

Cynthia McKinney Accepts the Presidential Nomination of the Green Party of the United States



Written by Administrator

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Green Party Convention

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Let me introduce to you my family and your Power to the People Committee!

My mother and father, Billy and Leola McKinney.

My son, Coy, who just graduated from college in Canada!

I want you to know that there is no way I could do this without their love and support.

Your Power to the People Committee members who are with us today:

You've all shared e-mails with her and heard her lovely voice on the telephone: Lucy Grider-Bradley, the campaign manager of my 2004 comeback campaign and FEC Compliance team leader for the Power to the People Committee!

I've known him all of my political life. You've known him for years if you're a Green party member. Hugh Esco, website man with the Power to the People Committee!

In two long road trips from Georgia to Maine, one trip through California, Oregon, and Washington, and by way of numerous e-mails, you all have come to know my friend, personal assistant, proud Haitian-American activist, et aussi, l'homme avec qui je pratique mon francais, David Josue, standing firm against the occupation of Haiti.

John Judge is my friend. He shared U.S. government COINTELPRO documents with me that few except researchers have ever seen. John Judge is an expert on the murders of Malcolm X, John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bobby Kennedy, COINTELPRO, other government covert operations directed at certain U.S. citizens, and what really happened on 9/11. Maybe John can tell me how our military and intelligence infrastructures failed four times in one day after the taxpayers invested trillions of dollars in them.

Janet Young, proud accountant for the Power to the People Committee! Learned the true meaning of politics when she saw what happened to me after I put impeachment on the table.

I am also joined on the platform by members of the Reconstruction Movement who have come into the Green Party to support our Power to the People campaign! The Reconstruction Movement came into being as a result of dissatisfaction around government failures and unmet needs of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita survivors and the many communities across our country in need of reconstruction.

The RunCynthiaRun visionaries from California who are responsible for bringing me to the Party's Presidential process!

All of the Green Party candidates who are running for election in 2008!

And Rosa Clemente, your Vice Presidential nominee!

Thank you all for being here and standing with me today.

In 1851, in Akron, Ohio a former slave woman, abolitionist, and woman's rights activist by the name of Sojourner Truth gave a speech now known as "Ain't I a Woman." Sojourner Truth began her remarks, "Well children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter." She then went on to say that even though she was a woman, no one had ever helped her out of carriages or lifted her over ditches or given her a seat of honor in any place. Instead, she acknowledged, that as a former slave and as a black woman, she had had to bear the lash as well as any man; and that she had borne "thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And Ain't I a woman?" Finally, Sojourner Truth says, "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!"

As it was in 1851, so too it is in 2008. There is so much racket that we, too, know something is out of kilter. In 1851, the racket was about a woman's right to vote. In 1848, just a few years before Sojourner uttered those now famous words, "Ain't I a Woman?" suffragists met in Seneca Falls, New York and issued a declaration.

That declaration began:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government . . . But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled."

Two hundred sixty women and forty men gathered in Seneca Falls, NY and declared their independence from the politics of their present and embarked upon a struggle to create a politics for the future. That bold move by a handful of people in one relatively small room laid the groundwork and is the precedent for what we do today. The Seneca Falls Declaration represented a clean break from the past: Freedom, at last, from mental slavery. The Seneca Falls Declaration and the Akron, Ohio meeting inaugurated 72 years of struggle that ended with the passage of the 19th Amendment in August of 1920, granting women the right to vote. And 88 years later, with the Green Party as its conductor, the History Train is rolling down the tracks.

The Green Party is making history today. According to one source, 45 women have run for President in primary elections in the United States in the 20th Century; 22 have made it on the ballot in at least one state in November. Thank you, Green Party, for pulling this history train from the station.

But we make history today only because we must. In 2008, after two stolen Presidential elections and eight years of George W. Bush, and at least two years of Democratic Party complicity, the racket is about war crimes, torture, crimes against the peace; the racket is about crimes against the Constitution, crimes against the American people, and crimes against the global community. The racket is even about values that we thought were long settled as reasonable to pursue, like liberty and justice, and economic opportunity, for all. Yes, Sojourner, there's a lot out of kilter now, but these two women, Rosa and me, joined by all the men and

women in this room, are going to do our best to turn this country right side up again.

And just like the women and men at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 who declared their independence from the Old Order, I celebrated my birthday last year by doing something I had done a dozen times in my head, but had never done publicly: I declared my independence from every bomb dropped, every threat leveled, every civil liberties rollback, every child killed, every veteran maimed, every man tortured, and the national leadership that let this happen. At that pro-peace rally in front of the Pentagon, I noted that nowhere on the Democratic Party's Congressional Agenda for their first 100 days in the majority was any mention at all of a livable wage, the right of return for Katrina survivors, repealing the Patriot Acts, the Secret Evidence Act, the Military Commissions Act, or bringing our troops home now. Nowhere on the Congressional Democrats' agenda was an investigation into the Pentagon's "loss" of \$2.3 trillion that Rumsfeld admitted to just before September 11th. And nowhere was there any plan to get that money back for jobs, health care, education, and for veterans. Not even repeal of the Bush tax cuts that have helped to usher in, according to some, levels of income inequality not experienced in this country since the Great Depression. And instead of Articles of Impeachment to hold the criminals accountable, impeachment was taken "off the table."

And so, taking these words directly from our own Declaration of Independence, and from the Seneca Falls document "it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it."

There is no doubt that the people of this country and in the global community are suffering from Washington, D.C.'s policies today.

Even as the ice in the Arctic Ocean reportedly was melting, the United States was obstructing an international discussion of climate change goals-setting for 2020 at the recently-concluded G-8 Summit. Even while George Bush has made himself an international climate change villain by not signing onto the Kyoto Protocol, his own scientists at the U.S. Climate Change Science Program have predicted more heat waves, intense rains, increased drought, and stronger hurricanes to affect the U.S. due to the worsening effects of climate change.

Public policy can be our friend or it can be our foe in understanding and working through the immense changes our planet is undergoing. We the voters, the activists, the policy wonks, the candidates, and the elected officials all have a role to play in making public policy. As I have said so many times during this campaign for the Green Party nomination, politics is not a beauty contest; it is not a fashion show; it is not a horse race. Politics is the authoritative allocation of values in a society. Politics is about values being reflected in public policy. It is about having power over public policy. And we engage in the political process because we want our values reflected in public policy.

Had the Green Party's values been reflected in public policy since the beginnings of the Green Party in this country, the United States would have long ago implemented a livable wage; there would be no civil liberties erosion; diversity would be respected, appreciated and welcomed; education would be interesting and relevant to students' lives and no student would graduate from college \$100,000 in debt in a Green Party USA because education, not incarceration and militarization, would be subsidized by the state.

In a Green Party USA, health care would be provided for everyone here through a single payer, Medicare-for-all type health care system. We would have no homeless men and women sleeping on our streets and everyone who could work would have work. Rebuilding our infrastructure, manufacturing green technology, retooling our economy so that those who protect us, train us, heal us and prepare us for tomorrow are compensated in what is their true value to our culture and our society, based on their contribution to our civilization.

Vietnam War-era veterans would be our last war veterans because we would never have been engaged in war and occupation against Afghanistan and Iraq. We would forego imperial designs on our neighbors to the

north and south, never building any wall of division, not ever encroaching on their geographic or cultural sovereignty.

In fact, if Green Party values were now reflected in U.S. public policy, our country not only would not be engaged in war and occupation, there would be peace in the Middle East based on self-determination, respect for human rights, and justice. We would strive to perfect our democracy at home through election integrity and no one would be denied their rightful place in our Union due to discrimination. Our neighbors in the global community would look up to us for our cultural and technological accomplishments.

We would have apologized for genocide against the indigenous peoples of this land and the abomination of chattel slavery. Our country would have dignity on the world stage and in every international forum, and no one in this country would be made to live in fear.

Oh, if it could be true: that the values of the Green Party were reflected in the Federal Government's public policy. Let me wake up and snap out of my reverie. Yes, today's reality is harsh. Abu Ghraib, torture, rendition, lying, spying, war, stolen elections, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, New Orleans, poverty, racial profiling, Sean Bell, the San Francisco 8, Benton Harbor's Reverend Pinkney, the Holy Land Foundation, 9/11/01.

Embargo, blockade, friendly fire, depleted uranium, white phosphorus, cluster bombs, bunker busters, shock and awe.

Predatory lending, mortgage crisis, foreclosures, a country \$53 trillion in debt. And while Bear Stearns gets a bailout, you and I sink or swim.

Harsh? Today's reality is harsh. But what's even harder for many to accept and admit is that our quality of life today is the making of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

What our country has become through their public policy is reflective of their values.

We will never get a United States that is reflective of different values if we continue to do the same thing. Those who delivered us into this mess cannot be trusted to get us out of it.

That's why I signed up to do something I've never done before so I can have something I've never had before: My country, made in the likeness of the values of the Green Party.

When my father first started out in the world of politics in Georgia, he began as a Republican, because Georgia Democrats would not allow blacks to vote in their primaries. Some of my father's closest friends today are still Republicans because of that history. My father served 30 years in the Georgia Legislature as a Democrat. Because of him, I served 4 years in the Georgia Legislature, where we were the country's only father daughter legislative team. And then I went to Congress and served 12 years working with the Democratic Party and its current leadership representing the State of Georgia.

My son grew up playing on the Floor underneath my desk in the Chamber of the Georgia House of Representatives. His buddies were the legislators down there, under the Gold Dome, who were my and my father's colleagues.

My mother is the genteel Southern lady who keeps our family glued together. A nurse by profession, a nurturer by instinct, she could patch over all the times I had a political disagreements with my Dad and it ended up being discussed, not only at the family dinner table, but also on the evening news.

My father and I stumped for candidates, and helped keep Georgia in the Democratic Party fold, until on my

election night in 2002, I was forced to admit that the Republicans wanted to beat me more than the Democrats wanted to keep me. Both my father and I were put out of office after being targeted by a convergence of special interests operating in both the Democratic and Republican parties. In November of 2002, after the Primary Election losses of my father and me, Georgia went Republican: the first time since Reconstruction. With all kinds of certainty, I can say that my father and I, we McKinneys, we know too well how both the Republican and Democratic Parties operate.

And that's why I know we need an opposition party in this country. With over 200 elected officials already, the Green Party can become this country's premier opposition Party. One thing is clear, Democratic and Republican values are not Green Party values. And honestly, I believe, Green Party values are the values held by the majority in this country. And through our vigorous Power to the People campaign, we will proclaim our presence to every nook and cranny of this country. We are needed now, more than ever and here's an example of why.

It is hard to not hear the warning signs of a new war: a war against Iran. Dick Cheney told us to expect war for the next generation. The Republicans launched this war economy and their presumptive nominee said that we could stay in Iraq for the next 100 years and even sang a song for the bombing of Iran. The Democratic majority in Congress just voted to fund the war into 2009 and has 200 sponsors on a bill that declares war on Iran by calling for a naval blockade. A naval blockade is a declaration of war. The Democratic presumptive nominee wants to increase the size of the overused military and the budget for an already-bloated and wasteful Pentagon. I am the only candidate who has consistently voted against the Pentagon budget, voted against the war in Iraq, and I voted against the bills that funded it. The Green Party was against the war when it started, is against the war now, and is against any military action against Iran that might take place tomorrow. The Green Party is a peace party. A Green vote is a peace vote.

Not a word has been mentioned in this political season about the disparities that exist within our country with the recognition that public policy can erase them. And even though for the first time a woman and an African-American were being taken seriously in national primaries, a real discussion of race and gender has been studiously avoided on all sides. At a time when the United States is under review, itself, by the United Nations for its poor record on domestic respect for human rights, particularly in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a real discussion of race and gender is needed now more than ever. On some indices, according to United for a Fair Economy, the racial disparities that exist today are worse than at the time of the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Right here in Chicago, Hull House reported that it would take 200 years, without a public policy intervention from elected leadership, for the quality of life experienced by black Chicagoans to equal that of white Chicagoans.

Women are still the overwhelming profile of the minimum wage worker in this country. 65% of all minimum wage workers are women, according to 2005 statistics. Despite the law, women still go to work every day, performing the same tasks as men, yet bring home less pay than their male counterparts. Asian-American and Pacific Island women make 88 cents for every dollar earned by men, but African-American women earn only 72 cents and my Latina sisters earn only 60 cents for every dollar earned by men. Overall, according to 2007 statistics, women with similar education, skills, and experience are paid 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. Equal pay for equal work is not yet a reality for working women in this country. And the glass ceiling is all too real.

I'm very proud of my second cousin, Shont=E9, whose mother, a divorcee, raised her pretty much as a single mother. Shonte's mother, Shara, understood the value of her child getting a good education and helped her as much as she could with university tuition. The rest Shonte was able to secure by working on campus and in student loans. Shont=E9 graduated from college, and then took a one-year Master's program in Social Work, and now wants to get her Ph.D. But she's already over \$90,000 in debt. It doesn't have to be this way and we don't have to accept it. In other countries around the world, higher education is valued and is made

affordable to all who want it. Only a sick government would place a banker in-between a student and her teacher.

An insurance lobbyist in-between a patient and his doctor.

Lying and spying before 9/11 Truth and the Constitution.

Only a sick government would place a wealthy family and their huge corporation and its genetically-modified frankenfood peddled by force in-between us and the organic food that's healthy for us to eat and that farmers would prefer to grow.

Only a sick government would do this.

And I am no longer willing to trust the ones who are responsible for getting us into this mess to provide the solution to get us out of it.

The Green Party long ago took a stand for racial justice: against profiling, against police brutality, against discrimination of any sort, and for reparations stemming from the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The Green Party long ago took a stand for gender equity.

The Green Party long ago took a stand against all discrimination.

The Green Party is a justice party. A Green vote is a justice vote.

And the day after the election, if voters have been disfranchised and don't believe the announced election results, it will be the Green Party that will be there, as it was in 2004, to demand election integrity.

It is for all these reasons and more that I redeclare my goals in the language of my sisters who convened at Seneca Falls, NY 160 years ago. They wrote:

"It is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security." That declaration not only avoids the politics of the past, it contains a kernel for the future. How can those new guards for the future be won?

Here's how:

When I was first running for Congress and it was the year of the woman, women all over the country were saying, "We want our seat at the table." And when I got to Washington, I saw that policy was really made in a room, at a table. There were real seats at the table. Well, imagine what has happened to public policy making now.

There is a real room, with a window and a door and there's two seats at the table. The window is for us to look through while our representatives make policy for us so we can see what they're doing. At the table, one seat is for the Democrats and one seat is for the Republicans. Now, we don't know who did it, but one of them put a lock on the door and slipped a key to the corporate lobbyists who can come and go at will and whisper what they want to the Democrats, and then whisper what they want to the Republicans, and the result is that we the people, who pay for those seats and determine who sits in them, want one thing, but because the corporate lobbyists can come and go at will, our values get overridden and our representatives give us something else. That's how we end up with everyone saying they're against the war and occupation, but war and occupation still gets funding.

That's how we end up with everyone saying they're against illegal spying on innocent people, yet end up with

a telecom immunity bill being signed into law.

That's how we end up with everyone saying they're in favor of universal access to health care and no one supporting what the physicians, nurses, and health care providers support, and that's a single payer health care system in this country.

That's why my cousin and so many other students in this country face staggering personal debt just to get an education, yet our elected representatives keep voting to spend 720 million dollars a day on war and occupation, war crimes, and crimes against the peace.

Now, if we can entice people who have stopped voting because they see the system as rigged, to become active again, and to vote Green . . .

If we can convince those first-time voters from the previous two Presidential elections, though they might be discouraged because they saw their vote obstructed and then not counted while neither of the big parties fought to protect them, if we can convince them to vote Green . . . If we can convince those who see two parties, but only one political agenda, to vote Green, then it is possible for the Green Party to get 5% of the national vote.

5% of the vote makes the Green Party, not a minor party in the eyes of the federal government, but a major party.

5% confers on the Green Party major party status. And with that 5%, we can pull up another chair at the table of public policy making. It only takes 5% of those who vote, including the near majority who don't vote, to come out for a Green Party President and then we will have an official third party in this country, and public policy that truly reflects our values. Now, I'm known for taking bold positions, based on my own research, that have put me ahead of the curve. I was there on private militaries hired by the Pentagon and our State Department long before Blackwater began patrolling the streets of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

I was there on corporate accountability and military contracting scandals before Iraq and Afghanistan.

I was there on enlisted members' and veterans' rights and health issues, like forced vaccinations and conscientious objection.

I was there on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita recovery and detoxification, restoration, and return issues.

I was there on 9/11 foreknowledge.

And I put impeachment "on the table."

I'm not afraid to address the issues that no one else will dare to talk about.

I'm not afraid to speak truth to empower.

Let me close with this.

Don't expect me to keep a count of the major party flip flops from now to November. I'm sure there will be many. But, in the end, that's not the important issue to understand. What is more fundamental to understand is this: the other political parties find themselves in this flip-flop predicament because they have to appear to share our values while they serve someone else's.

The Green Party doesn't have to engage in shapeshifting because the Green Party is funded by and belongs

to you.

All over the world, Green Party members are working as elected leaders in government to make public policy reflect our Green values. Wangari Mathai, former Parliamentarian from Kenya, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Green Party member. Ingrid Betancourt, recently released hostage in Colombia, former Senator and Presidential candidate. Green Party member. Green Party members make public policy at the national level on every Continent, but not yet in our country.

Twenty years ago, Green party activists saw through this two-party box that voters have been put into in this country and started the Green Party here. And what we have to remember is this: whatever it is that we want in the realm of public policy, we can get if we have the right elected officials in office. Nothing for us is impossible. Politics is about shared values being reflected in public policy. And these Green party candidates standing with me are the right kind of people who will implement the right kind of public policy that reflects our shared values.

Voters in this country are scared into not voting their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations. But in Bolivia and Ecuador and Argentina and Chile and Nicaragua and Spain, and India and Cote d'Ivoire and Haiti, voters were not afraid to vote their hopes and dreams and guess, what. Their dreams came true. Ours can, too.

Every one of you in this room today and each of the individuals I've met and communicated with online across our country has made a difference in my life. And moreover, the 5% who will vote for us, will help us make a positive difference in the lives of people around the world. Who we are makes a difference. What we do makes a difference.

We are in this to build a movement. We are willing to struggle for as long as it takes to have our values prevail in public policy. A vote for the Green Party is a vote for the movement that will turn this country right side up again.

I want to invite everyone who shares our values to join our Power to the People campaign. C-Span viewers can learn more about us at [www.runcynthiarun.org](http://www.runcynthiarun.org). I want to work with the nominees of the other small political parties so we can form a united front. I'm asking for your vote because in reality the only "wasted" vote is a vote against conscience, a vote against our dreams. Vote your dreams, Vote your conscience. Vote our future. Vote Green.

Thank you, Green Party, for granting Rosa and me this supreme honor. Now let's go out there and get busier. We've got a lot of work to do.

Power to the People!