

Statement by Stephen Gaskin: The War on Drugs

The war on drugs as it's being played out in the US these days has far left being the proscription of a substance and being about abuse of that substance. It is a concerted organized attack on a minority of the population of the US that would itself be a small country, maybe 25, 35, 40 million people. The Constitution is being damaged severely by this; we're losing all the protections from government abuse and we're turning into a police state. The man we have made our drug czar can not only countermand the US Customs Department about what can be imported, he can start wars with other countries and send troops into other countries. We have more troops in Colombia than we had in Vietnam when I first noticed.

The war on drugs is not the issue itself, but it's a symptom of the general unresponsiveness and bought-outness of our government. It shows this government is not of the people, by the people, for the people which Proposition 215 proves. People in California have been arrested and given a hard time for abiding by Proposition 215 which was a referendum passed by the electorate, and if there's anything holy in democracy it ought to be a referendum passed by the electorate.

There's not hardly any Left in this country anymore, unless you count the marijuana legalization movement. This movement is one of the most authentic Lefts that exists in the country, a group of diverse people from all cultures of the world bound together by their belief that the laws against marijuana are unreasonable to the point of insanity. These hundreds of thousands of people are affected by the drug war in the same way that the youth of the country were affected by Vietnam. In those days, everybody knew somebody who'd been drafted, going to Vietnam, maybe been killed. Now everybody knows somebody who's on trial, going to jail, maybe doing life.

We have our turn. We, the heads of the country and the world, have our turn to band together, respectably, in public, register to vote, and make politicians have to pay attention to what we are saying. This is our privilege, it is our right, it is our obligation.

That's why it's so important to get the Green Party on the ballot in as many states as possible. We have to let the Democrats and the Republicans know that they are not the only game in town, and that there's a much better game being played over on the other side of the fence. I'm hoping that my presence in this race can attract first-time voters, disillusioned political dropouts, and a bunch of other people who can help make a big noise in this election.