



# FORWARD2004!

## GREEN NATIONAL CONVENTION

### The History of the Green Party

The roots of the Green Party come from many places and directions. The developing ecology movement, 60's new left movements as well as some streams of anarchist thought all fed different parts of Green politics development. The earliest versions of the Green Party formed independently in New Zealand, Australia (Tasmania) as well as the United Kingdom.

But it was the election of a number of Greens to the German Parliament that made the first big splash for the Green Party. This resulted in a number of activists in the United States deciding that this country needed a Green political movement as well, and members of anti-nuclear, bioregionalist, anarchist and others met in August of 1984 in St. Paul, Minnesota to adopt the 10 Key Values that still define Green politics in the United States.

The Green movement was collected under the umbrella of the Green Committees of Correspondence in 1980's and featured a dispersed group of up to hundreds of local chapters. There were debates on philosophy, grassroots activism, as well as the first electoral campaigns in these years. As the 1980's came to an end, tension grew as to how much to emphasize electoral politics and how it should relate to the activist movement, whether they should be independent of each other, or have one subservient to another.

In 1992, the Greens/Green Party USA was formed out of the Green Committees of Correspondence and some Greens decided to focus their organizing efforts on their local and state chapters of the Green Party. More candidates were running for office and more state parties were achieving legal recognition from their respective states.

In 1995 and 1996, a number of strands of the Green Party worked separately to recruit Ralph Nader to stand as the party's presidential candidate. Although Nader did not campaign extensively in 1996, the visibility it brought to Greens resulted in the forming of the Association of State Green Parties in November of 1996 at a meeting held in Virginia 10 days after election day. The ASGP was structured as an umbrella organization of autonomous state Green parties, with the goal of developing into a legally structured national Green Party.



# FORWARD2004!

## GREEN NATIONAL CONVENTION

### The History of the Green Party

Counts of candidates and elected Greens continued to grow in the late 1990's as more states joined the ASGP. Many Greens were getting elected in California and Wisconsin and there were prominent campaigns in New Mexico as well. The Green Party was expanding into more states, but there were still many gaps. In 1999, the ASGP formed a partnership with the European Federation of Green Parties and both jointly adopted a Common Ground Statement on issues of common interest.

In 2000 Ralph Nader sought and received the nomination of the ASGP at a convention held in Denver, Colorado. Nader raised and spent over \$8 million and campaigned energetically. A record number of Green candidates ran at the local, state and national level, and a record number of them were elected. Membership counts grew as well.

The years after this election saw rapid growth as the Green Party was the fastest growing political party in the country. It received official recognition from the Federal Election Commission as a national committee in late 2001, and created a new organization called the Green Party of the United States, and opened an office in Washington, DC. The Green Party became the most visible political alternative to the two old parties.

In 2002, the party ran over 500 candidates and held a mid-term convention in Philadelphia. By now, there were state parties active in all but a handful of states and Greens were elected to office in about half of the states, though the greatest concentration was still in California and Wisconsin, as well as Pennsylvania. In the past two years, the national party greatly expanded its support for organizing, hosting Campaign Schools across the country, assisting state parties with fundraising and ballot drives, and contributing to Green campaigns. The Greens also played a lead role in opposing the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the PATRIOT Act, and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

As we go into the 2004 elections, the Green Party continues to be the most visible alternative political party, and the one that most commentators discuss as being a factor in national politics.