

# 4

## The Greens: from idealism to pragmatism (1984–2002)

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### Introduction

‘Utopia has come to French history’, declared René Dumont on 26 April 1974. Conscious of the necessity of establishing such a utopia, he was of the opinion that the newly founded ecologist movement should ‘organise so as to establish itself permanently as an influence in French political life’ (Dumont, 1974: 5). Twenty-five years later, this utopian movement has been replaced by a complex organisation. In a quarter of a century, the Greens have had the opportunity to try out a number of organisational approaches and to test various electoral strategies and to develop novel internal practices based on their own particular motivations and identity. Gradually, however, they have been forced to accept a dose of political reality and adapt their membership practices in the interests of electoral success. In carrying out our organisational, electoral and ideological analysis, our aim is to explore how the Greens have tried to maintain a coherent identity while facing up to the new responsibilities which have recently been placed at their feet.

### Structure and membership

The democratic formality of the party is an attempt to save the Greens from oligarchic tendencies as well as to establish the following principles: free engagement, enshrined in membership regulations; free expression within the party, to fight against the tendency of the individual to disappear under the force of militancy; and the revitalisation of democratic practice, in particular participatory democracy. The

organisational structure is meant to lower the boundaries between politics and civil society: the 'movement' should remain a policy tool and nothing more. The Greens abide by these founding principles, maintaining a collective memory of the party's origins as well as transforming it to cope with contemporary political challenges.

### Building a 'different' party

Comparative analysis has revealed that, in general, ecology parties in Western Europe abide by similar principles in their organisational structures (Richardson and Rootes, 1995, Vialatte, 1996). Their organisations are based on five principal characteristics: plural leadership; rotation; limitations on multiple office-holding; the absence of a professionalised leadership; and regulated gender parity (Rihoux, 2001: 123). Their aim is to build a 'different' party whose rationale lies in the importance of grass roots democracy (Poguntke, 1993: 136–48).

For the French Greens, the organisation should formally ensure equality for all members, regardless of their function or power within the movement. Four principles derive from this: the primacy of regions (regions have complete autonomy as to their organisational structure); collective decision-making (the National Inter-Regional Council (NIRC) and the Executive College (EC)); direct democracy (by means of internal referenda); and gender parity. Between 1984 and 1994, the regions directly appointed three-quarters of the NIRC, the legislative body of the movement with over 100 members. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was the sovereign body of the movement within which policy direction was decided and the remaining quarter of the NIRC were elected by proportional representation. The NIRC and EC were both bound by its decisions, demonstrating the importance of the equality principle for each member.

New statutes were passed in 1994, in order to provide a more effective policy tool. The main change was the abandoning of the AGM, to be replaced by a meeting of regional delegates every two years. This congress occurs in two stages. First, a 'decentralised AGM' where national and individual motions are introduced and voted upon takes place at the same time and with the same agenda in all the regions.<sup>1</sup> Delegates to the Federal Assembly (FA) are also elected at this stage, by proportional list vote. The second stage takes place one month later. During the FA, the delegates vote on motions which have not yet been passed or validate amalgamations of different motions. They also designate the remaining quarter of the NIRC (around 30 delegates) by a proportional list vote. However, there is still a regional AGM which meets annually to consider matters and motions pertaining to that region. Every two years, the regional members of the NIRC are elected. The list of delegates to the national council is consequently based upon local alliances.

These statutory changes were accompanied by a change in membership activity. In terms of finances, the Greens experienced a major boost in the mid-1990s. Between 1984 and 1989, membership dues had been the main source of income,<sup>2</sup> the Greens refusing company or other groups' contributions. From 1989, the pooling of representatives' allowances, and in particular those of MEPs, increased revenues. However, the major step up occurred with the new party finance regulations that began to be introduced from 1988 onwards. From then on, all parties were financed by the State according to their results in legislative elections – worth around \$1.7m for the Greens in 1997. Moreover, like all parties they had benefited since 1995 from the public financing of campaigns which substantially increased the budget allocated for this purpose. Overall, in 2001 the Greens' budget was around \$3 m. This has given the Greens the opportunity to employ a small internal bureaucracy, and to give its members stipends somewhat beyond the token gesture they had previously been paid.

The increase in members' participation within local bodies has led to a more professionalised and effective operation (Boy, *et al.*, 1995). This institutional structure has also established membership somewhat at a distance from their original participatory principles (Villalba, 1996: 149–70). The Greens may have tried to establish a democratic framework, but they have progressively adapted this to try to integrate themselves more fully into the political system. Certain basic rules (no multiple office-holding, rotation of positions, non-professionalisation, collective decision-making, and so on) have all been compromised, with the key exception of gender parity.

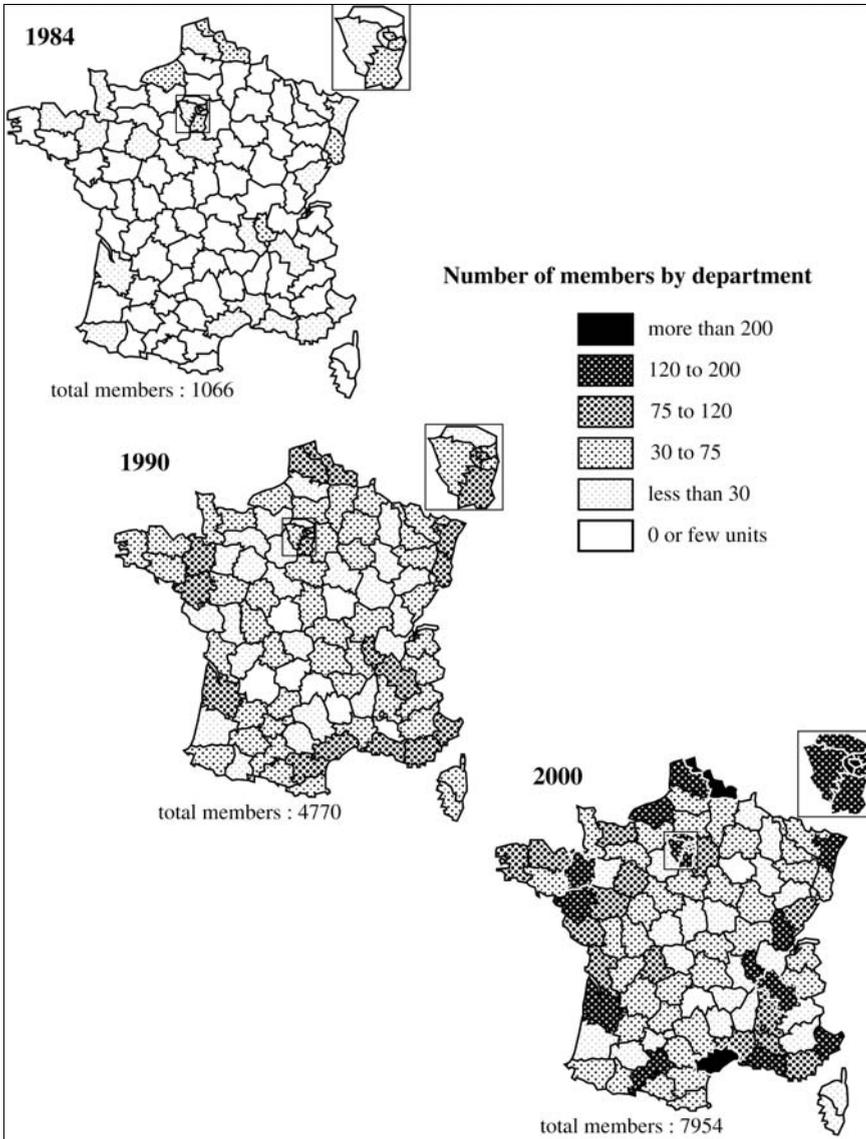
#### The importance of militants

At the moment of the creation of the Green Party in 1984, membership was low and spread across only about twenty departments (Vieillard-Coffre, 2001: 122–30).

High-population density is the first reason for this unbalanced spread (see Figure 4.1).<sup>3</sup> Attachment to ecological ideas is particularly strong in urban areas, due to greater consideration being given to improvement in the quality of life. Second the presence of leaders with strong local support can contribute to membership size (for instance, Antoine Waechter and Solange Fernex in the Haut-Rhin). Lastly, mobilisation around important environmental issues (infrastructure routes, nuclear power plants, *inter alia*) can also explain higher membership, although not entirely (for instance, anti-nuclear protest has little purchase in the Seine-Maritime department).

In 1986, nationalising the party was a principal concern of the Greens. A transformation of the party's internal functioning was necessary to do this, particularly in integrating unwilling local groups into the national framework. It was also necessary to reconcile ideological differences

FIGURE 4.1 Green membership by department



Source: Bennahmias and Roche (1992), and Green Party official figures  
All maps produced by Sylvie Vieillard-Coffre

between the various regions. Electoral campaigns provided the main means of slowly nationalising the party. By the end of the 1980s, there had been an increase in the number of members across practically the

whole country, even if the increases themselves were as unevenly spread as the original membership. The departments with the highest number of members were the 'historic' zones (Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin, Rhône and Drôme, the Breton departments, Gironde,<sup>4</sup> Paris, Essonne, and certain Mediterranean coastal departments). Other regions have 'gone greener' more recently – Franche-Comté and Corsica in 1989, for example, the latter after an electoral alliance with the nationalists led by Max Siméoni.

However, since its creation, the membership body has undergone important changes. The Greens have to live with a high level of membership turnover (30 to 35 per cent per year) either because of fluctuating electoral fortunes or because of internal wranglings (31 per cent left after Waechter's departure in 1994). Significant drops have been particularly noticeable in Haut-Rhin and some Alpine departments such as Alpes de Haute-Provence or Hautes-Alpes, although certain areas have been on the up (in the Jura, where Dominique Voynet is based). When the Greens manage to present a clear vision of their political project, membership usually rises, as was the case between 1987 and 1993 after the adoption of the autonomy principle, or since 1994 when the party has placed itself clearly on the left.

The end of the 1990s marked a new stage in the movement's stabilisation. The effects of the split had largely disappeared, and public opinion was once more open to Green themes. From 1994 onwards, the clarification of the party line, closely linked to the institutionalisation of the Green Party after its entry into the National Assembly and into the Jospin government in 1997, solidified the party structure. Since then, all departments have had their own local affiliates,<sup>5</sup> even if these are still unequally spread. For instance, the Ile de France has more than 2,000 members, Corsica only 44, out of a total of 10,372 members in April 2001.

Sociologically, the Greens are essentially taken from the least popular classes. Workers and employees only represent 15 per cent of members. Their education level is higher than the national average, with 22.7 per cent of members holding a Masters or equivalent qualification. Many of them proclaim themselves to have grown up in a left-wing household which 'talked politics'. More broadly, many members live in a milieu of friends and partners sharing their ecologist convictions and having frequent contact with other members.<sup>6</sup>

## A hesitant electoral journey

### A relatively unstable electorate

The Green electorate is very close to the party membership in terms of its sociological profile. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the bulk of the

ecology electorate lay in the middle classes, educated, with medium to high incomes and on the edge of the intellectual set. At the beginning of the 1990s, it began to display a more popular profile (Boy, 1990). Increasing numbers of blue- and white-collar workers began to vote this way, but with important fluctuations according to the period – 28 per cent in 1989, 19 per cent in 1993, and with an overall drop towards the end of the 1990s. On the other hand, retired and inactive voters are no more known for their ecology vote than small business owners and farmers. The gender split was roughly equivalent to that of the population as a whole between 1984 and 1990, with a feminisation in the mid-1990s. As concerns age, the Green electorate is on average younger than other party electorates. The 1990–95 period accentuated this rejuvenation, except in the 1995 presidential election, and since then younger voters have again become more important; 79 per cent of the Cohn-Bendit list voters were less than 49. Along the left–right continuum, the majority of voters place themselves on the left, followed by in the centre, and some elections have reinforced the leftist position – for example, the 1988, 1995 and 2002 presidential elections. The bulk of voters will choose a left-wing candidate in the second round, if one is present.

At the level of issues, voters are principally motivated by environmental concerns, a facet which has remained relatively stable across time. The questions which concern them are less along the lines of mainstream politicking.<sup>7</sup> However, geographical analysis of the spread of this electorate shows that there is no simple correlation between the occurrence of a local environmental crisis and a strong vote for the Greens. Beyond the purely environmental, the vote is motivated by considerations about the nature of democracy, for instance participation, or derives from circumstance – the decline of the PS at the beginning of the 1990s, a rejection of the traditional political system, and so on. Lastly, many votes derive from exchanges with neighbouring parties, notably the PS and sometimes the right (Boy and Chiche, 2002).<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the development of the ecologists remains heavily dependent upon the situation of other political actors. Together, these factors at least partly explain the high volatility of this electorate.<sup>9</sup>

The 2002 presidential election reinforced this pattern. Noël Mamère may have won 350,000 votes more than any previous Green candidate, but the national result was not up to Green expectations. The party was unable to exploit electorally the various environmental disasters which had affected France in recent years.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the extreme-left parties had fought the Greens for part of their electorate. Lastly, one cannot ignore the unfavourable internal situation within the party which had demoralised the membership during the campaign. In the subsequent legislative elections, the total national vote had risen by a little more than 200,000 votes since 1997 (4.5 per cent as opposed to

3.6 per cent in 1997) but the Greens lost four deputies from their 1997 total of seven.

The instability of the Green vote weakens the party's competitiveness and in 2002 particularly opened it to the problems of high abstention and tactical voting. The back-to-back timetabling of the elections helped to minimise the importance of the ecology vote in a context where the right was mobilising for a presidential majority in the National Assembly to put Jacques Chirac's programme into action. Within the left, the absence of Lionel Jospin from the second round of the presidential election provoked a backlash in favour of the Socialists in the legislatures to the detriment of the other *gauche plurielle* members.

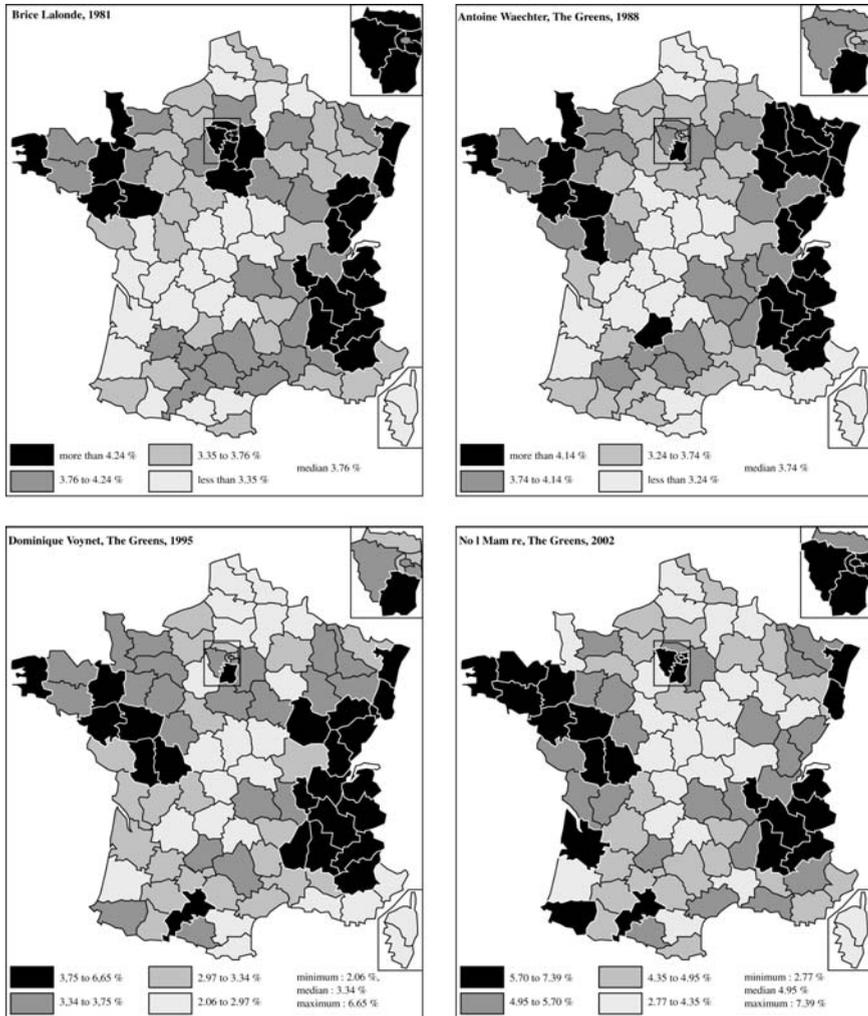
### The electoral learning-curve and managing competition

Despite its short life to date, the Green Party has tried out a number of electoral strategies. By carrying out an independent campaign or by participating in more or less ephemeral alliances, they have gradually mastered their electoral technique. However, one can still ask questions about their territorial implantation. The departments with the highest ecology scores in presidential elections between 1981 and 2002 give an interesting picture of the party's regional strength (Figure 4.2).<sup>11</sup> The areas of predominance are from Brittany to the north of Pays-de-la-Loire and across to Basse-Normandie, together with Alsace, Vosges, the Jura and the Arc Alpin.

This map shows certain areas of weakness as compared with the membership bastions, in particular Nord-Pas-de-Calais and the Mediterranean coastal departments.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, other areas, such as the Alps, see strong electoral support despite the weaker membership presence. Clearly, there is no necessary connection between level of membership activity and level of electoral success, nor is there any evidence of a link between areas of electoral strength in the most recent elections and those which preceded it. PR regional election results broken down by department provide a good example of this (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

The results show strong contrasts among themselves. In 1986, some departments in Corsica, Aquitaine and Poitou-Charentes did not have a Green list, and overall these elections mark a fall-back from the position at the previous elections. This coincides with the end of the construction of political ecology (1974–88). René Dumont obtained 1.4 per cent in the 1974 presidential election and the ecologists won 4.4 per cent (2.2 per cent across the whole of France) in the 1978 legislative elections. With 4.5 per cent at the European elections of 1979, two formations contested the 1984 Europeans and won 3.4 per cent (Greens) and 3.3 per cent (Entente Radicale Ecologiste pour les Etats-Unis d'Europe, led by Brice Lalonde), respectively. The 1986 regionals, despite being

FIGURE 4.2 Green presidential election results (1981–2002)

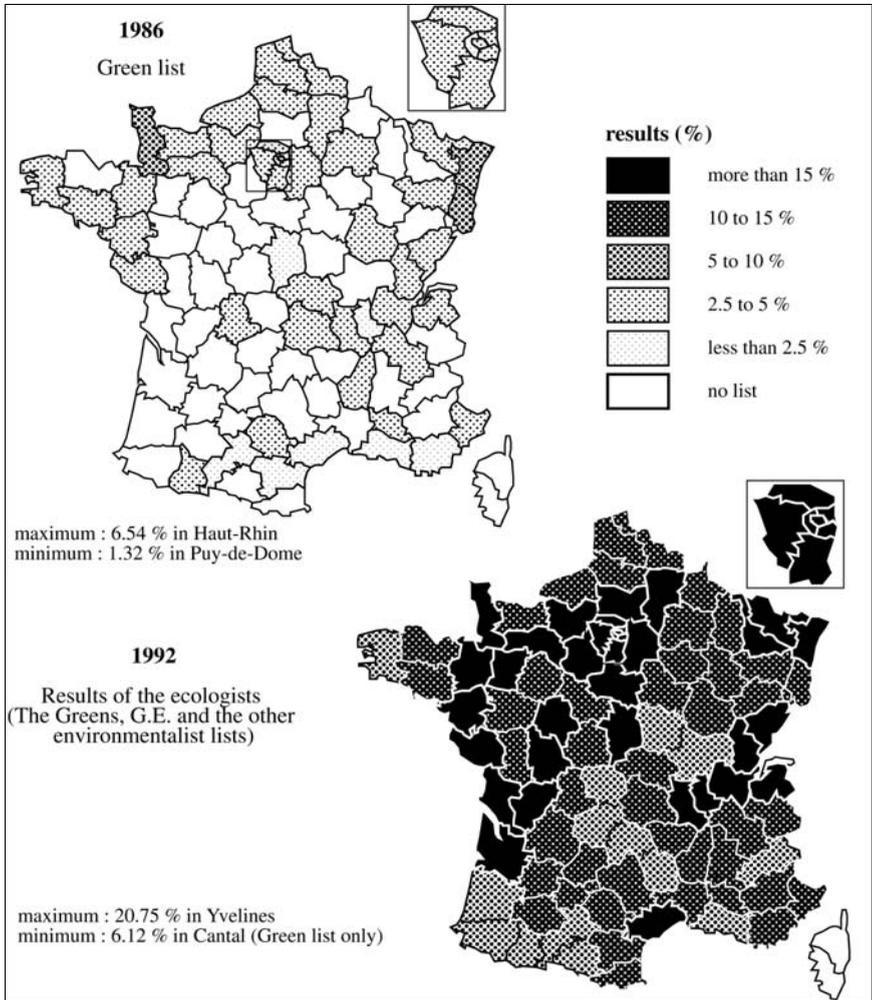


Source: Sainteny (2000), and Green Party official figures

held under PR, were hardly more favourable with 3.4 per cent in departments where a list was presented, and 2.4 per cent and three councillors nationally – Didier Anger in Manche, Antoine Waechter in Haut-Rhin and Andrée Buchmann in Bas-Rhin.

The end of the 1980s marked a turning point for the Greens with good results in the March 1989 municipal elections – 8.1 per cent in towns with more than 9,000 inhabitants. By this time, the Greens held a virtual monopoly of the ecology label, and benefited from a favourable

FIGURE 4.3 Ecologist regional election results by department (1986 and 1992)

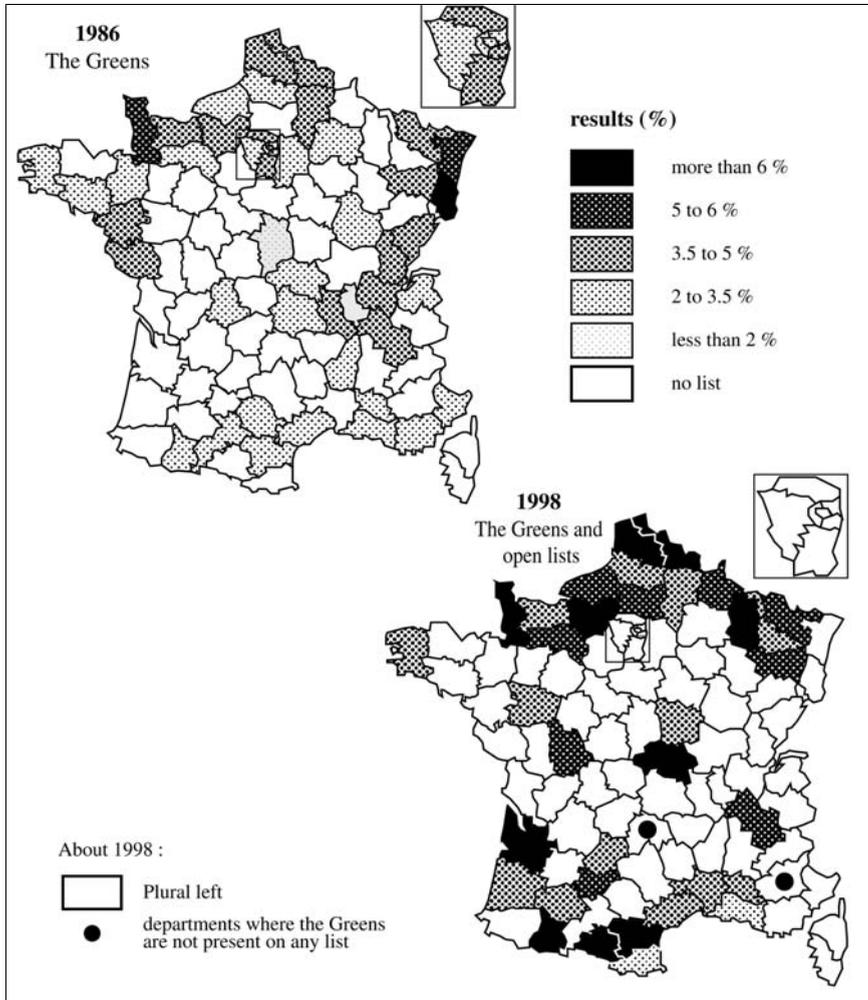


Source: Official Green Party figures

cultural and institutional context (Sainteny, 2000: 117–42). Politically, the PS was particularly weak after a litany of scandals, incumbent weariness and the experience of cohabitation between 1986 and 1988, and part of its electorate turned to the ecologists.

The creation of GE in 1990 by Brice Lalonde aimed to create a competitor for the Greens, developing an ecological perspective closer to that of the PS and presenting an image of ‘realistic reform’. The

FIGURE 4.4 Green electoral strategies by department (1986 and 1998)



Source: Official Green Party figures

March 1992 regional elections bear witness to the success of this action, with GE and the Greens obtaining almost an identical number of votes – 7.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively. The best scores were won where the two lists were in competition.<sup>13</sup> Where the Greens were the only ecology list,<sup>14</sup> their results were better than in 1986, but weaker than the combined GE–Green scores in the previous departments. For example, in Haut-Rhin the Greens won 14.6 per cent of the vote, whereas in Bas-Rhin, the Greens’ 11.14 per cent and GE’s 7.25 per cent

represented almost 18.4 per cent between them. In Nord-Pas-de-Calais, the Greens, led by Marie-Christine Blandin won their only regional presidency. For the party, this region was henceforth treated like a political laboratory, to test and prove their capacity of functioning at the institutional level (Villalba, 1999).

For the 1993 legislative elections, the Greens and GE united. The so-called 'Ecology Entente' won one of their best results under the two-ballot system, with 7.9 per cent of the vote, and around 11 per cent in the constituencies where they fielded candidates. However, these elections also indicated the weakness of the ecology label. Many other groups calling themselves ecologists suddenly appeared a few weeks before the first ballot and ate into the Entente vote (Dolez, 1997). The same was true of 2002.

In the following cantonal, 1994 European and 1995 presidential elections, with scores of 3.5 per cent, 2.9 per cent – their worst ever European result – and 3.4 per cent – with Dominique Voynet as the sole ecology candidate (Szac, 1998) – respectively, the Greens returned to the electoral wasteland. The 1995 municipals were also deemed 'unsatisfactory' by the Greens themselves, returning 6.5 per cent in the constituencies where they stood. Evidently, the ecologist split between the Greens and GE and the split within the Greens themselves were both partly responsible for the drop. In September 1994, Antoine Waechter created the MEI<sup>15</sup> but was unable to challenge the Greens in elections, despite the ideological challenge.<sup>16</sup> For its part, GE progressively moved towards the liberal–Gaullist right, a process which caused significant internal divisions<sup>17</sup> and inexorable electoral decline – 2 per cent at the 1994 Europeans; no presidential candidate in 1995; little presence in the 1997 legislatives; and only three councillors elected in the 1998 regionals. GE's remnants placed themselves in DL's orbit before once again attempting an independent electoral strategy, but with no greater success.<sup>18</sup>

#### Electoral results in the *gauche plurielle*

At the AF in Le Mans in 1995, the Greens decided to engage in a strategy to federate the ecologists on the left. After difficult negotiations and statutory modifications, the Parti Ecologiste, parts of the Alternative Rouge et Verte (AREV) and of the Convention pour une Alternative Progressiste (CAP) and the CES were integrated between the end of 1997 and the beginning of 1998. The unified programme reinforced the central position of the Greens as the principal representative of political ecology. GE was unable to turn itself into a centre- and centre-right-oriented ecology pole for the 1997 legislative elections. Nevertheless, the Greens were not the only repository for the ecology vote. A series of small formations also contest this vote, among others AREV, CAP and the

rightist *Ecologie Bleue*, composed of old members of GE who intended promoting environmental issues from inside the UDF. These formations only obtained weak results but showed that there is an available pool of ecology voters who will move to 'independent' ecology candidates (Boy and Villalba, 1999: 143–62).

The 1997 legislative elections opened a new electoral phase, with the Greens engaging in an alliance with the PS while simultaneously trying to maintain an autonomous political strategy. At the first round, the 455 Green and Green-endorsed candidates won just over one million votes, or 5.1 per cent – at the national level, 4.1 per cent. But hundreds of Green candidates did not reach the 5 per cent threshold. In the 1998 regional elections, the Greens tried to adopt a strategy of alliance, as well as maintaining the principle of autonomy for the regional federations in the electoral procedure. Fifty-four full *gauche plurielle* lists and five partial ones were entered. The 37 other lists presented by the Greens were the so-called 'Green and open lists'. In all, they won 5.6 per cent (Boy and Villalba, 1999). The map of the ecologists' results reflect this double strategy. The results of the Green lists are less good than those of the ecologists in 1992 (Greens plus GE plus other ecology lists) but only just below that of the 1992 Green lists on their own (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). In terms of representatives, the Greens lost 38 of the 105 seats won in 1992. Without doubt, then, this is a downward trend. At the cantonal elections, they obtained 7.6 per cent in the 718 cantons where they fielded candidates. Finally, in the 1999 European elections, despite a head of list with a strong media presence, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a number of salient environmental themes – GM crops, 'mad-cow disease', etc. – and weaker competition from other ecology lists, the 9.7 per cent score was still below the 1989 and 1994 results.

For the municipal and cantonal elections of 11 and 18 March 2001, the Greens repeated this double strategy, presenting 180 independent lists (which won an average of 14 per cent) and taking part in around 300 full or partial *gauche plurielle* lists. The ensemble of 'left' lists (the *gauche plurielle* without the independent Green lists) won 36.4 per cent at the first round and 38.84 per cent at the second in those communes with more than 3,500 inhabitants. At the final count, the Greens won over 1,000 municipal councillors, including around 40 mayors. Only four mayors were elected on independent lists – three in the Ile-de-France and one in Territoire de Belfort – and 25 were elected on 'communal interest' lists,<sup>19</sup> mostly in communes with fewer than 3,500 inhabitants. Thanks to the *gauche plurielle*, the election of mayors in the largest communes, such as Les Mureaux, Saumur, Lyon I or Paris II, reinforced the credibility of the programme, addressing local politics from their own perspective. The Greens also presented more than 700 candidates in the cantonal elections (and endorsed 100 *gauche plurielle* candidates).

They obtained 13 general councillors, bringing their total number of elected representatives to 17 (excluding the Parisian councillors who follow a slightly different procedure). Of these 13, 9 were supported by the other parties from the governing majority.

Since 1974, then, political ecology's electoral results have alternated between phases of growth and phases of decline. Overall, the Greens can only rely on 5–7 per cent of the vote. Well managed within the alliance, these votes have brought important benefits. The peak at the end of the 1990s, when they returned to results on a par with those at the beginning of the decade, resulted from their taking into account both the weight of the Fifth Republic's majoritarian logic and of the left–right cleavage, and even more so the importance of environmental themes to public opinion. Even though the Greens still suffer from a lack of credibility outside the environmental field, their participation in government and strategy of agreements with the *gauche plurielle* have more than made up for this programmatic weakness.

However, they do not seem to have known how to exploit their governmental participation and presence in the National Assembly in the 2002 elections. Although they presented an unprecedented 451 candidates, only 11 of these broke the 30 per cent barrier, with 22 winning more than 20 per cent. For the Green leadership, even a ministerial candidate had no guarantee of success with Dominique Voynet and Guy Hascoët both being defeated in their respective Jura and Nord constituencies. Only Yves Cochet, the former minister for the environment in his new Paris seat and Noël Mamère in Gironde managed to win re-election, together with Martine Billard, also in Paris. Billard, the only new deputy, ironically comes from the left–libertarian stream of the Greens, which had been very critical of its own party's time in government.

### Partner within the *gauche plurielle* government

To understand the relationship of the Greens with the plural-left majority between 1997 and 2002, it is necessary to look at the changes in the party's political and ideological priorities.

#### Implantation on the left

In 1984, the Greens hesitated over the strategic direction that their party should take. For two years, certain influential figures within the party – Jean Brière, Yves Cochet and Didier Anger – prudently shifted their focus towards the left. However, the strong 68 per cent support for Antoine Waechter's motion, 'Ecology is not for marrying!' placed the Greens in a position which proclaimed the irrelevance of traditional political cleavages ('Neither right nor left'), the important of alternative

values (the importance of the environment, the alternative challenge to economic growth) and destined the party to fight for a new 'cultural majority' in France. This radical vision may have allowed the Greens to occupy their own niche in political space and, despite their marginality, to hide a thin manifesto demonstrative of its ideological weaknesses. Gradually, however, this approach became more and more contested by those with a more pragmatic view of political action. Indeed, by 1993, the Greens had ceased to consider the autonomy principal as an absolute block on any political alliance. Waechter was repudiated. Henceforth, the Greens have clearly presented themselves as part of the left. The AF of Le Mans in 1995 discussed the predictable political compromises necessary for agreement with the left – the PS, PRG and PCF – and even future electoral compromises. From January 1997, the Greens and the PS divided up constituencies, agreeing unanimous acceptance of Green leaders, desistment pacts and, last but not least, the financial considerations linked to state financing of parties.

The Greens benefited from the programmatic agreement with the PS in being allowed to promote certain themes which had always formed part of ecology's discourse (see Figure 4.5). Unlike in 2002, the agreement between the Greens and its partners was predicated upon a negotiation of programmatic contents. Particular attention would be given to job-sharing, an issue to be found in Waechter's 1988 campaign, and which was also a fundamental part of Dominique Voynet's (Voynet, 1995). Overall, the contract dealt more with social than with environmental issues.

This strategic development won the Greens national posts: seven Green Party or Green-affiliated deputies sat in the National Assembly<sup>20</sup> and Lionel Jospin gave the Ministry of Territorial Management and the Environment to Dominique Voynet. On 8 April 2000, Guy Hascoët was named Secretary of State for the Interdependent Economy (Economie Solidaire). The Greens had thus passed a further threshold of legitimation. This approach seems to have satisfied ecology members. In 1998, 79 per cent of them thought that governmental participation was a positive thing. The members believed that their representatives had principally been influential in the areas of the environment (70 per cent) and gender parity (61 per cent) (Boy and Villalba, 2000). As far as ideology was concerned, the Greens were seen as presenting a radical front which went beyond the current policies or intentions of the *gauche plurielle* – for instance, 67 per cent wanted the naturalisation of all illegal immigrants.

The European election campaign was an opportunity to show the extent of Green ideology. Cohn-Bendit initially focused his campaign on issues of concern to him, and notably the 'liberal-libertarian' vision of ecology (Cohn-Bendit, 1999). Under pressure from Green members, however, he reoriented his campaign to focus more upon social issues and problems high on the French agenda – pensions, youth development,

FIGURE 4.5 The main themes of the Green–PS programmatic agreement (1997)

- **Economic and social clauses**

Wholesale reduction in working hours via a law on 35-hour working week with no salary reductions; further decrease to 32 hours by 2003; creation of a 'tertiary sector' of social and ecological utility; minimum income guarantees for 18–25 year-olds

- **Democracy and citizenship clauses**

Suppression of article 16 of the constitution; no multiple office-holding; gender parity; adoption of statutes for local representatives; reinitiation of decentralisation of the regions; re-establishment of asylum law and *droit du sol*

- **International clauses**

Social and environmental charters to be introduced into a new Maastricht Treaty; establishment of sustainable development criteria for single currency; elimination of weapons of mass destruction

- **Territorial and environmental clauses**

Moratorium on building of nuclear reactors and MOX production until 2010; closure of Super-Phoenix reactor programme; reduction of nuclear waste stocks. Reviewing of waste treatment in the Hague, and no new contracts signed by France; an energy law by 2005 at the latest; development of the rail network; moratorium on motorway construction; review of taxation on fossil fuels; introduction of eco-tax on pollutant energy sources; abandoning of Rhine-Rhône canal project; implementation of 'Natura 2000' directive

minimum income guarantees, etc. Nevertheless, he continued to promote his 'third left' perspective as his own political strategy.

After the spring elections in 2002, the Greens asserted their desire to revitalise the left camp via ideological renovation – 'reaffirming left-wing values' and in particular those concerning social and environmental policy. The influence of the electoral results and the need to reorganise the balance of power on the left will have important consequences for the internal development of the party.

#### Factional influence and its limits

Internal debate within the Greens has remained a source of tension between factions ever since the party's creation. They represent the support of certain members for the leaders, and are based upon ideological or strategic concerns. Increasingly, however, factions are becoming a means of attacking other candidates or securing membership benefits. At the

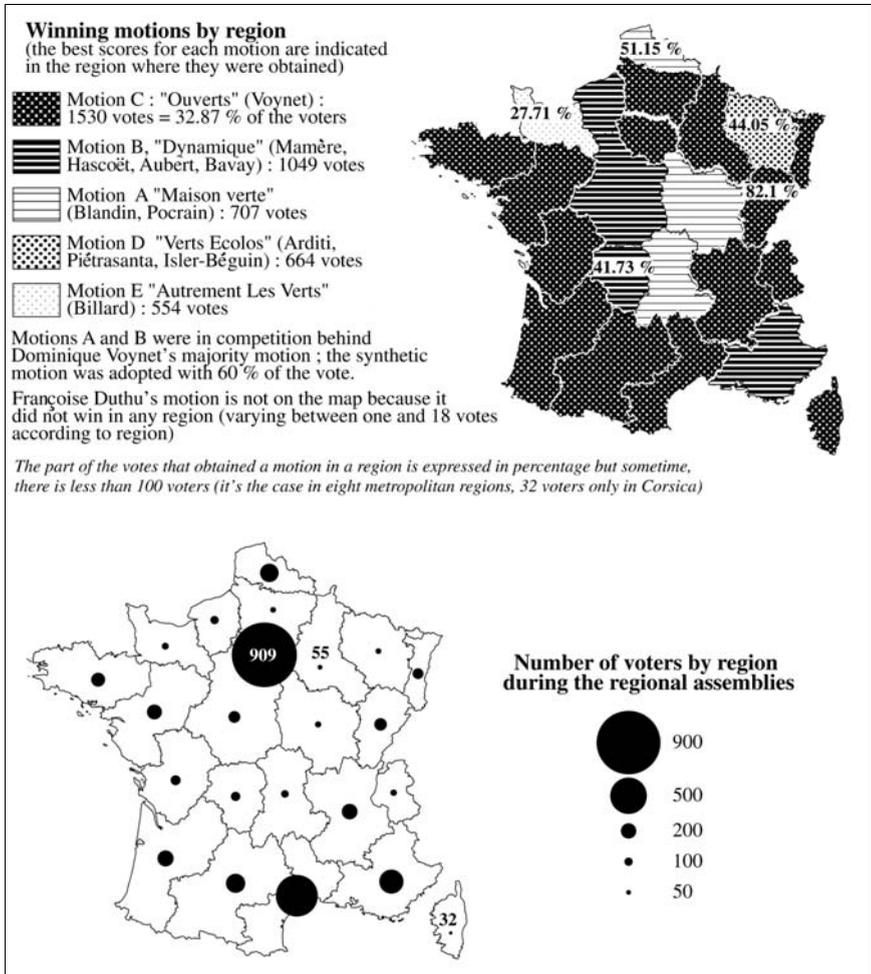
Toulouse Congress on 11–12 November 2000, six main factions vied for power.<sup>21</sup> The ideological differences were sometimes difficult to discern, and it was particularly on matters of electoral strategy that divisions appeared. In fact, the unequal geographic distribution of members strongly affects the political influence of the factions (Vieillard-Coffre, 2001: 147–50). Thus, certain departments had an effect on the vote – Dominique Voynet won in the Jura, of course, but also in six of the eight regions where membership is high, and in particular in the largest, the Ile-de-France (see Figure 4.6).

But the result at Toulouse was also in part due to the confrontation of two major and fairly similar factions: Maison Verte and Dynamiques. The first opposed Dominique Voynet's strategy, while the second chose to ally with her. The Maison Verte list led by Marie-Christine Blandin and Stéphane Pocrain won in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais with half of this region's votes and just over 100 in the Ile-de-France. In contrast to this list, the one led by Noël Mamère and Guy Hascoët was important not in the regions of its two leaders, but in those with the most members (251 votes in Ile-de-France and 122 in Languedoc-Roussillon, as opposed to 63 votes in Aquitaine and 80 in Nord-Pas-de-Calais). The weight of a faction thus comes from its success in the regions with the most members, even if the faction itself does not win.

The primary to elect the ecology candidate for the 2002 presidential election demonstrates the limited use of factions. Five candidates took part. A 21-year-old candidate, Alice Crété, was supported by ALV – she won 12.59 per cent. Verts Ecolo and Dynamiques put their support behind Etienne Tête (9.71 per cent) and Noël Mamère respectively. The writer and regional councillor, Yves Frémion, was not supported by any faction and won 8.20 per cent; nor was Alain Lipietz, although he is considered to be a member of Dominique Voynet's inner circle. In the first round in May 2001, Mamère won 42.78 per cent of the vote, with Lipietz taking 25.55 per cent. These two candidates insisted that their candidacies did not reflect a game playing upon the support of different factions. Alain Lipietz won the surprise victory, managing to gather a majority of the second-round vote without the official support of a faction or of the Green leadership. He won 3,528 votes against Mamère's 3,183. Lipietz's victory was based principally on the level of constancy in the different regions' support for him. While Mamère scored highly in certain regions, Lipietz at least doubled his score in every region (see Figure 4.7).

However, Lipietz's candidacy did not satisfy certain national leaders. Making good use of certain media *faux pas* committed by Lipietz, the party apparatus forced him to submit to a second approval process by the members. On 29 October 2001, with 81 per cent of the vote demanding his removal, Lipietz stood down in favour of Noël Mamère. At this stage, it is less the factions and more personal rivalries and media

FIGURE 4.6 Motions in the Toulouse Congress and regional assembly voting



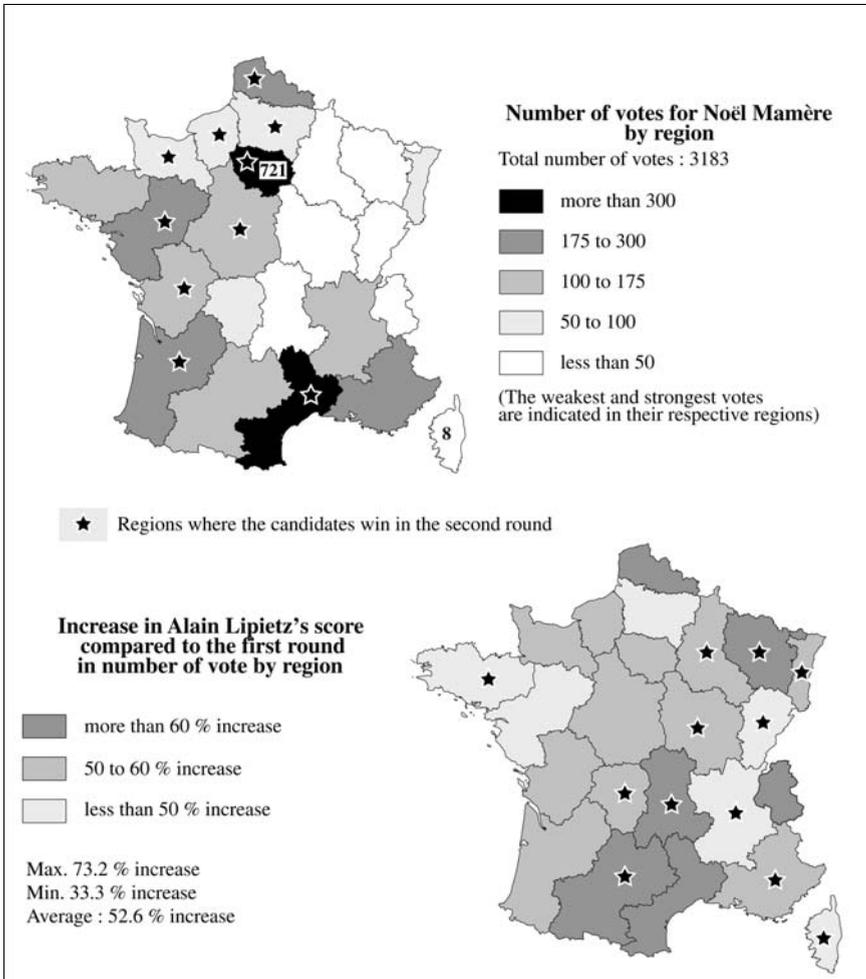
Source: Green Party official figures

scrutiny which determine the balance of power within the party. From now on, membership support will not be a guarantee against the party's interests as perceived by the Green leadership.

### Conclusion

For the first time in their history, the Greens are able to assess their participation in a governing coalition. They had ceased to be a marginal

FIGURE 4.7 Green presidential primaries in 2002



Source: Green Party official figures

and idealistic member of the party system, and had become an important partner within the *gauche plurielle*. However, this unprecedented situation should not be allowed to disguise two uncertainties. First, the Greens cannot claim the ecology vote for themselves alone as the 2002 elections showed once more.<sup>22</sup> Without any doubt, managing an independent left-wing ecology pole will become a major issue in the near future. The evaluation of their time in power is the second uncertainty: what have they gained from this systematic power-sharing with the PS? Unsurprisingly, internal debate over this has been rife.

For some Greens, such as the Autrement les Verts, Ecologie et Démocratie or Vert Ecolo factions, government policy was not sufficiently swayed by Green policy. They have denounced the failure of the 1997 Green–PS agreements, and in particular the continued pursuit of a nuclear strategy, the ignoring of thousands of illegal immigrants, the renaissance of road and motorway construction, insufficient consideration of the greenhouse effect, and the failure to introduce PR electoral reform for 2002. Some, such as Autrement les Verts, recommended leaving government; others would have simply preferred to clarify and consolidate the terms of the Green–PS agreement, and consequently to redefine the policy priorities and electoral negotiations – the line taken by Dynamiques Vertes, Maison Verte and Ouvert. Debate is equally as lively on what to take away from their time in government.<sup>23</sup> It is clear that constructing a new political project will force the Greens to look long and hard at their own agenda and organisation in order to ascertain the key positive points from their time in power, and subsequently to use these to strengthen the legitimacy which derives from their unique political stance.

## Notes

- 1 All motions winning the required majority at the national level, once the regional scores are added, are considered passed and are therefore not debated at the FA.
- 2 The amount varies between regions, but the lowest amount is EURO 30, equivalent to the national allocation.
- 3 This cartographic depiction of membership can also be calculated using the number of members as a proportion of the departmental population. However, the raw figures illustrate more clearly the weight of certain regions within the national organisation.
- 4 The influence of Noël Mamère is clearly significant, but needs to be put into context. He became Mayor of Bègles and vice-president of the *communauté urbaine* of Bordeaux in the 1989 municipal elections, standing on the presidential majority ticket. He subsequently moved to GE, before returning to the Greens in 1997.
- 5 Aube and Cantal appear in white because the number of members is tiny; Réunion and Guadeloupe each have a local organisation.
- 6 Source: survey by Daniel Boy (CEVIPOF), Agnès Roche (Clermont-Ferrand University) and Bruno Villalba (CRAPS-Lille 2), 1998, with the cooperation of the Greens. The data can be downloaded at <http://www.les-verts.org/documents/enquete.html>
- 7 [http://www.sofres.fr/etudes/pol/130700\\_references\\_n.html](http://www.sofres.fr/etudes/pol/130700_references_n.html)
- 8 Conversely, PCF bastions are often Green-electoral wastelands.
- 9 In 1995, 26 per cent of Voinet voters made their choice ‘at the last moment’, compared to an average of 11 per cent; 17 per cent made their choice ‘in the last few days of the campaign’, as against 10 per cent on average.

- 10 For instance, the major storm in December 1999, the sinking of the *Erika* and *Ievoli Sun* petrol-tankers off the Brittany coast in December 1999 and November 2000 respectively, and the flooding of the Somme in the successive winters of 2000–1 and 2001–2.
- 11 The 1974 election is distinct from the rest: for the first time the ecologists fielded a presidential candidate, René Dumont, an agronomist not previously known for his ecologist leanings. A political presence for ecology only began to develop in the municipal elections of 1977.
- 12 It should be noted that the electoral results, in terms of valid votes, are figures which take into account the size of the population, whereas the membership figures do not.
- 13 Especially in the Parisian district: 20.75 per cent in Yvelines and 20.44 per cent in Val d'Oise.
- 14 In Hautes-Alpes (9.94 per cent), Ariège (9.6 per cent), Corrèze (7.12 per cent), Creuse (8.7 per cent) Haute-Garonne (8.18 per cent), Gers (12.42 per cent), Haute-Loire (10.2 per cent), Haute-Marne (14.51 per cent), Nièvre (7.8 per cent), Hautes-Pyrénées (9.16 per cent), Haut-Rhin (14.6 per cent) Saône et Loire (9.01 per cent), Deux-Sèvres (10.68 per cent), Tarn (6.53 per cent), Territoire de Belfort (14.43 per cent).
- 15 See their website: [www.novomundi.com/mei/](http://www.novomundi.com/mei/).
- 16 Electorally, they have had extremely indifferent results – no candidate in the 1995 presidential election; 1.5 per cent in the 1999 European elections.
- 17 The following splinters were formed: 1992 – François Donzel's Alliance pour l'Ecologie et la Démocratie (AED); 1993 – Jean-François Caron's Ecologie Autrement (EA); 1994 – Noël Mamère's Convergence Ecologie Solidarité (CES), etc. Some were inclined towards the PS (AED) or negotiated agreements with the Greens (EA). Others, after some hesitation, finally joined the Greens (CES).
- 18 [www.generation-ecologie.com/](http://www.generation-ecologie.com/).
- 19 Representing that diverse group often labelled 'apolitical'.
- 20 Marie-Hélène Aubert, Yves Cochet, Guy Hascoët and D. Voynet (Greens); André Aschieri, Noël Mamère, and Jean-Michel Marchand (ecology deputies in Radical, Citoyen et Vert parliamentary group); and Michèle Rivasi (ecology deputy affiliated to PS parliamentary group).
- 21 Dynamiques vertes led by Guy Hascoët and Noël Mamère; Notre Maison Verte led by Marie-Christine Blandin; Ouverts led by Dominique Voynet; Autrement les Verts led by Martine Billard; Verts Ecolo led by Maryse Ardit and Etienne Tête; and Ecologie et Démocratie led by Françoise Duthu.
- 22 In these elections, of the 32 formations presenting at least 50 candidates nationally, 8 stood under an ecology banner.
- 23 See the CNIR debates of 23–24 June 2001, and the *EcoRev* dossiers (<http://ecorev.org>).