the fact that they are opposing both the Democrats and Republicans. Most would not vote Democratic if the Greens are not on the ballot.

The Democrats often claim that the Green Party candidate, Ralph Nader, in 2000 was the key factor in the Democrats’ loss to George W. Bush. In that election, a high point for the Greens, Nader won a bit less than three million votes, 2.7 percent.

In 2000, there was a major movement worldwide against capitalist globalization, kicked off by the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle. The Nader campaign gave electoral expression to this movement.

Mass rallies for Nader drew thousands across the country. One in Oakland, California, filled a large auditorium. The mainly young people who came cheered loudly for everything Nader said, and even more loudly when he raised anticapitalist themes. Emboldened by this response, Nader went further.

The idea that Nader supporters were even considering voting Democrat is nonsense.

So why are the Democrats so intent in denying ballot status to Greens when they can? Part of the reason is that Biden is not mobilizing many youths to vigorously campaign for him. In 2008, Barak Obama, as the first Black candidate of a major party to run for president, inspired Blacks, young people, and others with hope for real change, his “army” as some called it.

But Obama in power did not deliver on the hopes he aroused. Many young Blacks, whites and others in the Black Lives Matter movement have expressed disillusionment with voting Democrat with not much to show for it.

The same is true for the many young people who are gravitating toward socialism on a scale not seen since the 1960s.

What does Biden say regarding the issues raised by BLM? He promises to increase spending on police. He often says he will bring “both sides” together, so he proposes to convene a commission composed of police chiefs and police “unions” (which support police who murder 100 percent and in every instance) on one side and “civil rights leaders” of his choosing on the other, with a sprinkling of politicians from the two major parties, to find a compromise “solution”.

Concerning climate change he champions fossil fuels, especially fracking even while the west coast is in flames, tropical storms and hurricanes grow in the Atlantic, creating massive floods when they hit land. He is opposed to even the watered down Green New Deal languishing in Congress.

On healthcare, he wants to retain the employer-backed private insurance of Obamacare. Right now, with the massive layoffs resulting from the pandemic, tens of millions have lost their employer-backed plans.

Without going into all the issues, Biden is on the right wing of the Democratic Party and doesn’t

have a vision beyond not being Trump.

So the Democrats want to suppress the Hawkins and Walker Green Party candidates as much as they can, less the Greens begin to win over the awakening, however slow and not yet well organized, of the forces to the left of the Democrats.

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