

## Page 5. Small parties in the 1990s

By 1990 two other parties emerged. Jim Anderton, formerly a Labour MP and party president, formed the NewLabour Party in 1989. In the 1990 election it won 5.1% of the vote, and Anderton retained his electorate seat, giving NewLabour a presence in Parliament. The newly formed Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand also stood candidates in 1990, winning 6.8% of the vote but no seats.

### God and party politics

The Christian Heritage Party, established in 1989, disbanded in 2006. The Christian Democrats suffered a similar fate – set up in 1995, they vanished into the small UnitedFuture coalition. Unlike some democracies, where God is frequently invoked in speeches, New Zealand party politics is largely secular and parties based on religious values have not fared well in elections.

In December 1991 NewLabour, the Green Party, Mana Motuhake and the Democratic Party (previously Social Credit) formed a new grouping called the Alliance. By pooling resources they hoped to enhance their chances of winning more seats in the 1993 election. The Alliance won two seats. In 1996, the first election under the MMP (mixed-member proportional) system, the Alliance gained 18.4% of the vote, winning 13 seats. A fifth party, the Liberal party, formed in 1992 by two National MPs protesting against their government's welfare reforms, also joined the Alliance.

### The Green Party

The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand was formed in 1990, drawing its members from the environmental movement, the by then defunct Values Party, and a smattering of other left-wing interests.

In its structure and beliefs the party differed from the standard model. Opposed to centralised control and 'presidential' leadership, the Greens made decisions by consensus (when possible), gave electorate groups greater independence than was usual, and had a joint leadership (one male, one female) and a number of spokespeople.

Participation in the Alliance was strongly debated within the Greens, and in 1997 it left the Alliance. The Greens had been one of the strongest elements in the grouping, and when standing candidates on its own behalf in 1999 it won seven seats in Parliament. By then the party, which had been seen as a single-issue party, had broadened its policy base.

Following the 2017 election the Greens entered into a confidence and supply agreement with Labour, which formed a coalition government with New Zealand First.

### New Zealand First

Another splinter party, New Zealand First, established and led by Winston Peters, broke away from National prior to the 1993 election and won 8.4% of the vote and two seats. In 1996, after the first MMP election, the party had a 'kingmaker' role – the party it went into coalition