

A Jeffersonian's Acceptance of the Green Party's Four Pillars

Below are the Green Party's tenets and comment on how one modern-day Jeffersonian, Mark Stewart Greenstein, applies each to some of today's pressing issues.

1. Grassroots Democracy

Every human being deserves a say in the decisions that affect his or her life and should not be subject to the will of another. Therefore, we will work to increase public participation at every level of government and to ensure that our public representatives are fully accountable to the people who elect them. We will also work to create new types of political organizations which expand the process of participatory democracy by directly including citizens in the decision-making process.

MSG: Agreed. I go further though -- until majority, children should have a say too. Giving parents an extra vote for their wards is democratic. Children cannot protect themselves -- this is a gesture, at minimum to show they have political rights. I also believe those entrusted with the care of mentally-enfeebled adults should have an extra vote too.

2. Social Justice and Equal Opportunity

All persons should have the rights and opportunity to benefit equally from the resources afforded us by society and the environment. We must consciously confront in ourselves, our organizations, and society at large, barriers such as racism and class oppression, sexism and homophobia, ageism and disability, which act to deny fair treatment and equal justice under the law.

MSG: Agreed. I only ask that those who see "oppression" really scrutinize introspectively and be open to outsiders' views. America has less racism than any nation in the world. Some pockets still exist, but they are well outside our institutions. Generally, American businesses, civic organizations, and government

institutions now bend over backwards to be inclusive. We can't let a history that contained race-based oppression stymie us; we can let it cause distrust among races. You can only be just in your own time; please look to today and the future, not the past.

3. Ecological Wisdom

Human societies must operate with the understanding that we are part of nature, not separate from nature. We must maintain an ecological balance and live within the ecological and resource limits of our communities and our planet. We support a sustainable society which utilizes resources in such a way that future generations will benefit and not suffer from the practices of our generation. To this end we must practice agriculture which replenishes the soil; move to an energy efficient economy; and live in ways that respect the integrity of natural systems.

MSG. Agreed. I go further here too. I among the few who call to make salient our individual PROPERTY RIGHT in the environment. I ask that our Constitution recognize that we all have rights to the air we breathe and the water we drink. Currently, government is the best way to protect many of these property rights. Just as we cede to the federal government some power to protect us against military invasion, I believe a Constitutional Amendment is needed to allow the federal government to use its resources to protect against environmental invasion. Environmental protection is NOT among the Article I Section 8 powers listed for Congress; through the Amendment process, I'd like to see that environmental protection come within Article I Section 8 powers.

4. Non-Violence

It is essential that we develop effective alternatives to society's current patterns of violence. We will work to demilitarize, and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, without being naive about the intentions of other governments. We recognize the need for self-defense and the defense of others who are in help-less situations. We promote non-violent methods to oppose practices and policies with which we disagree, and will guide our actions toward lasting personal, community and global peace.

MSG: Agrees with 90% of this. The 10% difference I hope to convince people to change. We are good people in a VERY good nation. The world would be a much bleaker place without America. We are the only nation that fights for others' freedoms without regard to expanding our territory or our wealth. We are the only nation willing and able to stand up to thugs who brutalize their people and their neighbors. As such, we cannot let go of weaponry that SAVE peoples' lives. Our nuclear weapons arguably have kept many people at peace. While might does not make right, I believe "right makes might". We are good, and our ingenuity, and perhaps God, has accompanied our goodness with strength. America has been blessed, and is the best peacekeeper the world has ever known because it maintains weapons of mass destruction and threatens to use them against tyrants. Without our weaponry, Norwegians, Swedes, and Finns would all be under Russia's yoke. Without our weaponry, millions of Taiwanese, South Koreans, Japanese, and Singaporeans would be part of a greater Mao-ist China. Ask THEM whether they want a defanged America.

5. Decentralization

Centralization of wealth and power contributes to social and economic injustice, environmental destruction, and militarization. Therefore, we support a restructuring of social, political and economic institutions away from a system which is controlled by and mostly benefits the powerful few, to a democratic, less bureaucratic system. Decision-making should, as much as possible, remain at the individual and local level, while assuring that civil rights are protected for all citizens.

MSG: Agreed. When municipalities go awry, people can easily live or work in a neighboring municipality. States are too ubiquitous. Municipalities have the beauty of knowing your needs. NO state can do this. Even Vermont is diverse enough that it is too big for government functions.

6. Community Based Economics

Redesign our work structures to encourage employee ownership and workplace democracy. Develop new economic activities and institutions that will allow us to

use our new technologies in ways that are humane, freeing, ecological and accountable, and responsive to communities. Establish some form of basic economic security, open to all. Move beyond the narrow "job ethic" to new definitions of "work," "jobs" and "income" that reflect the changing economy. Restructure our patterns of income distribution to reflect the wealth created by those outside the formal monetary economy: those who take responsibility for parenting, housekeeping, home gardens, community volunteer work, etc. Restrict the size and concentrated power of corporations without discouraging superior efficiency or technological innovation.

MSG: Agreed. But the best "establishing" and "restructuring" comes from the Free Market. The best restricting of corporations comes from the Free Market as well. Big businesses FEAR untethered competitors. The Free Market is the consumer's best ally and the big corporate mogul's nightmare.

7. Feminism and Gender Equity

We have inherited a social system based on male domination of politics and economics. We call for the replacement of the cultural ethics of domination and control with more cooperative ways of interacting that respect differences of opinion and gender. Human values such as equity between the sexes, interpersonal responsibility, and honesty must be developed with moral conscience. We should remember that the process that determines our decisions and actions is just as important as achieving the outcome we want.

MSG: Agreed. The remaining inheritance of male hegemony should be swept away. However, very little exists, and we can't be fighting wars already won. There are more business groups for women than for men, more PhDs awarded to women than men, more college places taken by women than men, and fewer dropouts among girls than boys. Almost every conduit to women's freedom and success has been fully opened in American life, so let's only focus on the few under-reported problems. Misogyny is NOT at the root of the wage gap;

misogyny no longer creates glass ceilings. Good feminism means focusing on causes that REALLY exist.

8. Respect for Diversity

We believe it is important to value cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity, and to promote the development of respectful relationships across these lines. We believe that the many diverse elements of society should be reflected in our organizations and decision-making bodies, and we support the leadership of people who have been traditionally closed out of leadership roles. We acknowledge and encourage respect for other life forms than our own and the preservation of biodiversity.

MSG: Agreed. The only large institutions fighting diversity are those controlled by government. The small non-diverse cabals only harm themselves.

9. Personal and Global Responsibility

We encourage individuals to act to improve their personal well-being and, at the same time, to enhance ecological balance and social harmony. We seek to join with people and organizations around the world to foster peace, economic justice, and the health of the planet.

MSG: Agreed! Individual responsibility is wonderful. Groups forming without government force enhance happiness and prosperity.

10. Future Focus And Sustainability

Our actions and policies should be motivated by long-term goals. We seek to protect valuable natural resources, safely disposing of or "unmaking" all waste we create, while developing a sustainable economics that does not depend on continual expansion for survival. We must counterbalance the drive for short-term profits by assuring that economic development, new technologies, and fiscal policies are responsible to future generations who will inherit the results of our actions. Make the quality of life, rather than open-ended economic growth, the focus of future thinking.

MSG: Agreed. Survival, growth, and quality of life improvements deserve constant consideration. The best thinkers are not governments or bureaucrats. The best thinkers are the millions of us whose daily decisions have future prosperity in mind, and that means that the Free Market is superior to all planners.