

The Green Party in the U.S. is a “Movement Party”

Interview with David Cobb

By [Ann Garrison](#)

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*David Cobb is the campaign manager of the Green Party presidential candidate **Jill Stein** and vice presidential candidate **Ajamu Baraka**. I spoke to him on October 22, 2016.*

Ann Garrison: David Cobb, most people who’ve even considered voting for Jill Stein are familiar with her platform now, with the Green New Deal, the peace offensive and the idea that “We don’t need no friggiin’ wall; we just need to stop invading other countries.” What they may not understand is the significance of the five percent goal, the goal of getting five percent nationally in this election. Can you explain that?



David Cobb: Yes, Ann. First we have to understand that, if the Green Party receives five percent of the overall vote nationally, we will qualify for a minimum of \$10 million for matching funds for the next election cycle. The Stein/Baraka campaign will finish this campaign probably raising something between four to five million dollars. So imagine starting a campaign with more money than we raised during this entire election cycle. That’s what we’re talking about. And it’s not just about the money. It’s also about the apparatus and institution building, because we are running a campaign to guarantee being on the ballot in the next election cycle. Each state has different ballot access laws, but we are focusing our effort, focusing our energy, focusing our candidate time on those states where we can maintain ballot access. So the point I’m making is that the Green Party strategy is about building an apparatus for the future.

We’re not merely a protest vote, we’re a movement vote. We are preparing to take and exercise state power. We know that this struggle must be protracted, this cannot happen in just one election cycle. A political revolution is absolutely necessary in this country, but a political revolution cannot be run, r-u-n, in just one election cycle. And a political revolution cannot be won, w-o-n, by any one candidate or two candidates, no matter how good she or

they are. A real political revolution requires sustained effort over time, an understanding of how power operates, an understanding of the historic moment that we're in, an understanding of a shared political analysis around race and gender and class and sexual orientation, and understanding of social, political and economic institutions. You see, the Green Party is a serious, credible revolutionary force and I'm inviting people to think about the Green Party differently than they may have before this campaign.

AG: As a bunch of tree huggers.

DC: Hahahaha. Ann, there's worse things to hug than trees!

AG: Good point. Like maybe Wall Street and the military industrial complex. Now I want to know about the ten million dollars. Would it go into the party's infrastructure?

DC: That money would be available for the candidate and the party, for the party's convention and for the party's nominee. So there are multiple ways the party would be able to leverage that five percent and we would be able to leverage it.

AG: A lot of the complaints about the Green Party are that it doesn't spend enough time and money on its local infrastructure, on local party building, local elections, that it just runs a candidate for president every four years.

DC: Well, let's first actually dispel that myth. The reality is that there are approximately 400,000 registered Greens and Green Party members across this country. The second thing is that there have been thousands, literally thousands, of Green Party local candidates in the last eight years. The Greens have elected hundreds of people to office at the local level, and Greens win about 34% of the time that we run in local elections. So please do not allow independent media to repeat a myth that the corporate media creates. The Green Party is actually very involved in local elections, and Greens are very involved in multiple movements for peace, justice, democracy and ecology across this country. The problem has been that Greens have not been seen being Green, but Greens are usually on the front lines of most of the social justice and social change efforts in this country.

AG: As Jill Stein surrogate YahNé Ndgo said, the Green Party is a party of activists.

DC: There's no doubt. We aim to be the electoral arm of the social movements that so many of our members are engaged in.

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