

Green and Red between Tensions and Opportunities: A History of the Formation of the
West German Green Party, 1968-1981

by

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B.A., University of Guelph, 2005

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Abstract

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In the West German federal election of 1983, the Green party won enough votes to earn seats the Bundestag. The young party's fame grew exponentially as a result and they have become, arguably, the most well-known of all environmental parties. This project explores the formation of the Greens. The Greens' political identity is reassessed by examining the party's roots in the new social movements and the formation of the party, regionally and federally. I contend that the Greens represent a political experiment whose establishment as a parliamentary party was never certain. The Greens attempted to integrate "postmaterialist" issues and grassroots organizational forms into the traditional politics of the Federal Republic. This paper also establishes the opportunities available for a new party within the context of the development of the left in post-war West Germany.

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Dedication

For Lee.

Introduction

On February 25th 2008, one day after the election to Hamburg's regional legislature, German newspapers began to speculate about a "revolution in German politics."¹ Voters had given no party a majority and left both traditional coalition partnerships, the Christian Democrats (CDU) with the Liberals (FDP) and the Social Democrats (SPD) with the Greens (Die Grünen), unable to form a government. The revolution to which pundits were referring concerned a possible alliance between the Greens and their "former class enemies"², the CDU. CDU leader and mayor of Hamburg, Ole von Beust, was quoted immediately following the election, saying that he "could easily imagine a black-green³ coalition. That would be a cool experiment."⁴ In spite of the programmatic differences between the two parties, Renate Künast, the Greens' floor leader in the Bundestag, stated that the Greens "have always tried to look beyond traditional solutions for new answers to old questions."⁵ However unexpected, the conservative Christian Democrats and the Greens, born of the social movements in the 1970s, solidified the coalition after their written agreement was approved at a Green party conference on April 27, 2008.⁶

The Greens first shocked West German politics in 1983 when the party won 5.6 per cent of the vote in that year's federal election and thus obtained 28 seats in the

¹ David Crossland, "After Hamburg Election, the Experimentation Phase Has Begun," *Der Spiegel*, February 25, 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de> (accessed August 2, 2008).

² David Gordon Smith, "Will Greens and Conservatives Marry In Hamburg?" *Der Spiegel*, March 6, 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de> (accessed August 2, 2008).

³ "Black-green" refers to the traditional colours associated with the two parties: the CDU have used black and while the Greens' hue is obvious.

⁴ "Merkel's Party Loses Support Again," *Der Spiegel*, February 25, 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de> (accessed August 2, 2008).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Hamburg's Greens Approve Landmark Coalition Deal With CDU," *Deutsche Welle*, April 4, 2008, <http://www.dw-world.de> (accessed August 2, 2008).

Bundestag. The results of the 1983 election were shocking for two reasons. The first reason is that the Greens' entrance made them the first new party to enter the Bundestag in over two decades. Since 1961, the Bundestag had been dominated by a "two and a half" party system, with governing authority shifting between the CDU and the SPD while the FDP played the role of kingmaker.⁷ This political concentration culminated in 1976 when the three Bundestag parties took 99.1 per cent of the popular vote.⁸ The Greens' entry in 1983 ended the "two and a half" parties period. The results of the 1983 election were shocking for a second reason: the nature of the new party itself. The Greens presented themselves as an alternative to the other parties; they were an experiment in "new politics"⁹, blending the influence of the post-war "New Left" and ecology. Until then, the Bundestag had been dominated by a very conservative politics. The legacy of the reconstruction period after the war was a Federal Republic dominated by a consensus on the central role of stability and security.¹⁰ Older men in dark suits concentrated on economic development and dismissed the concerns of citizens who experienced the negative effects of that development. The Greens and their calculatedly relaxed symbolism (jeans, sweaters, sneakers and flower pots in the Bundestag¹¹) brought an immediately noticeable shift.

Some scholars have highlighted the election in 1983 as transformative not only for the party system in West German, but for the Greens themselves. Thomas Poguntke

⁷ Andrei Markovits, "Reflections and Observations on the 1983 Bundestag Elections and Their Consequences for West German Politics," *New German Critique*, no. 28 (Winter 1983), 9.

⁸ Thomas Poguntke, "The German Party System: Eternal Crisis?" Keele European Parties Research Unit (KEPRU), (Keele: School of Politics, International Relations and the Environment, 2001), 6.

⁹ Ferdinand Müller-Rommel, "Social Movements and the Greens: New Internal Politics in Germany," *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 13 (1985), 63.

¹⁰ E. Gene Frankland and Donald Schoonmaker, *Between Protest and Power: The Green Party in Germany* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 6-7.

¹¹ Paul Hockenos, *Joschka Fischer and the Making of the Berlin Republic: An Alternative History of Postwar Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3-4.

argues that the entry of the Greens into the Bundestag marked the end of the first phase of the party's development. For Poguntke, the Greens remained below the threshold of "fully-fledged party"¹² until 1983 because they had not yet crossed the "threshold of representation",¹³ which he cites from Mogens Pedersen's 1982 article on the typology of party lifespans. Poguntke acknowledges the Greens crossed the thresholds of "declaration" and "authorization" before 1983. Nevertheless, he contends that they were not a developed party until after the 1983 election because the party was then dominated by a fundamentalist faction sceptical about the efficacy of parliamentary representation. Only after 1983 did the party supposedly undergo some dramatic organizational changes. This argument underrates the influence of both the social movement experience and the process of the Greens' formation on their subsequent development.

This paper will argue that the Greens were shaped by their predecessors in the social movements of the 1970s and by the unpredictable formation process into a fully-fledged party by 1981, the year of their first federal electoral competition. Poguntke makes clear that the post-1983 period, in which the Greens had to contend with the powerful "logic of parliamentarization"¹⁴, led to the intra-party Realo-Fundi conflict and altered the organizational structure of the party. It was in that period that the Greens were transformed from a self-professed "anti-party party" into a contender party. However, it is not clear that the Greens before 1983 were below the threshold of a fully-fledged party. The factionalism of the Realo-Fundi conflict was evident earlier, in the

¹² Thomas Poguntke, "From Nuclear Building Sites to Cabinet: The Career of the German Green Party," Keele European Parties Research Unit (KEPRU), (Keele: School of Politics, International Relations and the Environment, 2001), 5.

¹³ Mogens Pedersen, "Towards a Typology of Party Lifespans and Minor Parties," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1982), 7.

¹⁴ Poguntke, "From Nuclear Building Sites...", 7.

competition between left-wing and right-wing groups during the first Green party conferences at both the regional and federal levels, starting in 1978. Furthermore, the logic of parliamentarization was not unprecedented: regional Green parties had attained seats in a number of Länder by 1983, beginning with Bremen and Baden-Württemberg in 1979.¹⁵ Though the structural conformity required by parliament was far greater than that of Pedersen's threshold of declaration, in West Germany the 1967 Law on Parties required the Greens to create a formal structure by 1980. In spite of their scepticism, the Greens chose to become a party before 1983 and had to deal with the attendant tensions of that decision thereafter. There were also those members of the party who, from the very first formative meetings, were not troubled by the transformation into a party. For all these reasons, I believe Pogunkte's periodization is misleading.

In order to show how the development of the Greens led to a fully constituted party by 1980, I will first address the Greens' predecessors in Chapter One. The emergence of a green electorate in the Federal Republic in the 1960s and 1970s will be explored through the history of the student movement and the "new social movements"¹⁶, considered by many as the precursors to the Greens. The party's history begins in these movements. The opposition to perceived authoritarianism in the form of nuclear power and nuclear weapons, the ecologically destructive effects of industrial capitalism, and discrimination against women and minorities took on novel, extraparliamentary forms in West Germany. These groups preceded and inspired the formation of and the forms adopted by the Green party. The context of their emergence in the history of West Germany more broadly is also important, as John Ely has written.

¹⁵ Werner Hülsberg, *The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile* (Verso: London, 1988), 245.

¹⁶ Ruud Koopmans, *Democracy from Below: New Social Movements and the Political Systems in West Germany* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 11-12.

After World War II, its disproportionately rapid industrial and economic expansion contrasted with a reduced political influence, contained discretely within the structures of Atlanticism. This character intensified the “post-materialist” element in Germany that led to the Greens. Germany had a proclivity to focus on issues of democracy and quality of life, rather than on military and economic security, as character influences of its postwar condition ... Geopolitically contained, Germany became an economically flourishing republic ... Deflated nationalism and industrial advancement allowed Germany’s “new class” of urban professionals to develop a “left interpellation in the college-educated green voters ... The Greens’ development, seen in the larger context of the left, demonstrates the importance of a *left green* politics as the historic contribution of the German Greens.¹⁷

In Chapter Two, the transformation of the social movements into a “green” party will be analyzed in greater detail. The “weakness of an historic communist left” and the “legitimation crisis” faced by the Social Democratic government during the 1970s opened space for a new party of the left.¹⁸ The Greens filled that space. However, the transition was not without obstacles. The Greens united a diverse range of constituent movements under the banner of ecology and experimented with anti-hierarchical, grassroots party structures. Neither lent themselves to easy incorporation in the Federal Republic’s parliamentary system. Rather, the Greens were, in their formative period, riven by factional struggles about the party’s programmatic direction and the extent to which representatives of extraparliamentary movements should incorporate themselves into a governing structure that the movements regarded dubiously. I believe that by examining the factional struggles and the role of a few prominent members of the party the Greens’ position as a herald of the transformation of the left and as representatives of leftist version of ecological politics becomes readily apparent. The Greens’ political

¹⁷ John Ely, “Green Politics and the Transformation of the Left in Germany,” *New German Critique*, no. 72 (Autumn 1997), 177-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 179-181.

experiment, a response to the opportunities on the left of the political spectrum, resulted in a party that achieved an unprecedented level of success for an “ecology” party. Their transition from movement to party integrated the ideals of the sixty-eighters and the new social movements into West German politics and laid the foundation for a “semiparliamentarized”¹⁹ party that would become crucial to the pattern of coalition governments across Germany.

However, it was never certain that the Greens’ predecessors would ever form a party. In fact, one of the social movements’ primary targets was the political system and the mainstream parties that dominated it. The often too-close relationships between the government bureaucracy and large corporations left many social movement activists cynical about the effectiveness of representative government. They struggled to develop a new political model: a more openly democratic, grassroots politics. But the Greens were not altogether novel; rather, the party was built up from organizations and ideas that preceded it. The Greens were a contraption, not a contrivance.

Evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould’s essay, “The Panda’s Peculiar Thumb”, offers a useful analogy. Gould discusses the occurrence of an enlarged foreleg bone, called the ‘radial thumb,’ that has become a sixth, thumb-like digit allowing giant pandas to manipulate their primary food stuff, bamboo. He also describes how this modified bone of the foreleg is found in other bears but the extent of its development in the panda is unique.²⁰ In order to more efficiently consume its food, pandas were forced to:

¹⁹ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 170. The term is used to contrast the party at the end of the 1980s with its self-identity at formation: the anti-party party.

²⁰ Stephen Jay Gould, “The Panda’s Peculiar Thumb,” *Natural History* vol. 87, no. 9 (November 1978), 26.

... use parts on hand and settle for an enlarged wrist bone and a somewhat clumsy, but quite workable, solution. The radial thumb is, to use Michael Ghiselin's phrase, *a contraption, not a lovely contrivance*. But it does its job and excites our imagination all the more because it builds on such improbable foundations.²¹

The Greens are the “panda’s thumb” of post-WWII leftist politics in West Germany. In spite of the way some critics have disparaged the party because of its transition away from environmental ideals influential in inducing the formation of a party, the Greens were never a “lovely contrivance” of ecological politics. Their history and formation bear the marks of both the range of social movements in the 1970s and the alienated left that floundered between a centrist Social Democratic party and a proscribed communist party. The Greens incorporated both elements, social movement activists and left sympathizers, in their formation, the result of which was a party “jury rigged from a limited set of available components”²²: a contraption, not a contrivance.

The Greens’ improbable foundations are considered by scholars to date from after WWII and lay within the tensions between the left and the right in post-war West Germany. The party’s roots have not often been linked to a longer environmental tradition. However, Anna Bramwell famously attempted to link the Greens directly to the history of environmentalism in Germany more generally, specifically to the *völkisch* nationalism of the pre-WWII era. Most controversially, she attempted to associate the Greens with Richard Walter Darré and the Nazis’ ‘blood and soil’ (Blut und Boden) ideology.²³ She has been repeatedly challenged.²⁴ Colin Riordan answered Bramwell

²¹ Ibid., 30.

²² Ibid., 20.

²³ Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Richard Walter Darré and Hitler’s “Green Party”*, (Abbotsbrook, Buckinghamshire, UK: Kensal Press, 1985) & “Ricardo Walther Darré – was this man ‘Father of the Greens’?”, *History Today*, vol. 34 (1984), 7-13

directly: “There are no grounds for suspecting some direct link to Die Grünen. None of the authors of the main tenets of green political theory and practice who remained in the party after 1980 would have the remotest sympathy with such a tradition.”²⁵ Accordingly, the history of the Greens does not extend farther back than the end of World War II.

It also does not extend past the conceptions of ecology that began to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s, specifically in the Club of Rome’s *Limits to Growth*.²⁶ Ecologism, distinct from both of its related predecessors, environmentalism and conservationism, replaces an anthropocentric worldview with a non-anthropocentric one: put simply, humankind is a part of nature, not above it. Andrew Dobson draws the distinction in this way:

The principal difference between the two is that ecologism argues that care for the environment (a fundamental characteristic of the ideology in its own right, of course) presupposed radical changes in our relationship with it, and thus in our mode of social and political life. Environmentalism, on the other hand, would argue for a ‘managerial’ approach to environmental problems, secure in the belief that they can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption.²⁷

The Greens, in their early years, demanded radical changes. They argued that the economic, social and political structure of West Germany needed to be fundamentally altered to emphasize the importance of environmental concerns and other previously ignored issues. The Greens were not only a manifestation of latent environmental concern among the West German populace. Rather, the party inherited and, using ecology as a coagulant, transformed the legacy of the non-communist left.

²⁴ Piers H.G. Stephens, “Blood, Nor Soil: Anna Bramwell and the Myth of ‘Hitler’s Green Party’”, *Organization & Environment*, vol. 14(2), July 2001: 173-187

²⁵ Colin Riordan, “Green Ideas in Germany: A Historical Survey,” in *Green Thought in German Culture*, Colin Riordan, ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3-5

²⁷ Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1992), 13.

The Greens' roots in the non-communist, or 'New', left will be explored in the following chapters. From the student movement in the late 1960s, to the new social movements of the mid-1970s and the regional green voting lists of the late 1970s, the groundwork of a federal New Left ecology party was laid by 1981. These early years before 1983, the celebrated entrance of the Greens into the Bundestag, are important to examine in detail because it was then that the party exhibited all of its characteristics as the inheritor of the New Left. The tensions of the transition from movement politics to parliamentary politics, and the responses of the various foundational elements to the opportunities available in West German politics, especially left of the SPD, shaped a party supported by many who did not believe the mainstream parties represented their political concerns.

In their own words, the Greens were “the alternative to the traditional parties”, representatives of the “spontaneously” emergent social movements and citizen’s initiatives in parliamentary politics.²⁸ In scholars’ terms, the Greens were a party political manifestation of “new politics”²⁹, contesting the establishment parties’ faith in infinite economic growth and disregard of the rising spectre of the ecological crisis. The Greens not only asked new questions, reacting to the dangers of the “risk society”³⁰, they pioneered new forms of political organization based on a grassroots model influenced by the extraparliamentary demonstrations of the West German social movements. Their experiment in creating an anti-hierarchical party was intended to reflect their conception

²⁸ Hans Fernbach, trans. *Die Grünen: Programme of the German Green Party*, (London: Heretic Books, 1983), preamble, 1.

²⁹ Thomas Poguntke, “The ‘New Politics Dimension’ in European Green Parties,” in *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, ed. Ferdinand Müller-Rommel (Westview Press: London, 1989), 175-194, especially 174-178.

³⁰ Ulrich Beck, *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

of a more democratically organized society.³¹ The Greens introduced a “postmaterialist” and ecological consciousness to the traditional stability politics of the Federal Republic, challenging the status quo from within.

³¹ Poguntke, “From Nuclear Building Sites...”, 1.

Chapter One: Concretizing Utopia

The Pre-History of the Greens from the Student Movement to the New Social Movements, 1968-1977

Introduction

The history of the Greens begins not with the formal announcement of the party, federally, after conferences in late 1979 and early 1980, but with the emergence, across the Federal Republic from the late 1960s into the 1980s, of the new social movements. By opposing the state and its representatives on a diverse array of social issues that had been ignored by the mainstream parties, from outside the bounds of parliamentary politics, the new social movements laid the groundwork for the Greens, referred to by some as “the parliamentary arm of the protest movements”.³² One of the central debates about the Greens concerns their duality of their identity. Party representatives referred to its two legs, employing the imagery of a metaphorical soccer player: one leg planted in the social movements, with the other swinging through the parliaments of West Germany.³³ Whether or not the Greens have retained their links to the extraparliamentary movements is a debate for a later chapter. First, to understand the Greens’ development, their relationship with the new social movements must be established. From there, the prehistory of the Greens can be understood by examining the new social movements in greater detail. The diversity, in thematic concern, political identity and organizational

³² This phrase has been used by a number of party members, movement activists, and scholars who have studied the party. In the texts the phrase is frequently placed in quotations but it is rarely cited. Rather, it is attributed, as Thomas Poguntke has stated, to the “Greens’ self-image”. See Poguntke, “Between Ideology and Empirical Research: The Literature on the German Green Party,” *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 21 (1992), 339.

³³ E. Gene Frankland, “The Role of the Greens in West German Parliamentary Politics, 1980-1987,” *The Review of Politics*, vol. 50, no. 1 (Winter 1988), 102.

forms, of the new social movements, bears heavily on the formation of the Greens. The Greens entrance into competitive party politics was, and remained for many years, contentious, especially for the party's activist membership.

The first task, then, is to disambiguate the rather loaded term, "new social movements". It refers to all of the different groups or associations that formed in the wake of the student movement in West Germany. They pursued their interests, which can generally be grouped as ecology, women's rights and civil liberties, anti-nuclear energy and peace, outside the established parties, using political tactics previously unfamiliar in the Federal Republic.³⁴ But what about them is new? And what is a social movement? These questions have been taken on by a variety of scholars and their answers are by no means uniform. Rather than pursue a detailed discussion of the various definitions of both social movements and why they are new in the 1970s and 1980s, I will instead rely on the excellent definition provided by Ruud Koopmans in his sociological analysis, *Democracy From Below: New Social Movements and the Political System in West Germany*.

New Social Movements [NSM] differ from other movements in much the same way as, for instance, farmers' movements differ from the labor movement: they have different goals and are supported by different social groups. The NSMs address a set of postmaterialist themes (Inglehart 1983), which have arisen or have become more visible in recent phases of the modernization process. These include new risks, such as environmental pollution and the threat of nuclear war (Beck 1986), but also new opportunities for groups like women and homosexuals created by the dissolution of traditional social ties. The support base of the NSMs in the new middle class likewise has a new quality. Although members of the new middle class have historically played an important role in many social movements, the political weight as well as the sheer size of this stratum have reached unprecedented levels with the expansion of the

³⁴ Saral Sarkar, *Green-Alternative Politics in West Germany, vol. I: The New Social Movements* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1993), 1-3.

welfare state after 1945. It is in these two aspects that the newness of the NSMs lies: the essence of “new politics” lies not so much in “a new way of conducting politics,” but rather in the fact that they reflect the rise of new *themes* and new *actors* on the political stage.³⁵

From 1969 until the early 1980s, new social movements grew among the new middle class, opposing nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, focusing their attention on ecological protection, the expansion of women’s rights as well as minority rights. They included among their numbers proponents of the New Left, defined largely within the scope of the student movement and against the labouring class and trade unions of the Old Left. This diverse array of radical and moderate activists, who will be described in greater detail below, formed the initial base of support for the Greens and provided the young party with its first representatives.

While many aspects of the development of the Greens and the reasons for the party’s success have been debated, scholars have nearly unanimously linked the new social movements to the Greens. Horst Mewes, writing in 1983, just as the party first entered the Bundestag, was one of the most reluctant in making the association, claiming the party self-identified as an “expression of new German democratic social movements.”³⁶ His somewhat hesitant assertion, though, sustains the well-known and self-applied Green refrain: the Greens were the ‘parliamentary arm of the protest movements’. Thomas Poguntke notes that the movements supported the “nascent Greens, both organizationally and by providing them with experienced personnel”³⁷ while also making the point that the reason for the formation of a party was due to the

³⁵ Koopmans, 11-12.

³⁶ Horst Mewes, “The West German Green Party,” *New German Critique*, no. 28 (Winter 1983), 51.

³⁷ Poguntke, “Between Ideology and Empirical Research...”, 338.

established parties' unresponsiveness toward the problems championed by the NSMs.³⁸ That support from the NSMs, especially in their votes for the Greens who, according to Müller-Rommel, represent the "new politics"³⁹ values of the new social movement activists and supporters, was the reason for the Greens becoming an important and powerful political force in West Germany.⁴⁰ Saral Sarkar, in his two volume history of "green alternative politics", makes the connection between the NSMs and the Greens quite overt: the "most important political development of the 1970s that directly contributed to the origin and growth of the Green Election Movement ... [was] the new social movements."⁴¹ Ruud Koopmans, in making the connection between the two, asserts that while the social movements retained their identity after the formation of the Greens, the party provided parliamentary representation and the association of the two is proof of the breakthrough for new politics.⁴² Markovits and Gorski, on the other hand, in their study of the history of the Left in West Germany after the war, emphasize that the new social movements "evolved" into "new politics parties", and that the Greens in West Germany are notable as the most prominent and successful example of the process in

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ There is a vast secondary literature discussing "new politics" theory but rather than explore a very complex body of work, I will refer to Thomas Poguntke's summary from his contribution to *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, ed. Müller-Rommel. In essence, 'new politics' differ from the 'old politics', which are associated with the central concern for economic and security issues, as well as the use of representative forms of decision-making and conventional behaviour. 'New politics' are those concerned with the new "cluster" of issues and organizational forms associated with the emergence of a middle class: younger, more educated and often employed in the emerging service sector, who desire more participatory politics and new, elite-challenging and unconventional political behaviour (eg. boycotts, blockades, sit-ins, marches, site occupations, etc). 'New politics' parties, of which the Greens are one example, championed these new issues and forms. In West Germany especially this was due to the established parties, the CDU, FDP, and especially the SPD, ignoring 'new politics' issues, opening space for extraparliamentary movements to develop. As this chapter will argue, these movements made the Greens possible for a variety of reasons.

⁴⁰ Müller-Rommel, 63.

⁴¹ Saral Sarkar, *Green-Alternative Politics in West Germany, vol. II: The Greens* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1994), 4-5.

⁴² Koopmans, 85.

Western Europe.⁴³ Finally, Burns and van der Will largely avoid use of the term “new social movement”, favouring instead “extra-parliamentary opposition”, or APO, and delineate between a first and second wave of the APO.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, despite the terminological difference, the authors describe the second wave APO, or the NSMs, as being fuelled by a particular generation⁴⁵ whose political torchbearers the Greens sought to be. The new social movements or the second wave of extra-parliamentary opposition, then, are the forebears of the Greens. They, of course, did not develop in isolation but rather had their own antecedents.

Early Protest: Opposition to Nuclear Weapons

The first stirrings of extraparliamentary protest in the West Germany began early in the 1950s. The greatest symmetry between this early opposition, the later new social movements and the Greens themselves was their focus on peace. However, the continuities should not be overstated: the anti-militarisation and ban-the-bomb campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s lacked the systemic opposition and grassroots forms of the later and more popular movements. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some of the thematic concerns of the Greens all the way back to the early 1950s.

While the wide-ranging and mass mobilizing peace movement of the 1980s will only be briefly mentioned in this chapter, their emphasis on a broad defence of the

⁴³ Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorki, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18.

⁴⁴ APO stands for *Außerparlamentarische Opposition* or Extraparliamentary Opposition

⁴⁵ Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany: Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and the Democratic Agenda* (London: MacMillan Press, 1988), 261: “a particular generation, namely those that received their political socialization in the course of the 1960s...” This is a reference to the 68ers, or those young, well-educated, middle class citizens whose political experience was jolted by the student protest and the slightly more widespread opposition to the Emergency Laws, both of which occurred in 1968.

reproductive sphere and pointed opposition to nuclear weapons were similar to the goals of those who were reluctant about the rearming of West Germany in the early 1950s. Diffuse and spontaneous, the *Ohne Mich* or “without me” enmity first emerged in 1950 as rumours of a reformed German army swirled following the outbreak of the Korean War.⁴⁶ To call this a movement, though, would be an overstatement, as the passive resistance denoted by the associated phrase belies the collective action or focus required of a movement. There were two other forms of opposition to rearmament. The first was a collection of groups, namely the Emergency Committee for Peace in Europe (1951) and the GVP or All-German People’s Party (1953), that proposed plebiscites which would determine whether or not the West German public was in favour of remilitarization. These groups operated outside the sphere of the established parties since the SPD was, until 1955, unwilling to support extraparliamentary activity, reminiscent as it was of the very recent Nazi past. The second form, however, had the support of the SPD, which opposed the Paris Treaties that would have drawn the Federal Republic deeper into the Western military alliance. Known as the *Paulskirche* movement, named after the church where the first German parliament sat in 1848, the rather small group of SPD members, trade unionists, and left intellectuals opposed the Paris Treaties not only because of German rearmament but also because they would have proved “an obstacle to reunification”⁴⁷ with East Germany, given that the treaties proposed ending the occupation of the West.⁴⁸ Once the treaties passed in 1955, the *Paulskirche* movement came to an abrupt end. However, its significance was that, for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic, it linked the Social Democrats, the trade unions, critical

⁴⁶ Burns and van der Will, 76-77.

⁴⁷ Markovits and Gorski, 41.

⁴⁸ Pól O’Dorchartaigh, *Germany Since 1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 58.

intellectuals, and various pacifist and neutralist organizations in a mass extraparliamentary protest, pursuing a common goal.⁴⁹

Once the Federal Republic became part of NATO following the Paris Treaties, the next wave of opposition emerged in response to the decision to station nuclear weapons in West Germany. In 1957, agitated by Chancellor Adenauer's reductive description of nuclear weapons as a "refinement of artillery", 18 of Germany's most prominent nuclear physicists published the "Göttingen declaration" which described the destructive potential of tactical nuclear weapons. Following their defeat in the 1957 federal election,⁵⁰ the SPD sought to organize grassroots opposition to the nuclear initiative. The result was the *Kampf dem Atomtod* (KdA), or 'Fight Nuclear Death' campaign. Despite its broad-based nature and attempts to appeal to local and regional populations,⁵¹ the KdA campaign crumbled in late 1958 when the SPD withdrew their support. The traditional working-class party, after continued electoral defeats, decided that they needed to appeal to a wider potential electorate, and following the adoption of the Godesberg Programme in 1959, the SPD recast itself as a *Volkspartei*, or People's Party.⁵² Nevertheless, extraparliamentary protest did not wither entirely after 1959.

The APO: The Student Movement and the Opposition to Emergency Laws

The APO, or *Außerparlamentarische Opposition*, was never a single, monolithic organization, and the term was not used until 1968. The first phases of the development

⁴⁹ Burns and van der Will, 85.

⁵⁰ The CDU/CSU coalition won the election, garnering over 50 percent of the vote, the only time in the history of German democracy that any one party has achieved an outright majority.

⁵¹ According to Hans Karl Rupp, "...[A]t no time after 1945 was there a political issue promoted by the party and trade union leadership which received such massive support from the grassroots as the demand by the SPD and DGB executives that the government renounce its plans to equip the *Bundeswehr* with nuclear weapons." From Burns and van der Will, 90.

⁵² Markovits and Gorski, 34.

of the APO began in 1960 with the first ‘Easter March of the Opponents of Atomic Weapons’. These marches, which reached a fever pitch in 1968 that was not repeated until the mid-1980s, were initially sombre affairs as the apocalyptic association with nuclear weapons was reflected in the staunch silence of the first marches. Their original, narrow, negative focus widened throughout the decade as the popularity of the Easter Marches grew and pacifists of various ideological persuasions joined. Very early on the majority of the executive committee of the SPD-gutted KdA were members of the Easter Marches. They helped expand the concern of the movement; the new name of the organization reflected the change as the ‘Campaign for Disarmament’ (KfA) replaced the “opponents of atomic weapons”. After 1965, the KfA and the Easter Marches assumed a prominent position among the burgeoning protest that began to simmer across the Federal Republic in response to the first postwar recession, the Vietnam War, the formation of the Grand Coalition, the controversial Emergency Laws and the growth of the student movement.⁵³ After the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg and the radicalization of the student movement in 1967, which will be described below, the KfA became the umbrella organization for what began to be called the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition, or APO, and organized the opposition to the Emergency Laws.⁵⁴ The KfA’s organized opposition to the threats the Emergency Laws posed to democratic governance in the Federal Republic were in contrast to those of the student radicals insofar as they maintained their support for disarmament and did not feel that the Laws were an attempt by the state to destroy the Left. This is an important element of the first wave APO: there were two strands, the moderate and the radical. The Easter Marches and the KfA, to some extent,

⁵³ Burns and van der Will, 94

⁵⁴ Ibid., 95.

represented the moderate strand, while the radicalized opposition that grew up in the student movement represented the more extreme strand. Below, I will describe the growth of the student movement, considered by many Greens scholars to be the primary well-spring of the new social movements.

In the late afternoon of April 11th, 1968 Rudi Dutschke, symbolic and organizational leader of the West Berlin student protest and brilliant Marxist orator, stepped out of his apartment building on to Kurfurstendamm, the busiest thoroughfare in the divided former capital city. Waiting for him was Joseph Bachmann, a 23 year old right-wing fanatic who had travelled from West Germany to West Berlin for the express purpose of encountering Dutschke. Bachmann asked the young student radical if he indeed was Dutschke. When ‘Red Rudi’, as he had been dubbed by the conservative Springer Press newspapers,⁵⁵ answered in the affirmative, Bachmann called him a “dirty communist pig”,⁵⁶ pulled out a pistol, and shot at the stumbling student protester 3 times, hitting him in the head, neck and chest.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Michael A. Schmidtke, “Cultural Revolution or Cultural Shock?: Student Radicalism and 1968 in Germany,” *South Central Review*, vol. 16, no. 4, Rethinking 1968: The United States and Western Europe (Winter 1999 – Spring 2000), 86.

⁵⁶ Hockenos, 83.

⁵⁷ Richard L. Merritt, “The Student Protest Movement in West Berlin,” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 1, no. 4 (July, 1969), 516.



Figure 1 (Top): Rudi Dutschke leading a demonstration in front of Amerika-Haus in Frankfurt, 1968.⁵⁸

Figure 2 (Bottom): Dutschke delivers an address to the International Vietnam Congress held at West Berlin's Technical University on February 17, 1968.⁵⁹

Almost immediately, demonstrations broke out in West Berlin, both in sympathy for Dutschke and against the inflammatory publishing house of Axel Springer, which many student radicals blamed for the attack. Incredibly, Dutschke managed to survive

⁵⁸ *Der Spiegel*, "Eines Tages", <http://einestages.spiegel.de> (accessed August 15, 2008).

⁵⁹ *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/30008378-r%20copy.jpg>, (accessed August 15, 2008).

his injuries. Dutschke's assailant was captured alive but he was not blamed singly by student protesters across West Germany. Instead, the attempt on Dutschke's life proved the catalyst that caused simmering student unrest to boil over into a "spasm of reaction"⁶⁰ across the major cities and university towns of the Federal Republic.

It is this spasm, the student revolt, that many historians of the left have pointed to as the beginning of the social movements that eventually spawned the Greens. Its significance was not in the cars students flipped over or the battles they had with police, though those were of some concern. Rather, the student movement, and the APO more widely, represented a new tone of opposition. The anti-militarists before them had operated more or less inside the bounds of the state. The students, on the other hand, began to question the legitimacy of the state entirely; they presented an anti-authoritarian stance in the face of the repression they perceived emanating from the government and capitalist enterprise. This was something new and would be a vital ingredient in the Greens. As I will point out later, it can be argued that this anti-authoritarianism created a tension in the party that would plague it during its formation. At the same time though, I should note that the SDS-led student movement was not identical to the Greens. The elitism of the Marxist student group was a feature not found, for the most part, in the NSMs or in the Greens. While they were an example of new forms of state criticism and involved new actors, their legacy would not be tied only to the formation of the party.

Before leaping too far ahead, I should return to the situation in 1968 and draw more direct connections between the events and my interpretations of how they affected the development of the Greens. First, how had the situation in West Berlin reached such a critical temperature? Student agitation had been increasing across the country since the

⁶⁰ Merritt, 516.

mid-60s, largely in response to the perceived internal hierarchy of the universities. Students were also influenced by the anti-authoritarianism of the philosophy of the Frankfurt School. Interest in anti-authoritarian ideas was not entirely due to the arcane unresponsiveness of the universities. The Nazi past of the students' parents weighed heavily upon their minds as uncomfortable silence often greeted the question, "Daddy, what did you do during the war?" Taken together, the rigidity of the university structure, the gap between the Nazi generation and their children, and the influential theories of the Frankfurt School prompted students to organize and effect change.

Observers consistently note the significance of the ideologies and theories of the Frankfurt School in the development of the *Neue Linke*, or New Left, of which the student movement was a part. While the range of ideas that these theorists presented resist pithy summary, it is worth mentioning that they all shared a belief in the inherently repressive nature of the institutions of advanced capitalist society.⁶¹ The student protesters latched on to the anti-authoritarianism of the Frankfurt School; they saw, in the universities, a significant gap between the democratic ideals of West Germany and the institutional reality. Two theorists in particular influenced the students: Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer. Marcuse argued that the material pleasures of modern society stunted people's desire for political reform, unlike early industrial societies where hardship motivated openness toward radical change.⁶² While Marcuse's theories focused on the development of the individual in modern society and were influenced heavily by Freud, Horkheimer developed a theory about the authoritarian state shaped by the events

⁶¹ Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973), "Introduction", especially page xiv.

⁶² O'Dochartaigh, 97

of World War II.⁶³ These ideas, as well as those of Jürgen Habermas and Theodor Adorno, shaped the nascent political ideology of the student protesters and their “vanguard organization”⁶⁴, the SDS (Sozialistischer Deutsche Studentenbund).

During the 1960s, German universities remained essentially the same hierarchical institutions that developed in the 19th century. Though many other factors motivated the students in their protests during the late 1960s, the rigid authoritarianism of the universities was the most direct instigator.⁶⁵ Nowhere is the clash between students, faculty and administrators better illustrated than at the Free University of Berlin.

The Free University (FU) was founded in 1948 after students from the renowned Humboldt University, uncomfortable with Communist domination, left the school for the Western sector of the city. From its very foundation, supported financially by the Ford Foundation and politically by the American military administration, the FU featured a degree of administrative codetermination unknown in the rest of country.⁶⁶ Students sat on a variety of boards and committees so that they were represented at every level of the university’s government. The students on these committees, though, were significantly outnumbered; an issue that became more important as politically engaged students realized their influence was in fact quite limited.

Despite the Free University’s more democratic structure, by the 1960s the professorial and administrative elite had entrenched their position of control over the school. When overcrowding on the campus (and at other universities across West

⁶³ Gerd Langguth, *The Green Factor in German Politics: From Protest Movement to Political Party*, trans. Richard Straus (Westview Press: Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford, 1986), 2.

⁶⁴ Hülsberg, 38.

⁶⁵ Markovits and Gorski note the significance of the Vietnam War as a spur for student protest in West Berlin and across West Germany. They quote Rudi Dutschke on page 52 of their text: “No political event played so decisive a role in the discussion and in the politicization of the students as the Vietnam War.”

⁶⁶ Merritt, 519.

Germany) became an issue in the mid-1960s, the administration and faculty's opposition to student influence provoked the students to decry the structural authoritarianism obscured by "formal democracy".⁶⁷ This "hidden authoritarianism" connected directly to the ideas of the Frankfurt School theorists and bolstered the students' oppositional ideology.⁶⁸

The centralized control and repression the students experienced in the universities reflected their wider concerns about their parents and the so-called "Silent Generation". The focus on reconstruction and stability during the trying post-war years had, in the minds of many student protesters, prevented a concerted effort to expunge the legacies of the Nazi period. The most obvious physical evidence of the ignored links with the Nazi period came in the form of professionals who had served the Nazi regime and continued to serve, as newly converted democrats, the state in the Federal Republic. For example, in Würzburg, 90 percent of the city's teachers had held the same job during the Nazi period, teaching a very different curriculum.⁶⁹ Konrad Adenauer, Chancellor of West Germany from 1949 until 1963, focused on economic growth through consensus politics and by orienting the state toward the West, so as to achieve as much sovereignty as possible. Dealing with the past was not on the agenda.

The new Emergency Laws proposed during the first Grand Coalition government myopically ignored the past in its efforts to normalize the West German state. Proponents of the Emergency Laws, a package of legislation and constitutional amendments designed to increase the government's powers during a period of severe internal unrest, felt that the FRG's constitution, the Basic Law, in its initial form, did not

⁶⁷ Ibid., 519-20.

⁶⁸ Schmidtke, 81-82.

⁶⁹ Hockenos, 29.

provide enough executive power in the event of national emergency.⁷⁰ Critics, though, feared that the proposed new laws gave the executive excessive powers, similar to those that hastened Hitler's rise to power.⁷¹ The Emergency Laws, as eventually passed through the Bundestag in 1968, provided another touchstone for protest among the students but also prompted wider opposition among the New Left, represented by the APO. In conjunction with the authoritarianism of the university system, the Emergency Laws provoked the student movement's distaste for anything that echoed the Nazi past.

The parents of the student rebels, whose hyper-materialism had developed during the hardships of postwar reconstruction, were separated from their children by an especially sharp generation gap. The *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle) and *Modell Deutschland* (Model Germany) of 1950s and early 1960s West Germany allowed the children of the so-called Silent Generation to grow up comfortably. They also developed differently; not facing material hardships, these students searched for ideals apart from their parents' focus on material goods and were repulsed by the seemingly ignored sins of Nazism. Many scholars of the student movement or of social movements in West Germany note the significance of the generation gap in forming a distinct and more radically left-wing group of students in the 1960s in the Federal Republic.⁷² The student rebels were interested in expanding democracy across the country and found the current institutions fell far short of their ideals.

⁷⁰ Markovits and Gorski, 54.

⁷¹ Burns and van der Will, 99-102 .

⁷² Hülsberg, 41; Schmidtke, 79.



Demonstrations against the proposed Emergency Laws on May 11, 1968. Figure 3 (Top): The banner reads, "It is the obligation of every democrat to fight against the Emergency state." Figure 4 (Bottom): The banner reads, "No Reich".⁷³

⁷³ *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/30008392-r%20copy.jpg> & <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/30008378-r%20copy.jpg> (accessed August 15, 2008).

In addition to the rigid university system, the gap between the students and their parents and the influence of Frankfurt School thought, West Berlin itself was significant in the formation of the student movement. While the Free University was different from the rest of the Republic's schools structurally, the school attracted a disproportionate number of left-leaning students for another reason, too. Residents of West Berlin were exempt from the military service that was mandatory across the rest of West Germany.⁷⁴ The western half of the divided former capital found itself bulging with students unprepared to accept the status quo and during the second half of the 1960s, bore witness to the student revolt that many scholars point to as the oldest direct relative of the Green Party.

The specific organization most closely related to the development of the movement was the Socialist Student Union of Germany (SDS). The SDS was not a mass organization; in fact, until the fall of 1966, which saw the stirrings of protest among the students, only about 125 students of the FU's 15,000 were members of the organization.⁷⁵ Unlike the later new social movements and the Greens themselves, the SDS was an elitist organization, inspired by Marxist-Leninist cadre style political formation. The SDS was also not the only student organization that was part of the movement. Most scholars, however, refer to the SDS almost singularly when referring to the student movement and the development of extraparliamentary opposition in the Federal Republic. On this basis, I will use the organization as the representative of the strategies of the student protesters.

The SDS originally was a youth wing of the SPD, created to contest student elections. With the SPD's transformation into a *Volkspartei* after the Godesberg

⁷⁴ O'Dochartaigh, 95.

⁷⁵ Merritt, 521.

conference in 1959, the party's moderate and centrist elements decided that the increasingly troublesome left-wing of the SDS was enough to sever the student organization from the party.⁷⁶ By 1965, after nearly dissolving due to the break with the SPD, the SDS had become a radically left-wing organization, largely Marxist in orientation, under the leadership of Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl.⁷⁷ It was then that the protest movement really began, with the SDS at the forefront. Their ideology, inspired by the Frankfurt School's anti-authoritarianism, supported their strategy for opposing the state and its institutions and was captured neatly in this quote from Rudi Dutschke:

Through systematic, controlled, and limited confrontation with the power structure and imperialism in West Berlin, [our purpose is] to force the representative 'democracy' to show openly its class character, its authoritarian nature, to force it to expose itself as a 'dictatorship of force!'⁷⁸

The "systematic, controlled, and limited confrontation" that the SDS favoured appeared in a few events that occurred in 1966, though the most serious breakthrough did not occur until the summer of 1967. Influenced by civil rights' activists in the United States, the SDS organized a sit-in on June 22, 1966, to protest a proposed Free University reform that would have limited the tenure of students to eight semesters and given administrators the power to expel.⁷⁹ In addition to the influence of the example of civil rights protests in the United States as well as protests against the war in Vietnam, the student protesters in West Germany were also concerned with the state of left-wing

⁷⁶ Markovits and Gorski, 49-50. The authors also note the significance of the party's decision to ban simultaneous membership in the SPD and the SDS and the earlier dismantling of West Germany's Communist Party (KPD): "However, with no parliamentary alternative to the SPD's left, extraparliamentary articulation of politics became a structural necessity for these leftist critics."

⁷⁷ Markovits and Gorski, 50.

⁷⁸ Quoted by Merritt, 521.

⁷⁹ Schmidtke, 83.

politics in the country. The SPD, after Godesberg, was no longer considered an alternative party. No communist party existed in the country after the forced dissolution of the KPD. After the election of 1966, the absence of an alternative party on the left motivated the students in their extraparliamentary protests.⁸⁰ The election saw the SPD agree to a “Grand Coalition” with the other largest party in the Bundestag: the CDU/CSU. The new coalition, agreed to on December 1, 1966, coincidentally preceded an almost immediate rise in protest action by the students and the wider APO. On December 10, 1966, the SDS organized the “lets go for a walk” demonstration, itself piggy-backing on a larger anti-Vietnam demonstration. The demonstration involved 200 SDS members who broke a previously agreed-to mandate, confining the march to suburban side streets in West Berlin, and walked on to Kurfürstendamm.⁸¹ This small, subversive action by the SDS coincided with the formation of the Grand Coalition and exemplifies the new style of protest action that the SDS promoted. These sorts of actions, testing the boundaries of the state’s acceptance of protest, bore heavily on both the new social movements, as this chapter will explore later, and on the Greens themselves. More radical protest, however, also influenced the development of the Green party and the new social movements.

In addition to subversive actions and limited confrontations with the state, the SDS was involved in other forms of organization, especially prior to 1967. SDS organizers formed, on the Free University campus, discussion groups, exhibited art and films, and arranged demonstrations.⁸² But their moderate protests rapidly radicalized following the events of June 2, 1967. Ideologically in line with the SDS’s position on

⁸⁰ Markovits and Gorski, 50.

⁸¹ Schmidtke, 83.

⁸² Markovits and Gorski, 53.

Vietnam and exploitation in the Third World, a demonstration was organized to protest the state visit of the Shah of Iran. The students could not accept a state-sanctioned visit of a head of state they believed to be a brutal dictator. Police, having previously banned the demonstration, attacked the protesters who numbered in the thousands and had gathered outside the Opera where the Shah and West German politicians were spending the evening. In the melee, a twenty-six year old student named Benno Ohnesorg was shot in the head by an officer and died.⁸³ As news of the shooting spread to campuses across the Federal Republic, the student movement expanded not only in West Berlin but across almost every other university in West Germany. It also led many students to join the pre-existing opposition to the proposed Emergency Laws. Protests against the Emergency Laws, combined with the death of Benno Ohnesorg, inflamed and enlarged student opposition leading into 1968 and the attempt on Rudi Dutschke's life.

Opposition to the Emergency Laws spread protest beyond the bounds of university campuses in the Federal Republic, but the students remained central in organizing against the 'establishment'. Radicalization did not take place, however, until after the shooting of Dutschke. In the days following the assault, the SDS attacked the Springer Press, West Germany's largest publishing house, as not only complicit in the attempted murder but as representative of authoritarianism in the "culture industry". Springer newspapers, after the death of Ohnesorg, improperly reported the facts related to the event and openly sided against student protesters, labelling them communists. As a result, the SDS protested the publisher through sit-ins and boycotts. The Springer papers retaliated by demonizing the students, especially Dutschke, branding him "Red Rudi".⁸⁴

⁸³ Schmidtke, 84.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 86.

When Dutschke was shot, and the assailant found with clippings from those same Springer papers, the students reacted instantly, violently attacking Springer Press buildings and distribution outlets, blaming the publisher for the attempted assassination. The street violence culminated on Easter weekend in 1968, April 14-15, as protesters and police clashed in the streets of Berlin. During what can only be properly described as riots, more than forty people were seriously injured and two people lost their lives. The experience of this event changed the student movement irreparably, splintering the previously unified protest. Some former student rebels felt the violence was senseless and discrediting, while for others, it would serve as the impetus for further violence throughout the 1970s.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Ibid., 87.



Figure 5 (Above): Mourners line the streets as Benno Ohnesorg's body is transported from the Free University of Berlin to Hannover on June 8, 1967.⁸⁶

The Grand Coalition did not give in to the demands of the student movement or the APO. As a result, by late 1968, the student movement and the APO crumbled. This is not to say, however, that leftist student organizations and those involved in the APO disappeared entirely; their significance and modest number of supporters diminished precipitously. Once the Emergency Laws passed, the APO's *raison d'être* disappeared, leaving the movement with little else to hold it together. The APO splintered and its former supporters went off in a number of different political directions. Some chose to

⁸⁶ *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/30024880%20copy.jpg> (accessed August 15, 2008).

form dogmatic communist organizations of every conceivable permutation. Others who were less committed to the revolutionary cause joined the SPD, optimistic about the new Social-Liberal coalition (SPD-FDP) after the 1969 election. Some chose to turn away from national movements, favouring instead politics at the local level. However, the atmosphere of opposition to the prevailing culture and politics did not die out with the fragmentation: it “had greater staying power”.⁸⁷ The student movement and the APO had encountered a limitation, a barrier to their cause, but the spirit they represented and fortified carried on.

The New Social Movements

Scholars who trace the Greens’ history through the left point out that the student movement and the extraparliamentary opposition “laid the groundwork”⁸⁸ for the new social movements of the 1970s. During the 1970s, the new social movements developed around a few social and political issues that remained outside the boundaries of significance for FRG politicians: ecology, the new women’s movement, and opposition to nuclear power. But it was not the radicalized students, nor the post-Emergency Laws APO, who led the NSMs by re-organizing around new areas of concern.

Markovits and Gorski point to four different paths taken by the radicalized student movement and its concomitant abatement. Some chose revolutionary communism, the most prominent example of which was the *K-Gruppen* (K-groups),⁸⁹ believing that the

⁸⁷ Hülsberg, 53.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁸⁹ This is a catch-all phrase used to refer to groups of communists of different ideological perspectives. The end of the APO led to the beginning of the “so-called organizational phase.” Groups of Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyites and other revisionist communists formed dogmatic organizations whose similarity in title belied the frequency with which they would fight amongst themselves. For example, out of the remnants of the KPD and the SDS came the DKP, the KPD-AO, the KPD Marxist-Leninist, the KBW, as

working class could still be mobilized through small cadres and strict hierarchical organization, à la Leninist organizations. There were also those who believed they could not wait for the workers and had to take matters into their own hands. This was the path of armed opposition: the RAF and the Baader-Meinhof gang used terrorism to combat the violence used by the state. In stark contrast to the terrorist underground were those who decided to opt out of traditional social structures or conventional politics, like the Spontis⁹⁰ or the inhabitants of West Berlin's infamous Kommune I, who wanted to create utopia through personal transformation. The fourth group that the authors mention were those who believed in the possibility of "radical reform" by transforming existing institutions. The authors, though, are referring to the Jusos, or the re-constituted youth wing of the SPD, and use them as an example of Rudi Dutschke's notion of the "long march through the institutions". These four paths, as presented by Markovits and Gorski, cover the options that the students, or perhaps put more accurately, the radicalized left-wing students, took after the extraparliamentary opposition effort collapsed. The left's splintering into smaller, scattered, and ideologically dissociated factions was not, however, the sole legacy of the student movement for the formation of the Green Party.

well as the KA, the KB and the ABV-KPD. However, all ignored the "overall spirit and movement of the period" and "were out of tune with the anti-authoritarian spirit of the revolt." "Self-organization, love of life, spontaneity and enlightenment were replaced by zombie-like obedience, discipline, asceticism, indoctrination and the regurgitation of the failed wisdom of the Soviet Comintern." By the early 1980s, nearly all of these organizations were completely defunct, the German Autumn of 1977 and the emergence of the Greens combining to siphon off the majority of their supporters. See Hülsberg, 51-54.

⁹⁰ In his study of Joscka Fischer, Paul Hockenos describes 'Spontis' in some detail. The name, mocking Lenin's "condemnation of impromptu political action" (p. 100), referred to 'spontaneous anarchism'. They believed that "the personal [was] political" (p. 112), an idea that would bear in an indirect way on the Greens themselves. They also lived in abandoned row housing in West Berlin and the Federal Republic's larger urban centres, especially Frankfurt, and formed co-ops. "In the co-ops, squatted houses, and other countercultural niches, the Spontis lived by their own political ethic, in defiance of the political culture sanctioned by the state and West Germany's compliant majority. Much like West Berlin's Kommune I founders, the Spontis' aim was to create a practical utopia in the here and now, not to sacrifice the present for a more perfect socialist order in the future." (p. 112) One of the most prominent Frankfurt Spontis was Joschka Fischer.

The new women's movement began when the female membership of the SDS decried the patriarchy of the male-dominated organization, "where men did the head work and women the leg work."⁹¹ The beginning of the new women's movement in West Germany can be dated from the tomatoes thrown at a male SDS theoretician who ignored an impassioned speech made by Helke Sander in September 1968. She had addressed the separation of the private sphere from the political and economic, and the repression of specifically female problems associated with reproduction and the exploitation of women. By ignoring these inequalities, the SDS, concerned centrally as it was with anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical and emancipatory principles, was indistinguishable from the established parties.⁹²

The new women's movement can be traced back to the student movement's female membership. However, from those limited origins, the movement expanded in 1971. The "Aktion 218" campaign broadened the movement's base of support. "Aktion 218" protested the paragraph in the German penal code which made abortions illegal in the Federal Republic.⁹³ The campaign, then, was to end the criminalization of abortion and, furthermore, to affirm female "self-determination".⁹⁴ Because the campaign occurred outside the bounds of Marxist political theory, it was able to attract middle class women, wives, mothers and professionals, not just radicalized students associated with one of the K-groups, or the DKP, or another leftist offshoot of the student movement. Through the experience of "Aktion 218", the new women's movement and its attendant groups split away, irrevocably, from the dogmatic leftist groups. The feminists, or

⁹¹ Hilke Schlaeger and Nancy Vedder-Shults, "The West German Women's Movement," *New German Critique*, no. 13 (Winter 1978), 62.

⁹² Sarkar, vol I, 179-180.

⁹³ Schlaeger and Vedder-Shults, 62.

⁹⁴ Sarkar, vol I, 193.

radical feminists, chafed at the primacy afforded the struggle of liberating the proletariat from the bourgeoisie over the emancipation of women from societal patriarchy.⁹⁵

Women's groups linked to the DKP believed that the campaign against paragraph 218 distracted from the class struggle, that it was "unpolitical, reformistic",⁹⁶ and hence, "wrong"⁹⁷: the ideological differences between the radical left and the new women's movement had become too polarized. Radical feminists, from the mid-70s until the formation of the Greens in 1980, passionately opposed traditional leftist politics.⁹⁸



Figure 6 (Above): The cover of the June 6, 1971 issue of Hamburg-based *Stern* magazine read, "We Had Abortions". The story featured the public admission by 374 women of their abortions, illegal at that time in the Federal Republic.⁹⁹

The new women's movement was not, as accused by the radical left, apolitical but rather engaged in politics apart from traditional Marxism. The women's movement fought for recognition of the private sphere and the patriarchy attendant with limiting

⁹⁵ Schlaeger and Vedder-Shults, 63.

⁹⁶ Sarkar, vol I, 189.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 194.

⁹⁸ Schlaeger and Vedder-Shults, 63.

⁹⁹ *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/stern1971_web.jpg (accessed August 15, 2008).

women's role to it: "the personal is political".¹⁰⁰ They also engaged in the new social movements and have been considered by scholars as one of the NSMs themselves. A feminist group from Freiburg, *Frauenjahrbuch '75*, was involved in the protests at Wyhl, birthplace of the West German anti-nuclear movement.¹⁰¹ The association between the women's movement and the ecology movement was, if the reader will excuse the phrase, natural: both desired the protection of the reproductive sphere and saw systemic flaws in the industrial capitalist system where men exploited and dominated nature, just as they did women. In the birth of the Greens, then, the women's movement assumed a prominent role.¹⁰² Women like Petra Kelly and Antje Vollmer featured prominently in the development of the party and not only because the feminist groups demanded 50/50 representation for women among party representatives. Again it should be stressed that the women's movement grew out of the student revolt and was another fragment of the New Left that had "disintegrated into the heirs of the student movement on the one side and the partisans of the sectarian groups (K-groups) on the other, and a women's movement, the majority of which would prefer no politics at all to leftist politics."¹⁰³

In spite of the student movement's fragmentation, its most significant legacy, for the development of the new social movements, was the space it opened for dissatisfied middle class citizens. Prior to the 1968, West German political culture had no tradition of open and widespread criticism of the government and its policies. From 1969 on,

¹⁰⁰ Sarkar, vol I, 201.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² In 1984, the parliamentary representatives of the Greens elected three women as the leadership of the party (Waltraud Schoppe, Antje Vollmer, and Annemarie Borgmann), replacing the former leadership triumvirate that included two women as well (Petra Kelly and Marie-Luise Beck-Oberdorf). *The Times*, Thursday, Apr 05, 1984; pg. 6, "Women sweep the board in Green party election", from Michael Binyon

¹⁰³ Schlaeger and Vedder-Shults, 64.

however, citizens' initiatives, or *Bürgerinitiativen*, sprouted up "like mushrooms"¹⁰⁴ across the Federal Republic and led a second wave of extraparliamentary activity in the country. The citizens' initiatives, in contrast with the student movement which fertilized the soil in which they began to grow, started very modestly. Initially, they were concerned with addressing local problems related to everyday life. The term "citizen initiative" (or CI) referred to groups that were

spontaneous loosely organized association of citizens, normally in existence for a limited period of time only, who, directly affected by a specific issue, intercede[d] outside the traditional institutions and participatory forms of representative party democracy and who [sought], either by way of self-help or by way of influencing public opinion and exercising political pressure, to prompt action on the part of the authorities with regard to the citizen's particular concern¹⁰⁵

This definition, while somewhat wordy, captures the significant features of the CIs: they were flexibly organized, temporally limited groups of average citizens, operating outside the formal boundaries of politics, interested in pressuring the government bureaucracy, but not challenging the system itself. Between 1969 and the formation of the Greens in 1979/80, thousands upon thousands of CIs formed across West Germany and became, as scholars refer to it, the citizen's initiative movement, forerunner to the ecology movement and the anti-nuclear energy movement - two of the most significant progenitors of the Greens.

Arguably the first citizens' initiative appeared before the zenith of the student revolt in opposition to the extension of runways at the Frankfurt airport. In 1965, the opposition was a local concern: people living in the vicinity did not want any further noise from the already busy airport disrupting their lives. After successfully challenging

¹⁰⁴ Sarkar, vol I, 27.

¹⁰⁵ Burns and van der Will, 164.

the planning decisions in the courts in 1969 and again in 1972, the CI (“Action Against Aircraft Noise”) alerted other nearby communities to the consequences, both social and ecological, of airport expansion. The authorities’ obstinacy in pursuing their goal led to a protracted battle with an increasing number of CIs throughout the rest of the 1970s. It culminated in the early 1980s with site occupations by protesters and a subsequent ugly and violent confrontation with police.¹⁰⁶ As Burns and van der Will explain, the conflict over *Startbahn West* was emblematic of the development of the citizens’ initiatives and also of their links to the formation of the Greens in the early 1980s.

Most of the early CIs were not as widespread or as long-lived as those involved in the airport conflict near Frankfurt. They were generally short-term, locally-focused groups, concerned with ecological issues like water and air pollution, forest protection, expanded roads in municipalities, and improving public transportation. They also were not solely concerned with ecological issues. Especially in the period between 1969 and 1973, citizens’ initiatives formed to address a variety of problems. In their study, Burns and van der Will present three central areas with which the CIs concerned themselves: politics of the locality, defence of civil liberties, and environmental protection.¹⁰⁷ In the first instance, they refer to initiatives such as the Action Red Point campaign in Hannover that began in 1969. Frustrated with drastic fare increases, Hannoverians boycotted the privately owned public transportation company responsible by providing rides free of charge for those in need. A red mark on a car indicated a drivers’ willingness to lend a hand.¹⁰⁸ Other politics of the locality initiatives dealt with education reform and the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 189.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 172.

¹⁰⁸ Sarkar, vol I, 43.

protection of abandoned homes and squatters.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, regarding civil liberties, the authors refer to the initiatives formed to combat *Berufsverbot*¹¹⁰ and to guard against a surveillance state. Finally, the authors refer to the area of concern that is most significantly connected to citizens' initiatives: environmental protection.

While the other concerns that citizens' initiatives formed to take issue with or promote were indeed important and together shaped the movement, their most significant feature was the association with ecology. By 1972, nearly half of the citizens' initiatives in existence were ecologically oriented.¹¹¹ Some, like that in Cologne, opposed the construction of new highways in and around cities. The proposed plan in Cologne, designed to combat traffic congestion in the growing city, would have compromised some of the "green space" surrounding the old city. The CIs, in response, complained not only about how the new highway would destroy "important greenery and recreation areas,"¹¹² but also that the plan privileged automobiles and urban sprawl and would lead to increased noise and air pollution around the city.¹¹³ Other ecological CIs combatted environmental degradation more directly. In Othetal, a small town on a tributary of the Rhine River, water pollution became a problem during the 1960s as a local textile factory flushed its unpurified waste water into the river. Rather than continue to combat the intractable company directly, regional authorities decided to build a drainage system to

¹⁰⁹ Burns and van der Will, 174-175

¹¹⁰ *Berufsverbot* was the colloquial expression applied to the Anti-Radical Decree enacted by Willy Brandt's government in 1972. The legislation's purpose was to prevent extremists from entering the public service but was used by the government to limit access to careers of those citizens with potentially questionable political backgrounds. The term translates as 'Ban on Careers' or 'Career lockout'. See James F. Tent, "Review: *Political Loyalty and the Public Service in West Germany: The 1972 Decree against Radicals and its Consequences* by Gerard Braunthal," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 65, no. 2 (1993), 430-431; or Markovits and Gorski, 98-99.

¹¹¹ Sarkar, vol I, 39: "Already in 1972, 38 to 47 per cent of the CIs were active in the area of ecology alone ... I think it is justified to say that the Citizen's Initiative Movement was from the very beginning predominantly an ecology movement."

¹¹² Sarkar, 68.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 68-9.

clean up the fouled water downstream of the factory. Distrustful of the authorities' and factory owners' plan, the local citizens organized and began to conduct their own research into the efficacy and efficiency of the drainage system. The actions of the CI (Citizens' Association Against the Drainage System in the Planned Form) eventually forced the factory to clean up its act, though the battle raged on into the 1980s.¹¹⁴ The significance of these ecological citizens' initiatives, and of other ecological CIs, was in their methods and the scope of their concerns: they protested against the plans of local bureaucrats, politicians, and industrialists. By increasing public awareness and challenging the decision-makers in municipal councils, and by organizing around issues that, while ostensibly about protecting the environment, they also affected the daily lives of local people.

The early citizens' initiatives also tended to be focused on single issues. It is, however, debatable whether or not the ecological initiatives, especially those that lasted longer than a few months, were simply single-issue oriented given the broader issues of most environmental concerns. For example, by protesting against air polluters, ecology CIs were not only protecting the environment but also public health and industrial expansion. By the middle of the 1970s, the ecological CIs began to resemble a movement, with centralized cohesion, wider organization, and tackling broader issues.

Most accounts of the citizens' initiatives movement tend to break the movement up into at least 2 separate phases with 1973-74 as the turning point.¹¹⁵ The shift from the first phase to the second was marked by economic crisis and the consolidation of the citizens' initiative movement.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 72-4.

¹¹⁵ Hülsberg, 55; Markovits and Gorski, 99-100; Scharf, 2; Sarkar, vol I, 35.

The economic crisis of the mid-1970s in West Germany, a product mainly of the 1973 ‘oil shock’, had ramifications for the federal government and for awareness of ecological issues. In 1969, in the wake of the student movement, the federal election resulted in a social-liberal coalition government with Willy Brandt’s SPD promising the introduction of an era of reform. Brandt’s exhortation to “dare more democracy” was answered by the CIs, but the SPD’s planned reforms were quashed by the recession occasioned by the oil crisis. Social reforms, promised or not, came second to the economic stability of the young republic, liberal-minded citizens discovered. With the publication in 1972 of the Club of Rome’s “Limits to Growth”, questioning one of the central pillars of capitalist democratic society, namely that of constant growth, sceptical West Germans began either joining or starting their own CIs at a faster pace.

The mid-1970s also saw the escalation of tactics by the extremist left in the Federal Republic, especially by the RAF and the *Bewegung Juni 2* (June 2nd Movement), culminating in the German Autumn of 1977. At the same time, much of the public protest was still dominated by the radical left offshoots of the student movement: various K-groups, concentrating on their familiar leftist themes, led street protests for public transport reform that ended in days of rioting in 1974 and 1975.¹¹⁶

While scholars see the CI movement up until 1973-4 as being the precursor to the ecological movement, describing it as a “conglomeration of single-issue activity”,¹¹⁷ the consolidation of the movement began in the mid-1970s. The *Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz*, or Federal Association of Environmental Citizens’ Initiatives (BBU), formed in 1972, marked the beginning of the consolidation. Seen by

¹¹⁶ Koopmans, 157-8.

¹¹⁷ Karl-Werner Brand, quoted in Markovits and Gorski, 101.

scholars as the national umbrella organization of the ecology movement, initially 15 likeminded CIs agreed to coordinate their efforts in a registered federal body. The BBU's emergence was not only closely linked with the increasing prominence of ecology in the CIs but it also marked the start of the transition from a profusion of informal initiatives to a more centrally organized and unified federation: a forerunner of the Greens. By 1982, the BBU had grown into the most important extraparliamentary ecology association in the nation, coordinating some 1000 CIs that boasted a total membership of between 300,000 and 500,000 persons.¹¹⁸ As exemplified by the expansion of the BBU throughout the 1970s, ecology became the unifying theme of the new social movements, the banner under which the exceedingly diverse initiatives across West Germany would unite in 1980 as a political party. But before that, protests against nuclear energy and nuclear power plants catalyzed the citizens' initiatives, massively expanding the scope of protest in the Federal Republic. The anti-nuclear energy protest movement connected the grassroots activity of the CIs with opposition to the perceived abuse of state power, short-sighted bureaucratic decision-making, and environmental destruction, linking them all as issues worth mobilizing about.

The Anti-Nuclear Movement

Protests against nuclear energy began at Wyhl. Wyhl was the planned site for a nuclear power station in 1972, the announcement of which caused strident protest among local citizens and which also served to catalyze the broader anti-nuclear movement across

¹¹⁸ Burns and van der Will, 185; Koopmans, 217-220.

West Germany. This marked the beginning of the mass movement phase in the history of the new social movements.¹¹⁹

However, the protests at Wyhl were not an explosion but rather the result of a slowly building antagonism between the regional government and energy companies on one side and local citizens on the other.¹²⁰ Unlike the atomic protests from the 1950s, the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s was formed and operated entirely outside the bounds of the state and the party political apparatus. When the SPD ended its support for the KdA in 1959, the organization collapsed almost entirely. The anti-energy movement, on the other hand, had no associations with political parties and formed an entirely different and new sort of organization. Wyhl was where it first coalesced.

¹¹⁹ Sarkar, vol I, 112.

¹²⁰ It is important to note the existence of the West German *Atomstaat* which was, in essence, the Federal Republic's dedication to developing and expanding its nuclear power program in close connection with power companies and scientists. In addition to the dangers to citizens' health, a fear of the increased role of state security and bureaucracy emerged as the large-scale companies associated with the complex and necessarily undisclosed technology grew alongside the plants themselves. See Sarkar, vol. I, 97-108. "All of these institutions of modern life are evil and undemocratic, unresponsive, irresponsible and heteronomous. Their size and built-in bureaucratic rigidity distance these institutions from their original mandate, which was first and foremost to serve people and their needs. Thus, to adherents of the new social movements, nuclear energy is evil not only because it involves a product which is dangerous to the community's health but because it is, by its very nature, a large-scale in expenditure, in organization, in deployment. Nuclear energy installations, precisely because of their importance to a country's energy sources and defense-related industries, need a big apparatus of protection. Thus, to the activists of the new social movements, there exists a compelling link between the evils of the "nuclear state" (*Atomstaat*) and those of the "security state" (*Sicherheitstaat*)." From Markovits and Gorski, 12



The site occupation at Wyhl, 1975. Figure 7 (Top): Police use water cannons to remove the non-violent protesters on February 20, three days before the first large-scale protest.¹²¹ Figure 8 (Bottom): The diverse alliance of occupiers and the Friendship House on the Wyhl site, March 31.¹²²

In 1971, an electricity supply company, Badenwerk, sought permission from the state government of Baden-Württemberg to construct a nuclear power plant near the town of Breisach. The plan met immediate resistance from local citizens. Academics from the nearby university town of Freiburg spurred the initial response and were joined rather

¹²¹ *Der Spiegel* “Eines Tages”, <http://einestages.spiegel.de> (accessed August 15, 2008).

¹²² *Der Spiegel* “Eines Tages”, <http://einestages.spiegel.de> (accessed August 15, 2008).

quickly by both potentially-affected farmers and fishermen, as well as urban environmentalists.¹²³ These opponents spontaneously organized several citizens' initiatives to better contest the proposed reactor. By late 1972, these CIs had collected some 65,000 signatures on a petition opposing the reactor and organized a demonstration involving 560 tractors.¹²⁴ In October, at a public hearing regarding concerns about the safety of the planned reactor, the state's Minister of Economics, Rudolf Eberle, was forced to concede that the scientific evidence supporting the plant was incomplete and that further expert advice was required. Because of this stiff resistance, the proposed reactor site was moved from Breisach to Wyhl, roughly 20 kilometres away.

From its conception, the reactor in Wyhl was surrounded by controversy and the state's concession in the face of protest made Wyhl a symbolic rallying point for the anti-nuclear energy protest. Ruud Koopmans points out that the opposition that rapidly developed at Breisach and moved to Wyhl was part of a broader antipathy toward environmental exploitation in the German Baden region and the French Alsace region. In fact, he notes that the French anti-nuclear movement developed first and that the first national protests of significance occurred in Fessenheim, a village not far from Wyhl on the French side of the Rhine valley. Some Kaiserstuhl residents (the region in which Wyhl is located) participated in the demonstration at Fessenheim in May 1972, four months prior to the aforementioned tractor demonstration at Breisach. When the protests at Wyhl began to intensify in early 1975, the impetus and inspiration came partially from

¹²³ Sarkar, vol I, 111; and Koopmans, 161.

¹²⁴ Sarkar, 111.

the success of similar activity across the Rhine in Marckolsheim, where citizens' initiatives were opposing the construction of a lead processing plant.¹²⁵

The July 1973 decision to relocate the planned reactor site to Wyhl led to a similar progression of protest throughout 1974: development of citizens' initiatives, massive petitions, information meetings including scientific experts, and small but committed demonstrations by affected members of local communities. One of the more pivotal points in this episode was the formation of the *Badisch-Elsässischen Bürgerinitiativen* (Baden-Alsace Citizens' Initiative) in August, which united the 21 CIs of the Rhine Valley region. The founding of this regional body occurred after a march to the Wyhl site for the purpose of protesting both the reactor and the lead-chemical plant in Marckolsheim. What made this body significant, though, was the declaration the CIs made as a unified group:

... we have resolved to jointly occupy the construction sites for the nuclear power plant at Wyhl and the lead factory in Marckolsheim immediately when construction work begins. We are determined to offer passive resistance to the violence that is being inflicted upon us through these undertakings, until the government sees reason.¹²⁶

The radical intent this position declared marked a new phase in the anti-nuclear movement, one that would become obvious to the entire country in a few short months.

On February 23rd 1975, 28,000 people took part in a massive demonstration near the site at Wyhl. After the demonstration, about 3,000 of the protesters tore through the site's fences and proceeded to occupy it. The next day, a mass mobilization prevented the police from clearing the site. For the following 8 months, the occupiers lived on the

¹²⁵ Koopmans, 160-161.

¹²⁶ Sarkar, vol I, 112.

site in a large wooden round house, dubbed “Friendship House”,¹²⁷ their presence preventing construction from continuing until the legality of the project could finally be established. The protesters seem to have taken this action in part because of the example set in Marckolsheim, but also in response to the intransigence of both the government and the power company. The government gave the power company permission to begin construction in January 1975 after a referendum regarding the sale of the land the reactor was to have been built on. Fifty-five percent of the local population voted in favour of selling the land, which, of course, means something different than voting in favour of building a nuclear reactor on the land. Immediately, local communities and citizens initiated legal objections. These Badenwerk ignored and began construction less than a month later, on February 17th.¹²⁸ A few smaller demonstrations and a thwarted occupation attempt preceded the events of the 23rd, but it was that day and the following months of occupation which put Wyhl at the forefront of the burgeoning anti-nuclear movement. The anti-nuclear movement then, through the contacts the local CIs made through the BBU, exploded all across the country at places such as Brokdorf, Kalkar, Grohnde, and Wackersdorf. The example of Wyhl inspired like-minded activists and local citizens through the Federal Republic and, because of its mass nature, the anti-nuclear movement rapidly became the core of the ecology movement.

On March 21 1975, the courts ordered the construction at Wyhl to a halt. However, this did not end the site’s occupation. Also in March of 1975, the occupiers, in the process of converting the site into an alternative colony,¹²⁹ founded a People’s Forest

¹²⁷ Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Right Since the 1960s*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 133.

¹²⁸ Koopmans, 158-163.

¹²⁹ Markovits and Gorski, 103.

University (*Volkhochschule Wyhler Wald*) and continued their protest activities. A higher court ended the existing construction-stop in October but the stalemate continued. The occupiers were not going to leave the site and the government did not want to forcibly remove them. As a result, the CIs and the government reached a compromise called the “Offenburg Agreement” in which the state government guaranteed no advances in construction until October 31st, 1986 at the earliest, and agreed to withdraw criminal cases and lawsuits against demonstrators as well as to gather further expert opinions on the safety questions raised by the CIs. In exchange, the CIs agreed to no further illegal actions and to uphold their non-violent principles. After an extension in the construction-stop following the conclusion of the Offenburg Agreement on November 1st 1986, the Administrative Court of Freiburg brought the construction of the Wyhl reactor to a halt by annulling the previous permission and making a new agreement contingent on the construction of additional safety features.¹³⁰ The conflict at Wyhl came to a temporary end with the efforts of the CIs besting the combined efforts of the state government and the atomic energy companies.

Wyhl was only the beginning of anti-nuclear protests that tactically employed site occupation. However, it was the first and it was also successful which made it an example to be emulated by other protesters. More significantly, it was the first to effectively employ a strategy of non-violent resistance. The petitions, marches, and demonstrations employed at Wyhl until 1975 were of limited use when the authorities began construction. When the protesters spontaneously began to occupy the site,¹³¹ the

¹³⁰ Karapin, 119-120.

¹³¹ Koopmans, 162.

new social movements acquired a novel tactic that proved to be both an effective tool, if used properly, and a negative distraction.

While occupying planned construction sites was a new and different activity for the social movements, it was in addition to an already diverse array of options they were using to prevent further environmental injustice. The CIs that united around the protection and occupation of Wyhl also used more conventional strategies and tactics both before and after the official annulment of permission for construction. They organized public information meetings, published a bulletin, *Was wir wollen* (What We Want),¹³² and initiated legal objections to delay the combined efforts of politicians and energy companies. However, keeping in mind the development of new social movements, Wyhl was primarily significant for the introduction of site occupation, making non-violent resistance a potentially successful strategy. Wyhl was also important for uniting a number of different constituents of the NSMs.

Scholars note the significance of Wyhl for sparking an explosion of anti-nuclear citizens' initiatives and the development of alliances in response to the government's inflexibility, but Wyhl also helped cultivate links between concerned rural citizens and more committed, urban, student activists.¹³³ The combination of urban and rural protesters united against the nuclear megamachine increased the media profile of the Wyhl demonstrations. The participation of the rural population, opposing the projects due to their threat to local climate and health concerns, provided legitimacy for the student activists. The "fragile alliance"¹³⁴ between the local population, interested in protecting their way of life, and the urban activists, interested in challenging the state

¹³² Sarkar, 116.

¹³³ Koopmans, 161-163.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 162.

monopoly on power and growth, allowed the protests at Wyhl to flourish. It is also worth noting the proximity of the university town of Freiburg to Wyhl. Koopmans points out that the extreme left was quite weak in Freiburg, especially when compared to cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich. If the extremist K-groups had been more prevalent at Wyhl, the site occupation may have shifted from “being radical enough for urbanites, [but] not too radical for the locals ... [to] just another communist-inspired riot”.¹³⁵ It was the delicate balance between the assorted and distinct contributors (the local farmers, middle-class professionals and activists, and student radicals), that, along with the varying modes of protest – for example, citizens’ initiatives, petitions, legal injunctions, mass demonstrations, site occupation¹³⁶ - allowed Wyhl to develop into a “symbol and catalyst”¹³⁷ for mass protest across the Federal Republic. This was a significant and very different sort of activity from that of the APO and the SDS in the late 1960s. Elitist political formations were all but thrown out the window and the majority of Wyhl activists adopted the grassroots style of the CIs and introduced new tactics.



Figure 9 (Above): The indelible symbol of the anti-nuclear movement. The popularity of this logo, with its grinning sun and the question “Nuclear power? No, thanks”, exploded during the 1980s.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Ibid., 162-3.

¹³⁶ Burns and van der Will, 198.

¹³⁷ Markovits and Gorski, 103.

¹³⁸ *Der Spiegel* “Eines Tages”, <http://einestages.spiegel.de> (accessed August 15, 2008).

At Frankfurt, Wyhl and elsewhere, the ecology and anti-nuclear movement's new modes of protest were related to the new ways the activists perceived the battles in which they were engaged. Their protests against specific projects expanded to criticism of the entire "system" as they uncovered the decision-making methods and state-industry relationships that prevented democratic engagement from concerned citizens.¹³⁹ At this stage, activists began to challenge the decisions of the state regarding nuclear power plants and massive industrial sites using extraparliamentary methods first seen at Wyhl. Also, in the early stages of opposition outside the systemic channels, the broad cross-section of the population involved in the actions, such as farmers, made it difficult for the state to portray protesters as radicals.¹⁴⁰ The CIs, evident especially in their activity at Wyhl, opposed the ecologically destructive and undemocratic policies of the state using a wide variety of methods that developed in concert with the requirements of their action. They were middle-class professionals and farmers, left-wing students and concerned housewives and they made the environment "the Vietnam of the middle class".¹⁴¹ And while the activity at Wyhl resulted in success, as the movement against nuclear energy grew and moved to other sites, success became more difficult for the movements to achieve. This was one of the motivating factors in the establishment of the first green voting initiatives in 1978.

¹³⁹ Carol Hager, "Citizen Movements and Technological Policymaking in Germany," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 528, Citizens, Protest, and Democracy (July 1993), 49.

¹⁴⁰ Hager, 50.

¹⁴¹ Peter Menke-Glickert, quoted in *Time*, "Crusading against the Atom", April 25, 1977.

The Limits of Extraparliamentary Opposition

Following the unprecedented and, frankly, surprising success at Wyhl, the anti-nuclear movement spread across the Federal Republic at a rapid pace, each new or proposed site for a nuclear reactor becoming home to another heterogeneous mix of opponents. The new protests and site occupations at Brokdorf and Grohnde broadened the anti-nuclear movement, galvanizing the ecology movement and catalyzing a variety of groups including that least radical of aggregations, the general public.¹⁴² The links between groups opposing nuclear power plants and those opposing nuclear bombs were obvious and the success of the anti-nuclear power movement bled into the wider and even more popular peace movement of the 1980s.¹⁴³ However, events in 1976 and 1977 forced some to reconsider the value of action outside parliament on its own. There were two reasons why anti-nuclear activists re-evaluated their methods.

First, the conventional methods employed by the anti-nuclear citizens' initiatives at Wyhl, Brokdorf, Gorleben and Grohnde proved that degrees of success were possible. Activists used the courts to challenge the permits required by the power companies at each stage of the construction process for the power plants. This strategy required technical knowledge of both the legal system and the effects of these plants on the environment. For example, a local engineer used his own equipment to measure air

¹⁴² Burns and van der Will, 194 & 196.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 206: "Quite independently of the general international context [end of the *détente* period] a political climate had arisen in West Germany by 1980 wholly favourable to the growth of a mass protest movement. For a decade marked by extraparliamentary interventions had by then created a reservoir of protest energy on which the emergent peace movement could draw. In particular, the ecology movement had sensitized broad strata of West German society – especially the educated middle class – to the necessity of safeguarding the future of human existence by preserving the natural environment. In view of the recognition, fostered by this movement, that the civil application of nuclear power was but the 'Siamese twin' of its military use, the voice of environmental protest logically attached itself to the chorus of opposition to *Nachrüstung*."

pollution levels in his neighbourhood after the construction of a new coal power plant at Voerde. His data, which showed illegal pollution levels, was used to prevent the expansion of the plant for years.¹⁴⁴ However, these legal challenges often did not ultimately prevent construction of facilities, such as the nuclear facility at Brokdorf which eventually came online in 1986. Moreover, activists were forced to argue, in the court proceedings, within very narrow parameters which did not challenge the decisions made by the political bureaucracy that created sites of protest in the first place.¹⁴⁵

The anti-nuclear activists did not prevent most of their targets of protest from being constructed but the government's complete revision of its ambitious, nuclear-focused energy program was an indication of the movement's strength. Proposed in 1974, Schmidt's government planned that nearly half of the Federal Republic's energy needs would be met by nuclear power by 1985. By 1976, that target had to be lowered to a mere 15 per cent.¹⁴⁶ Taken together with their experiences in court battles, activists proved they could contribute to and influence a significant policy matter. The legal challenge strategy both exposed the limits of its influence and demonstrated the possibilities of pursuing systemic objections. The decisions against which the anti-nuclear movement was agitating were being made in an arena they chose willingly to avoid: the parliamentary arena.

The second and more volatile limitation the anti-nuclear movement encountered was that of violence, both at political demonstrations and more widely in the Federal Republic during 1977. The success of the anti-nuclear movement slowed after the violence of 1977 and allowed green voting lists to emerge the following year. "The

¹⁴⁴ Hager, 51.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁴⁶ Burns and van der Will, 200.

spread of a new wave of protest [the new social movements] was temporarily slowed down because it coincided with the heyday of the radical offshoots of its predecessor [the student movement and APO].”¹⁴⁷

At Brokdorf and Grohnde in 1977, site occupiers, among whose numbers were radical leftists and K-groups members, battled the police. Masked and armed protesters fought openly with riot police who employed stanchions and water cannons. Though these extremist protesters were only a tiny percentage of the total mass, the combined efforts of the state, the police, and the media portrayed the entire protest as radical.¹⁴⁸ Extremist violence, many activists knew, paved a short road with a dead end. Without the support of the public, or at the very least without public sympathy, the efforts of the anti-nuclear movement would be blunted.

The clashes between police and protesters also occurred at the same time as another type of extremist violence plagued West Germany: terrorism. One of the offshoots of the student movement were violent radicals who believed that state repression, experienced in the form of violence during the student revolt of 1968, could only be countered by means of war. The Baader-Meinhof Gang and their followers in the RAF (*Rote Armee Fraktion* or Red Army Faction) began their attacks on the state in the aftermath of the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg in 1967. Starting with arson, the urban guerrillas progressed to assaults and bank robberies, and finally to bombings, kidnappings and shootings. The situation reached a critical point in the autumn of 1977, referred to as the German Autumn.¹⁴⁹ In late July, the head of a state bank, Jürgen Ponto, was shot and killed outside his house in a botched kidnapping. In early September, RAF

¹⁴⁷ Koopmans, 166.

¹⁴⁸ Markovits and Gorski, 103-104.

¹⁴⁹ Hockenos, 123-128.

“commandos” abducted one of the state’s most prominent industrialists, Hanns-Martin Schleyer¹⁵⁰, killing three police officers and a civilian driver in the process. Their aim was to negotiate the release of imprisoned RAF members by holding Schleyer hostage. When their efforts did not produce the desired results, the RAF in concert with members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, hijacked a Lufthansa flight in October. After nearly a week, German military task force units stormed the flight while it was in Somalia, freeing the hostages and killing all but one of the hijackers. In response, the RAF murdered Schleyer, the authorities discovering his body on October 19th in France, in the trunk of a car. The extensive media coverage that these events received and the effect they had in provoking revulsion to violence discredited violent activity in general.

It is therefore no surprise that the first green electoral lists began to appear at local and regional elections in 1978. The violence of the 1970s discredited extraparliamentary opposition to the state, especially for those more moderate members of the new social movements. According to Herbert Kitschelt, the issue of violence, in combination with the limitations of movements outside parliament, may have “pulled” Greens founders toward electoral politics.¹⁵¹ If the goal was to effect change in the Federal Republic, reports on the news about bloody battles between the police and radical communist protesters hardly seemed the right strategy to drum up support among the general public.

Most activists agreed that resorting to violence wasn’t a solution. The German Autumn reinforced that message loud and clear. Some concluded that they had to link extraparliamentary activism and representative democracy in order to be taken seriously. Without a voice in the regional

¹⁵⁰ He was also a former Nazi party member and SS officer.

¹⁵¹ Frankland and Schoemaker, 59.

legislatures to lobby for their causes, they were too easily marginalized, shut out of the institutions in which policy was made.¹⁵²

The Greens themselves wore their dedication to non-violence on their programmatic sleeves: along with social justice, grassroots politics and ecology, non-violence was one of the Greens four founding principles. A change was at hand. The struggle and strife of the 1970s convinced some new social movement activists and former sixty-eighters that perhaps the once-reviled arena of mainstream politics was not so useless. After 1978, Dutschke's "long march" was now heading straight toward the biggest institutions in the Federal Republic.

Conclusion

The emergence of Green electoral lists in 1978 did not mean the extraparliamentary new social movements were coming to an end. From 1978 on, a Green electoral movement existed, developing at the regional and local levels, similar to the CIs and NSMs. The NSMs continued to exist and grow, especially within the *Öko-Pax*, or Eco-Peace, alliance. The peace movement was the largest, most popularly supported and perhaps most influential, at least for the electoral success of the Greens, of the NSMs. In fact, the new peace movement expanded the scope of the protest activity across the Federal Republic after the Dual-Track decision in 1979. But as it emerged alongside the party, I will focus in the next chapter on the development of the party and how the two strands I have attempted to detail in this chapter, the radical and the moderate, influenced the Greens in its early stages of formation.

¹⁵² Hockenos, 147.

The Greens, then, grew out of a number of different and ground-breaking political and social groups that opposed the state in West Germany for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways. The limited action of the ban-the-bomb and the anti-militarization groups introduced themes, if not the eclectic style of the later movements, that the Greens and the later NSMs would adopt: nuclear power and the dangers of rearmament. It was up to the student movement in the late 1960s, frustrated with either the docility or the atomised dogmatism on the left, to adopt the anti-authoritarianism of the Frankfurt School and challenge the foundations of the Federal Republic. The sixty-eighters used previously unseen political tactics to express their frustrations and inspired the movements that developed during the 1970s. If the students had learned from the opposition to Vietnam in the United States, the CI movement and the NSMs made ecology and the environment “the Vietnam of the middle class.”¹⁵³ Dumping the cadre-style action of the SDS, the citizens’ initiatives emerged, hundreds and thousands of them, at the most local level, organized by average citizens or former student rebels, urban service sector employees and rural farmers alike. By the late 1970s, the new social movements had developed critiques of the entire system of democratic capitalism, using the effects of nuclear power and weapons, the repression of minority groups, and destruction of the environment as their examples. With this fundamental opposition to the function of the state and its bureaucracy came a degree of radicalism that the activists embraced. However by 1977, the hardcore tactics of some extremists forced a re-examination of solely extra-parliamentary path the Greens forebears had until then followed. Despite the decision to begin contesting elections at the local and regional level in 1978, the nascent party and its attendant movements would not purge themselves

¹⁵³ Menke-Glickert, *Time*, April 25, 1977.

of radical tendencies entirely. This tension between moderate activists and fundamental oppositionists would bleed into the formation of the Greens and plague it through the first decade of its existence.

The pre-history of the Green party established their position as a leftist and ecological or more precisely, new politics, grouping. The shape of politics in West Germany had exacerbated the emergence of a postmaterialist voting cohort. Provided with few options besides operating extraparliamentarily, the student movement and, later, the new social movements, argued for the mainstream parties to address what the movements perceived as critical environmental, social and economic problems. The students, the citizens' initiatives and the anti-nuclear protesters pioneered different methods of political engagement in the Federal Republic. These forms were to influence the structure of the Greens, beginning in 1977. However, the tensions that Greens would encounter in attempting to create a party out of the movements limited the ecological-activists-turned-politicians' ability to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the weak left in the Federal Republic.

Chapter Two: “Neither Left nor Right but in front”

The Formation of the Greens, 1977-1981

Introduction

Beginning in late 1977, new social movement activists in West Germany began to coordinate electoral organizations that would represent the interests of members of the ecology and anti-nuclear movements. This was an unlikely occurrence given that the new social movements were, to an extent, the children of the student movement in the late 1960s and the student protest was largely directed against the existing hierarchical political structures. But rather than delving immediately into why the groups that would become the Greens chose to form a party and risk legitimating the state and its bureaucracy, it should be noted that electoral groups were, at first, another guise tried by the marginalized yet active political citizens referred to by the term “new social movements”. From the late 1960s through the 1970s, a myriad of forms were attempted by the politically motivated, including all the different sorts of protest groups noted in Chapter One, from citizen’s initiative groups through the innumerable dogmatic leftist splinter organizations. Why, then, was another new form attempted beginning in 1977, especially one that seemingly ran counter to the ideals of these marginalized political actors?

The idea of a formal party was not a notion that fit easily into the collective consciousness of those in the new social movements. The existence of the anti-nuclear movement, the women’s movement and the citizen’s initiatives owed a substantial debt to

the unresponsiveness of the *Volksparteien*¹⁵⁴ both inside and outside government. As epitomized by the expansion of nuclear power in the FRG, the links between the parties, government, large corporations and the trade unions convinced many of the moral bankruptcy of their representative institutions. As a result, participation in social movements flourished as citizens engaged politically outside parliament. However, there were others among the disaffected and environmentally conscious who were not convinced of the ineffectuality and dubiousness of traditional political institutions. Given the primacy of political parties¹⁵⁵ in Western democracies, especially in post-war West Germany, the chance to form a new party that would identify itself as ecological was, for some, irresistible. These party catalysts tended to be on the margins of the NSMs, both on the right and on the left. The mass of NSM activists required more evidence to be convinced that a new vehicle was necessary to continue the long march through the institutions.

The Greens' decision to formally organize themselves into a party has been examined and analyzed by a variety of scholars. They have isolated a number of reasons for the creation of the electoral groups that eventually came to form the Green party. In the last chapter I mentioned the potentially discrediting influence of violence at protests as a motivation for creating a party. For some activists, the events of the German Autumn, RAF terrorism and violent battles between riot police and extremist anti-nuclear

¹⁵⁴ Term used to refer to the mainstream parties, or "People's parties", in West Germany. Otto Kirchheimer, in his landmark paper "The Transformation of the Western European Party System", published in 1966, deemed these parties "catch-all parties" because they focused on attracting voters rather than ever-more party members, modifying Maurice Duverger's idea of the "mass integration party". Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party System," in *Political Parties and Political Development*, ed. Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), 177-200.

¹⁵⁵ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 67: "Competitive political parties are the pre-eminent institutions of modern mass democracy and the essential prerequisite for the electoral debate that leads to the allocation of political power..."

protestors, in the late summer of 1977 illustrated the limits of the extraparliamentary approach to politics. The combination of the state's intensifying repression and the popular media's concomitantly negative coverage conspired against further successes for the new social movements. "The limitations of the movements and the fear that the issue of violence would undermine the effectiveness of the anti-nuclear movement 'pulled' the founders of Green parties toward the electoral arena."¹⁵⁶ While violence at protests has been described as a "pull" factor, Greens scholars have also pointed out a variety of "push" factors that led to the formation of the party.

A quotation from noted political sociologist, Claus Offe, expresses the difference between "push" and "pull" factors: "The interest and explanatory approach has in most cases been in the 'push' of new values, demands, and actors that provide 'issueness' to certain questions, rather than in the 'pull' of objective events, developments or systemic imperatives the cognitive perception of which might condition or give rise to issues."¹⁵⁷ In other words, "pull" factors relate to structural changes and political events while "push" factors address the emergence of new values in West Germany, for example, those of the New Left addressed in the last chapter.

Perhaps the most prominent and influential "push" factor relating to the Greens is reflected in Ronald Inglehart's "postmaterialism" thesis. Inglehart's study was motivated by the shift of focus on economic and physical security in politics to less material issues like environmental protection. While I cannot do the intricacy of Inglehart's work justice in this space, a brief summary is important. "If you belonged to an age cohort that grew up in a period of security and prosperity – no wars, plenty of material benefits – you are

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁷ Claus Offe, "New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics," *Social Research* vol. 52, no. 4 (Winter 1985), 817-866.

later likely to place more emphasis on nonmaterial issues – the quality of life, a society of more opportunities for participation.”¹⁵⁸ Among the criticisms and additions to Inglehart’s work were other “push” factors such as the absence of political ideals during the *Wirtschaftswunder* period, the intensity of the generational crisis in West Germany due to the legacy of the Holocaust, and the passion of the student movement and the university experience.¹⁵⁹ The postmaterialism of the post-war generation explains the emergence of new values in a new political cohort but only sets the stage for the formation of a party.

“Pull” factors better explain how the postmaterialist cohort managed to step from the more flexible politics of social movements to the structurally limited world of party politics. As already mentioned, postmaterialist activists experienced the limits of movement politics in the heated atmosphere of the German Autumn but other systemic factors pulled them toward the parliamentary arena. One frequently cited example was the integrative force of the 5% hurdle.¹⁶⁰ It was unlikely that the diverse groups that agreed to the formation of an ecology party in January 1980 would have united if not for the minimum percentage of the vote required to be allotted seats in the Bundestag.¹⁶¹ However, this hardly explains the formation of the Greens. A common position regarding the close-knit relationship between the *Volksparteien* (SPD and CDU), large corporations and the trade unions also united the disparate groups. These three hierarchical organizations formed a “cartel of growth” that privileged short term gains

¹⁵⁸ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 54.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁶⁰ Roland Roth and Detlef Murphy, “From Competing Factions to the Rise of the Realos,” in *The German Greens: Paradox Between Protest and Movement*, ed. Margit Mayer and John Ely, translated by Michael Schatzschneider (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 51.

¹⁶¹ Another explanation notes the integrative influence of the 4.75 million Deutschmarks that the proto-Greens party, SPV-*Die Grünen* which ran in the 1979 election for the European parliament, received for accumulating nearly a million votes. Langguth, 12; and Hockenos, 152.

and the preservation of the status quo over long-term reform and ecological concerns.¹⁶² According to Herbert Kitschelt, the labour corporatism¹⁶³ of the Federal Republic's trade unions and the unresponsiveness of the SPD government by the end of the 1970s "pulled" those with postmaterialist values toward the creation of a new party¹⁶⁴: a party to contest elections in a new form in the space along the left-right continuum vacated by the SPD and the trade unions. The Greens formed because of the political opportunities available and, consequently, were shaped by them.

A more in-depth discussion of political opportunities and how they affected the NSM activists and the Greens so acutely is important at this point. Ruud Koopmans, in his study of new social movements in West Germany, argues that political opportunities mattered as much in the formation of a party as any internal factors for movement activists.¹⁶⁵ Koopmans' definition of political opportunities can be reduced, for the purposes of this paper, to the possibilities available to extraparliamentary actors for mobilization due to the structure, both informally and formally, in a state's political system.¹⁶⁶ In West Germany, the primary political opportunity for the new social movements was the space on the left in establishment politics. This space was a function of the development of post-war politics in the Federal Republic. After being vilified and marginalized during the stability and reconstruction period in the 1950s by the CDU, the Social Democrats consciously moved toward the political centre.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, one pillar of the stability and reconstruction of West German society, as pursued by

¹⁶² Frankland and Schoonmaker, 59-60

¹⁶³ Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Politics in Belgium and West Germany*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 20-21.

¹⁶⁴ Kent Redding and Jocelyn S. Viterna, "Political Demands, Political Opportunities: Explaining the Differential Success of Left- Libertarian Parties," *Social Forces*, vol. 78, no. 2 (Dec., 1999), 493-4.

¹⁶⁵ Koopmans, 1-5.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-17.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-46.

mainstream politicians, was diligent anti-communism, which led to the formal banning of the KPD.¹⁶⁸ It was in this space that the extraparliamentary opposition or APO, referred to in the last chapter, emerged. The SPD's post-Godesberg shift and the KPD prohibition "... left the country with an amputated radical left, forced to the margins of the polity and without any representation in established politics, in short: a *heimatlose Linke* (a homeless left)."¹⁶⁹ In the mid-1960s, the SPD formed one half of the Grand Coalition (SPD-CDU) government which had both ignored and inflamed protest movements and their demands.¹⁷⁰ The most notable examples of this were the shooting death of Benno Ohnesorg in 1967 and the 1969 passing of the Emergency Laws, in the face of vociferous opposition.

By the late 1970s, a similar situation existed. The SPD-FDP coalition, led by Helmut Schmidt had burst the bubble of optimism created by Willy Brandt's chancellorship in the early 1970s. Combined with the state's ignorance and repression of the new social movements, especially anti-nuclear activists' site occupations, the SPD was precluded from consideration as an alternative on the left. While the hysterical anti-communism of the 1950s and 1960s had declined, communists remained without any parliamentary representation at the national level. In spite of the similarities between the 1960s and the 1970s, the political opportunities were different. First, the sectarianism on

¹⁶⁸ Patrick Major, *The Death of the KPD: Communism and Anti-Communism in West Germany, 1945-1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). During the early post-war years in West Germany and the attempts to establish the Federal Republic, anti-communism outstripped anti-facism as the reactionary focal point of government authorities, at least strongly influenced by the position of the two Germanies in the Cold War. "On 17 August, 1956, the long-awaited verdict was announced, declaring the KPD to be unconstitutional, dissolving it, and forbidding ersatz organizations ... Marxism-Leninism was portrayed as a pseudo-religious faith, aiming at a Communist social order via a dictatorship of the proletariat, incompatible with the 'free democratic order basic order', infringing its principles of equality, pluralism, opposition, responsible government, and separation of powers." (p. 291-2)

¹⁶⁹ Koopmans, 44.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

the radical left after 1969 and the splintering of the student movement had only led to the myriad K-groups' insistence on in-fighting and to the violence of the RAF that threatened to discredit protest entirely.¹⁷¹ Second, Willy Brandt's challenge to "dare more democracy"¹⁷² was taken seriously in the early 1970s and the result, by the late 1970s, was a mass of citizen's initiatives, mobilized by the opposition to nuclear energy.¹⁷³ Finally, the protests in the 1970s were aimed at areas of concern, such as nuclear energy and expansion of highways, in the jurisdiction of local and regional governments instead of issues in the federal sphere which the APO in the late sixties had protested.¹⁷⁴ As a result, there were more successes (e.g. Wyhl) for protesters. Taken together, the new social movements in the late 1970s were able to attract a wider base of support,¹⁷⁵ a base strong enough to take advantage of the political opportunities presented by the absence of a viable left-wing alternative party in the Federal Republic.

In September and October of 1977, referred to as the *Deutsche Herbst* (German Autumn),¹⁷⁶ the belligerence of RAF terrorists and the state's attendant response (ie.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 99.

¹⁷² Ibid., 92.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 93. Another result was a mass of disillusioned former SPD members. Following the election of the Social-Liberal, Brandt-Scheel government in 1969, the SPD's membership increased substantially. Between 1968 and 1972, the party's membership rose by 200,000. After Helmut Schmidt took over Brandt's chancellorship, membership declined again, with the youngest age group leading the exodus. For example, Petra Kelly, who joined the SPD after Brandt's election and spent a number of years working on the Secretariat of the Economic and Social Committee in the European Economic Community, left the party in 1979 and became a founding member of *Die Grünen*. See Petra Kelly, *Fighting for Hope*, translated by Marianne Howarth (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984), 120.

¹⁷⁴ Koopmans, 54-58. This passage includes a detailed analysis of West Germany as a "weak" state due to its form of horizontal federalism whereby individual *Länder* implement policy and, consequently, have greater influence than in "strong" states. "The West German political system enables challengers to profit maximally from differences of opinion within the political elite. If the national government is unresponsive, regional governments may be turned into allies; if national parties are opposed to a movement, their regional branches may have different ideas; and if all else fails, the courts can still provide a more favourable outcome."

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 99-100

¹⁷⁶ In response to the life sentences given to two of the three founding members of the Baader-Meinhof Gang, predecessor of RAF, the organization's underground commandoes kidnapped the president of the German Employers Union, Hans-Martin Schleyer, on September 6, 1977. The RAF's ransom demanded

repression) heightened the antagonism toward anti-statist movements, especially those that engaged in violence, ‘pulling’ the majority of activists away from protests. Thus, the violence of a severe minority at anti-nuclear protests in combination with the shocking tabloid headlines created by the German Autumn worked against the efforts of the majority of new social movement activists, especially anti-nuclear protesters. In attacking the state for its social and environmental policies and their adverse effects, the activists had built up sympathy among members of the media and, consequently some segments of the general population, but the pitched battles between hardcore activists and riot police reduced the media’s responsiveness to the NSM cause.¹⁷⁷ In 1977, social peace was more important than opposing the megamachine¹⁷⁸ as represented by nuclear energy.

At the same time, it became clear to activists that they could not gain more than minor concessions from the industry and state authorities; the movements, apart from the

the release of their recently sentenced comrades. The kidnapping followed a number of other terrorist actions by the RAF including the assassination of federal attorney general Siegfried Buback and, as a result, sparked a major crisis in the Federal Republic. Determined not to yield to terrorism, Helmut Schmidt’s SPD government launched the country’s largest manhunt in response. West Germany’s leftists were soon pinched between, on the one hand, the state’s desperation and the concomitantly intense police activity which the majority of citizens supported and, on the other hand, the RAF’s hardcore sympathizers who believed disapproval was akin to disloyalty. Daniel Cohn-Bendit said of his experience during this period, “Around this time there was a lot of talk in the left about the Federal Republic having become some kind of all-powerful *Sicherheitsstaat* (security state). And it became a self-fulfilling prophecy: the RAF, through its campaign of terror against the state, turned the Federal Republic into just that, a *Terrorstaat* ... The [state’s] logic was to ‘drain the swamp’ in order to isolate the RAF ... There was no middle ground on either side, no space for discourse.” (Hockenos, 125-6) The German Autumn reached its apex (or nadir) on October 13, 1977. More than one month after Schleyer’s kidnapping without any resolution, commandos from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who were associated with the RAF, hijacked a Lufthansa airliner carrying over 80 West German passengers on their way to Frankfurt. Among their demands was the release of RAF prisoners. West German special operations units stormed the plane in Somalia, killing most of the terrorists and freeing the hostages. Two days later, after the imprisoned RAF leaders were found dead under suspicious circumstances in their cells, Schleyer’s body was found in the trunk of a car in France. The German Autumn came to a close but not without the West German left feeling the intense pressure of the state apparatus under threat. From Hockenos, 123-8.

¹⁷⁷ Sarkar, vol. II, 9.

¹⁷⁸ This is a metaphor created by Lewis Mumford to describe the organization of urban civilizations and their rigid, hierarchical bureaucracies. He included enormous and sophisticated structures as illustrations of the mega-machine, for example skyscrapers, airports and nuclear power plants. See E. C. Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape: 1880 to the Present* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1987), 132-133.

experience of Wyhl, could not force them to abandon projects altogether.¹⁷⁹ If the remaining options were either to join a paramilitary cadre and combat the police state, or to continue to challenge state-industry initiatives from a milieu that had already proven limited, some members of the citizen's initiatives and other new social movements wondered if pursuing their goals in another fashion might not be effective. Furthermore, they might actually force politicians to take the demands of the new social movements more seriously by taking from them that which elected representatives truly valued: votes.¹⁸⁰ However, very many citizen's initiatives and activists were disinterested in engaging with another new political form.

Quite apart from those who believed the limits of extraparliamentary forms of politics had been reached and those who were optimistic about the potential benefits of translating NSM political structures into the traditional system, many activists felt that the development of new forms was not an ideal process. For example, Joschka Fischer, a Green representative and one of Germany's most popular politicians in the late 1990s, was a dedicated Sponti¹⁸¹ in Frankfurt in the late 1970s. He was disillusioned entirely

¹⁷⁹ In Roger Karapin's comparison of the anti-nuclear protest actions at Wyhl and Brokdorf, notes that the weakness of police response at the former and the overreaction of police at the latter made Wyhl's site occupation possible while promoting militancy at Brokdorf. The reactor site at Wyhl was abandoned in the mid-1980s after a decade of disruptive nonviolent protest combined with conventional actions. Brokdorf's reactor, however, was put online in 1986 after a decade of both conventional and militant protest. One reason Karapin provides for the different results at Wyhl and Brokdorf is the timing of the protests. On one hand, Schleswig-Holstein state authorities learned from the example set by the Wyhl protest in Baden-Württemberg: they were prepared to repel site occupiers. On the other hand, militant leftists entered the quasi-military actions at Brokdorf quickly, aware of the conflict due to Wyhl's publicity. Karapin, 117-159.

¹⁸⁰ Sarkar, vol II, 12.

¹⁸¹ The "Spontis" or spontaneists emerged out of the alternative milieus that were prominent in the urban metropolises of West Germany. The alternative milieus were a reaction, first, by disillusioned sixty-eighters to the organized action of the student movement and they sought to inwardly focus on politics at the personal level because of their "deep dislike of capitalism; an equally passionate disdain for the Federal Republic; contempt for all established institutions of politics and administration; and a fervent desire to be different, remain apart, and start something new." (Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorki, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1993), 82) The Spontis were an example of a distinct form of politics with this alternative movement, one apart from the "ideological,

with the prospect of electoral politics. Instead, he languished in the political ghetto, living in an alternative subculture among the squatters movement, mingling with the edgiest and most hardcore of extreme left radicals.¹⁸² There were also many others who remained within the extraparliamentary movements. While the anti-nuclear movement flagged after the state proceeded to crush or ignore opposition to its designs to expand a program of nuclear power, following the “dual-track decision” in December 1979 at a NATO meeting, the largest of the West German protest movements began to germinate: the peace movement.¹⁸³ The peace movement continued to grow through the early 1980s, alongside the Greens, reaching its peak in the middle of the decade.

organizational and tactical dogmatism of the ‘orthodox’ K-groups.” (Markovist and Gorski, 85) Beginning as early as 1973, Sponti grass-roots groups flourish after 1975 with the influx of disappointed members of the SPD and its youth organizations. The spirit of spontaneism, captured at the Berlin “Tunix” or “do nothing” meeting in 1978 where nearly 20,000 young people danced and performed theatre of the absurd in their symbolic journey to an alternative utopia, celebrated the elimination of formal and informal power structures. The Spontis significance lay in their perpetuation of a form of grassroots democracy that broke ground for a leftist radical-reformist politics that was also pragmatic. (Markovits and Gorski, 85-87)

¹⁸² Joschka Fischer’s Sponti experience grew out of the *Häuserkampf* (“war of the houses”) in Frankfurt’s West End as part of the alternative milieu in Frankfurt. Despite living in squatted urban communes, functioning in co-operative groups that were a manifestation of the Sponti slogan, “the personal is political”, the Frankfurt left always flirted with violence and the militant underground of the RAF. Fischer himself was considered one of the militant radicals, the plebeian associate of patrician sixty-eighter, Dany Cohn-Bendit. Pulled into the street battles with the police who were ordered to clear the squats, Fischer like many in Frankfurt, protested the death of Baader-Meinhof gang founder, Ulrike Meinhof, in prison on May 9, 1976. It was after this violent demonstration where a police officer was severely burned by an exploding Molotov cocktail that Joschka Fischer purged violence from his Sponti philosophy. Fischer’s Römerberg address in June 1976 exhorted all leftists and Spontis to eschew violence completely as it was a dead-end tactic. This marked a complete break for the Spontis from the militant underground that soon escalated violence across the FRG in the German Autumn. Thereafter, a disillusioned Fischer dropped out of alternative politics almost entirely until the formation of the Greens, driving a cab and working in a bookstore. See Hockenos, 111-138.

¹⁸³ The dual-track decision of 1979 was a reminder to the West German public that the two Germanies remained the forward bases of the two superpowers. In the decade between the dual-track decision and the student movement and APO, the Federal Republic had filled a “reservoir of protest energy” on which the peace movement drew. (Burns and van der Will, 205) The first mass demonstration that exemplified the strength and diversity of the peace movement occurred in Bonn on October 10, 1981. Among the 300,000 participants, there were representatives from almost every party in the country: the Greens; Wilhelm Borm from the FDP’s executive committee; Alfred Mechtsheimer from the CSU; Georg Benz from the executive of the metalworkers’ union; and the SPD executive member, Erhard Eppler. (Burns and van der Will, 211) While the movement petered out after the stationing of the new Pershing and Cruise missiles in 1983, during its height the peace movement comprised a breadth of constituent groups with divergent ideologies, from former conservatives like Petra Kelly’s partner and former NATO general Gert Bastian to the eco-pax alliance of activists like Jo Leinen, Roland Vogt and Petra Kelly, and from Christian groups like “Ohne

The peace movement mobilized hundreds of thousands of West Germans but it was not the umbrella that the movements required to create a unified identity. In spite of the breadth of its concern for the safety of human life across the planet, the peace movement was too narrowly focused on one particular cause, namely the stationing of new missiles in the Federal Republic, to serve as a unifying theme. Ecology, however, proved more malleable. A similar variety of concerned individuals as joined the peace protests (for example, Bonn 1981 – 300,000 people) were involved with the ecology movement (radical leftists, liberal new middle class, conservative church groups, etc.). The difference between ecology and peace was that breadth of interpretations to which ecology lent itself, from qualitative economic reform and ecological humanism to eco-feminism, non-anthropocentrists and other eco-ideologies that espoused “unity in diversity.”¹⁸⁴ Ecology formed the minimum consensus that allowed a diverse range of individuals to pursue their new politics concerns and provided them with an identity.

“Red and green, green and red go well together”: Rudolf Bahro’s eco-socialist vision

The left in West Germany, both new and old, both in and outside the NSMs, were in search of a new identity by 1977 and began to experiment with party forms. In this search, visions for a political alternative were influential in shaping the trajectory of the party. Comprehensive alternatives to the political mainstream were rare; those alternatives that existed had significant influence. For example, Herbert Gruhl’s *Ein*

Rüstung Leben” (Live Without Weapons) to left wing members of the SPD like Eppler and Oskar Lafontaine. There was also a motley collection of radical anti-militarists who formed an extremist hard core in the waning years of the movement after 1983. (Markovits and Gorski, 107-11) “It was not a long path from the self-understanding of the ecology movement as a life movement (*Lebensbewegung*) to the peace movement as a survival movement (*Überlebensbewegung*).” (Markovits and Gorski, 108) The peace movement “undoubtedly played a vital part in enabling a new political party, the Greens, to establish itself as an electoral force.” (Burns and van der Will, 228)

¹⁸⁴ Markovits and Gorski, 104-106.

Planet Wird Geplündert (A Planet Is Being Plundered), published in 1975, became a bestseller in the Federal Republic. While Gruhl's book was primarily a cautionary tale about environmental destruction, another author presented a more holistic political alternative.

In the space below, Rudolf Bahro and his ideas will be introduced and their significance in shaping the Greens' identity will be addressed. He presented, first in East Germany and later in the West, a vision for the re-organization of the left around ecological principles. For Bahro, the two primary elements of the Greens, the "'post-Marxist' radical Left and a 'post-material' reformist middle class,"¹⁸⁵ needed to blend into one alternative and ecological left. As the formation of the Greens, examined in detail below, will show, Bahro's vision placed him in the centre of the debate about the direction of a new and unique party.

The most prominent proponent of a new form for the ecology movement in the Greens' history was Rudolf Bahro. In late 1979 and early 1980, he addressed the very first formative conferences for the Greens, scarcely a few weeks after leaving East Germany. He was forced to leave after being released from prison where he had been held for political reasons. Bahro was jailed for publishing a book that criticized the socialist system in East Germany and his ideas about what the green movement could become in West Germany used those criticisms as a jumping off point. For Bahro, who remained an avowed socialist in spite of his imprisonment by a socialist state, neither democratic capitalism nor state socialism, neither West nor East,¹⁸⁶ was the answer to the problems the new social movements identified. Rather, the central problem was the

¹⁸⁵ Markovits and Gorski, 79.

¹⁸⁶ Rudolf Bahro, "Why, as a Socialist, I'm Joining the Green Party," *Socialism and Survival: Articles, Essays and Talks, 1979-1982*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Heretic Books, 1982), 58.

industrialist imperative for constant growth and thus constant exploitation of resources, a problem common to both capitalist and communist nations.¹⁸⁷ Bahro was also an advocate for compromise between traditional Left dogmatists and New Left activists. Overcoming the ecology crisis was more important than squabbling over political forms. It should be noted, however, that Bahro remained a socialist and ultimately felt that ecology fit into a socialist understanding of the world.

Where, then, did this significant figure in the early history of the party, whose philosophy bridged a gap between the old and the new Left, come from? As already mentioned, Bahro was born, and lived, in East German and, consequently, was not a new social movement activist. In spite of this, his philosophy was one of the only attempts to synthesize the multiplicity of themes within green-oriented literature¹⁸⁸ and “articulated in their purest and clearest form”¹⁸⁹ the basic premises of fundamentalist¹⁹⁰ thinking. Bahro’s philosophy about the role of the Greens, as he espoused it during the formative period of the party’s history, both influenced the development of the party and frames the tension between the New Left, the post-materialist voting bloc, and the scattered, directionless traditional left operating outside the trade unions and the SPD.

Born in Bad Flinsberg (now known as Swieradów Zdrój, a Polish city) in 1935, Bahro lived the majority of his life in East Germany. He joined the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the GDR’s sole party, vanguard of the workers and peasants, in 1952 and studied

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸⁸ Markovits and Gorski, 138.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 124.

¹⁹⁰ The term “fundamentalist” is used here in reference to the wide usage of the term, beginning in 1982, to describe the more radical wing of the party. The two wings were popularly known as the Realos and the Fundis, referring to the former’s pragmatic approach reminiscent of a *realpolitik* strategy and the latter’s idealistic fundamentalism.

philosophy, between 1954 and 1959, at Humboldt University in East Berlin.¹⁹¹ As a young man, he was a committed socialist though not the most dogmatic. Despite working on a farm to better understand collectivized agriculture and serving the party as a journalist and functionary, Bahro developed a reputation as someone who asked uncomfortable questions.¹⁹² In the period after 1965 when Bahro left a job as a functionary in a trade union, he “lost his political naïveté”.¹⁹³ He took a position at the student journal, *Forum*, and in that position ran afoul of the party. He published and edited articles that explored the excessive conformism and lack of criticism in the party bureaucracy.¹⁹⁴ Confirmation of Bahro’s disillusionment came in 1968. The Prague Spring was the catalyst for Bahro: ‘actually existing socialism’ in the GDR was not the society he had read about in Marx and Engels. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, repressing the Czechs and Slovaks “socialism with a human face” experiment, struck a nerve in Bahro. Rather than resign from the SED, which was his initial reaction, Bahro decided he, “could and had to do something better and more decisive.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Günter Minnerup, “Rudolf Bahro – An Introduction,” *The Socialist Register*, vol. 15 (1978), 2.

¹⁹² Rudolf Bahro, *From Red to Green: Interviews with the New Left Review* (Verso: London, 1984), 26. The first doubts about Bahro’s ideological reliability arose in the Party apparatus after the 20th Congress of the CPSU and Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin’s excesses. Bahro objected to the way the information was presented to his class, handed down by SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht. “Without any kind of explanation he suddenly declared that Stalin was no longer to be reckoned among the classics of Marxism. When I heard this, I immediately thought of a quote from Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*: ‘As I lay there and slept, a sheep came and ate the laurel wreath from off my head, and said: Lo, Zarathustra is no longer a philosopher!’” (p. 25-26) However, it was not until the Soviet invasion of Hungary later that year that Bahro’s consistency was seriously questioned. The young student posted an article in his department to the effect that the party should trust their comrades enough to tell the truth about Hungary and was “hailed over the coals” for it. (p. 26)

¹⁹³ Rudolf Bahro, “Ecology Crisis and Socialist Idea,” *Socialism and Survival*, 39.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹⁵ Rudolf Bahro, “Rudolf Bahro Interviews Himself,” trans. Paul Edmunson and Günter Minnerup, *The Socialist Register*, vol. 15 (1978), 14.

Bahro's questions prior to the Prague Spring led to him, afterward, "[wanting] at all costs to give them an answer against which they would be as impotent, in terms of ideas, as we were against their tanks."¹⁹⁶ Bahro's answer, a stinging critique of the bureaucratic machinery in the GDR, landed him an 8-year prison sentence on the charge of espionage. His critique began as a PhD dissertation, which he worked on while employed by an industrial manufacturing facility to monitor production. After it was rejected on the grounds that it was too contentious, Bahro's work emerged in a revised form as a book entitled *Die Alternative*, or *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*.

On August 24, 1977, Bahro was taken into custody by state police, two days after the publication of interviews and excerpts from the book in *Der Spiegel*, a West German news magazine, and his public admission at a party meeting that he had published a book criticizing 'actually existing socialism'.¹⁹⁷ He was convicted of espionage by the courts and sentenced to an 8-year term. Considering the primary evidence used to convict Bahro were interview transcripts found lying on his desk, the sentence was severe. Authorities believed that copies of these transcripts, from interviews conducted in 1973-4 with recent university graduates working in industry, had likely been transported to the FRG during the publication process. Under GDR law, that made Bahro guilty of sharing state secrets with the West.¹⁹⁸ However, Bahro's lengthy sentence was commuted in late 1979 and he was released from prison.

Bahro's Marxist critique of "actually existing socialism" garnered wide praise and was exceedingly well-received in the West, especially amongst left-wing academics.

¹⁹⁶ Günter Minnerup, *The Case of Rudolf Bahro: A Socialist In An East German Prison* (Nottingham: Russell Press, 1979), 5.

¹⁹⁷ Bahro, *From Red to Green*, 70-71.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

Accordingly, Bahro's arrest following the publication of *Die Alternative* elicited excited opposition from Western critics.¹⁹⁹ A group calling itself the Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee, composed of trade unionists, journalists, and members of the Communist Party of Great Britain wrote a letter to Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR, appealing for Bahro's amnesty.²⁰⁰ On October 11, 1979, Bahro was released from prison in a general amnesty of political prisoners in East Germany on the 30th anniversary celebration of the establishment of the state. Rapidly thereafter, he made his way to the Federal Republic.²⁰¹ Eighteen days after he left the GDR, on November 4th, 1979, he was present at the Offenbach preparatory conference to establish a federal Green party.

In his foreword to a collection of Bahro's speeches and letters, E.P. Thompson, famous socialist historian of the British working class, described Bahro's arrival in the West "like someone leaping from a moving train. [Bahro] hit the ground running, but running in his own direction."²⁰² Bahro threw himself into the formation of the Greens. By his own admission, Bahro "hadn't arrived in the West just to insult the GDR from a safe distance, or to confirm the self-righteous prejudices of people who like to sit around and casually compare the two social systems."²⁰³ He "was never an East German dissident."²⁰⁴ In fact, he still considered himself a socialist, in spite of his incarceration by an ostensibly socialist government.

¹⁹⁹ Minnerup, "The Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee Appeal," *The Case of Rudolf Bahro*, back cover.

²⁰⁰ Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee, "International Solidarity with Bahro," in *The Case of Rudolf Bahro*, ed. Günter Minnerup (Russell Press Limited: Nottingham, 1979), 20.

²⁰¹ Bahro, *From Red to Green*, 92.

²⁰² E.P. Thompson, introduction to *Socialism and Survival*, 8.

²⁰³ Rudolf Bahro, preface to *Socialism and Survival*, 11.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Socialism, conceived in the way Bahro had presented in *Die Alternative*,²⁰⁵ still held the potential to lead to the emancipated society he envisioned. He believed as well that the canyon splitting democracy in the West and socialism in the East needed to be bridged. Furthermore, Bahro believed that this same gap separated socialist and conservative politics in West Germany, distracting both from the ultimate threat: the potential destruction of humanity by way of the environmental devastation caused by the industrial mode of production.²⁰⁶ Fortunately, ecology, and its possible political manifestation in the Greens, provided the material required to create this bridge, one that would avoid environmental destruction by ending the reliance on constant growth characteristic of both capitalist and communist industrialism. So, Bahro began his involvement in the Greens as someone who believed in the critical nature of the ecological problem but also as a socialist who saw the way to the socialist utopia through the unifying power of ecology.

It was at the Offenbach conference for the Greens that Bahro began to develop, publically, his ideas about how ecology and socialism fit together seamlessly. It was on November 4, at the Offenbach conference, that Bahro made one of his most famous and

²⁰⁵ “Rudolf Bahro sets himself the task of restating the whole socialist and internationalist project, of reaffirming the idea that no man is good enough to be another man’s master. In his own words: ‘*Today it is general emancipation that is the absolute necessity*, since in the blind ploy of subaltern egoisms, lack of solidarity, the antagonism of atomised and alienated individuals, groups, peoples and conglomerates of all kinds, we are hastening ever more quickly towards a point of no return.’” From Christopher Hitchens, introduction to *Rudolf Bahro Interviews Himself*, by Rudolf Bahro (Nottingham: Russell Press, 1978), 1.

²⁰⁶ Mewes, 59-60. “According to Bahro, the ecological crisis constitutes the ultimate, quintessential crisis of capitalism. Whereas all previously identified inner contradictions of capitalism, including the class struggle diagnosed by Marx in the 19th century, did not suffice to ‘eliminate’ capitalism, the ecological crisis finally will usher in its demise. Thus, insofar as the struggle to prevent global environmental deterioration is still primarily directed against capitalism, traditional socialists in joining its struggle will not need to reorient themselves. Beyond that point, however, a complete rethinking of the socialist theoretical perspective is in order ... It has become clear that not class interest, but the species interest of humankind (reminiscent of early Marx) has become the focal point of all truly emancipatory politics. Furthermore, socialist emancipation has become part of the effort of quite literally ‘saving mankind,’ and with it, ‘saving Western civilization.’”

oft-quoted remarks: “Red and green, green and red, go well together.”²⁰⁷ By his own account, Bahro agreed to leave for West Germany upon his release from prison because he wanted to have some influence on leftist politics in the Federal Republic.²⁰⁸ He made those intentions known throughout his speech at Offenbach, entitled “Our Forces Belong Together”. He acknowledged the aims of the Greens as more than ecological, focusing also on “the general emancipation of human beings, men and women, [and] all conditions in which people are debased and humiliated.”²⁰⁹ For Bahro, the ecology movement shared these aims with the socialist movement. Because of this shared goal, Bahro thought that communist groups should dissolve themselves in the Greens to realize the emancipatory potential of an alliance of all anti-capitalist forces.²¹⁰

Naturally, Bahro recognized the conflict inherent in such an alliance, between the traditional working class emancipation of the Old Left and the less anthropocentric, post-materialist concerns of the New Left. The contradiction between these two leftist conceptions was the growth imperative. Communism, concerning itself centrally with unshackling the labouring class, relies on a traditional notion of industrial growth that the New Left did not support. New social movement activists protested the corporatist state’s lack of transparency about the effects of industrial growth on the environment, for example, nuclear power plants or waste facilities. In spite of this tension, Bahro felt that the socialists and the Greens needed each other.²¹¹ Bahro’s central concern was the “general emancipation of human beings – men and women,”²¹² and as such only a union

²⁰⁷ Rudolf Bahro, “Our Forces Belong Together,” *Socialism and Survival*, 18.

²⁰⁸ Bahro, *From Red to Green*, 97.

²⁰⁹ Bahro, “Our Forces Belong Together,” 18.

²¹⁰ Palmer, Cooper and Corcoran, ed. *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 269.

²¹¹ Bahro, “Our Forces Belong Together,” 22.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 23.

of like-minded individuals could lead to “a mass movement of cultural transformation.”²¹³

At the end of his Offenbach address, Bahro spoke out against “traditional left sectarianism”.²¹⁴ He stopped short of fixing Greens’ trajectory entirely, instead referring to the party’s formation as a “project” that would, hopefully, lead to a broader movement, able to transform society. This broader movement, as he saw it in November 1979, relied on the tossing aside of all “dogmatic ballast”²¹⁵ that could work against the young party. Discussed in the following section on the formation of the party, Bahro’s speeches presaged factional struggles in the Greens instead of preventing them.

On January 13th, 1980, at the Greens’ founding conference in Karlsruhe, Rudolf Bahro again addressed the assembled delegates. The speech, entitled “Why, as a Socialist, I’m Joining the Green Party”, returned to the themes of Bahro’s speech two months earlier at Offenbach: compromise among socialists because of the primacy of the ecology crisis over traditional leftist demands.²¹⁶ He referred to the required compromise as both “historic”²¹⁷ and “avowed and principled”.²¹⁸ Bahro then announced his “adherence to the Green Party”²¹⁹ for two reasons he had not previously mentioned. First, the left needed to try something new. By the early 1980s the SPD was losing ground in the Federal Republic and the communists remained fractured and ineffective. Second, the Marxist and socialist tradition had no adequate answer for the questions

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Bahro, “Why, as a Socialist, I’m Joining the Green Party,” 57.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 61.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 60.

raised by the ecological crisis.²²⁰ Bahro saw that the Greens might be able to craft an answer and that potential, the potential for an historic compromise on the left, needed support.

Bahro's position came to be the foundation of one of the most prominent factions in the Greens after their formation: the eco-socialists. In spite of his exhortations at Karlsruhe, Bahro still supported a socialist version of an ecology party and the historic compromise he envisioned did not come to pass by the conclusion of the formative conferences in the spring of 1980. The tension between a majority of New Left influenced activists experimenting with an electoral party and a minority of socialists, radical or otherwise, still motivated by traditional Marxist politics was never eased. Factions carried over into the party though they began to shift after 1981. Nevertheless, in the Greens' formative period, conflict on the left more widely manifested itself in the development of an ecology party. Bahro's conception of an ecological movement unifying and directing society toward an emancipated (and therefore socialist) future was never mirrored in the development of the Greens. Rather, from the regional development of electoral lists beginning in 1977 to the foundation of the federal Greens in 1980, the party was a polyglot organization of the political left, attempting to use ecology as a lowest common denominator, to fuse the disparate constitutive elements.

²²⁰ Ibid.



Figure 10 (Above): Rudolf Bahro speaking at the Karlsruhe conference in 1980.²²¹

Another reason Bahro's ideas were so resonant was that they addressed the political opportunities mentioned above. With the fractured radical left and the SPD in government leaning consistently toward the right, there was a void on the left. Bahro's vision for the party, in his early days, meshed with the opportunities available by envisioning an ecological alternative party that would unite the post-Marxist and post-material left. His conception presented not only an alternative but also one that was viable given the shape of politics in West Germany. But as both the party and Bahro developed, it became clear that his radical ecological perspective could not be maintained within a viable electoral party.

²²¹ *Stern*. http://img.stern.de/content/53/50/535065/Gruen250_250.jpg (accessed August 15, 2008).

Formation of the Greens

The impetus to form a party did not just come from charismatic individuals and leftist intellectuals. Given the party's roots in the grassroots politics of the citizen's initiatives and the protests associated with the new social movements operating at the local level, it would be difficult to assert that the Greens were the product of any single person's diligence. Instead the party bore the marks of its grassroots heritage and its eventual successes confirmed a reinvention of the left. The Greens became a "party of a new type"²²², or in Petra Kelly's argot, the "antiparty party".²²³ Many within the party used a football metaphor to describe the nature of the Greens and its relationship with the social movements; the movements were to be the pivot leg (*Spielbein*), the political constant for the party, or the kicking leg (*Standbein*), which would be the mouthpiece for the movements in establishment politics.²²⁴ This close relationship with the grassroots was supposed to prevent the professionalization or cooption of the party and maintain its anti-hierarchical character. Furthermore, the cadre-style, centralist tactics of classical Leninism, so typical of the traditional left radicals was also tacitly off limits. As we shall see, the Greens' formation could not avoid the influence of left radicals. However, by 1981 the Greens were not just an ecology party and nor were they a radical party. The Greens represented a reinvention on the Left.

The development of the Greens began first at the regional level. A discussion of their formation at the federal level will follow but the developments at the local and state

²²² Mewes, "The West German Greens," 63.

²²³ Kelly, 17.

²²⁴ Jürgen Hoffmann, "From Cooperation to Confrontation: The Greens and the Ecology Movement in Germany" in *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, Realities*, ed. Axel Goodbody (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 73.

level between 1977 and 1980 bear investigation primarily because of the different ways in which the ecologically-minded attempted to interact with the political structures. The themes of party development that would inform *Die Grünen* at their formative conferences emerged initially at the local level in Lower Saxony and Hamburg and then spread to nearly every *Land* in the country. Across the Federal Republic, experimentation in forming parties or voting lists led to a multiplicity of different styles.

There were two reasons for the geographic divergences between the forms taken by the nascent parties and voting lists. First, there was tension between activists regarding both the level of integration they were willing to consider and where they were situated on the left-right political continuum. Essentially, the NSMs had developed outside mainstream politics not only because the establishment was not listening to their demands but also because they chose to participate in a new style of politics which the establishment could not replicate. The new social movements, and later the Greens, politicized local politics to a degree that had not existed earlier in West Germany.²²⁵ Thus, the tension was between those that decided that the limits of the movements had been reached and it was time for another method to pursue their ends by ‘voting for themselves’ and those that disagreed because entering the system would weaken the movements, dilute the principle of direct democracy, and prevent systemic reform by

²²⁵ Thomas Scharf, *The German Greens: Challenging the Consensus* (Oxford/Providence, USA: Berg Publishers, 1994), 240-1. Scharf’s work asserts that the Greens’ influence politically is felt most intensely at the local level where most Greens are active, not unexpected given the ‘grassroots’ nature of the party. He positions the Greens’ “New Local Politics” as bringing an argumentative style to the localities, pressuring the consensual apathetic style of the “Old Local Politics”. “The New Local Politics represents more than just an extension of the New Politics agenda to the local level. In addition to new issues, the New Local Politics is characterised by its parliamentary styles, its conflictual orientation, its broad definition of the powers of local decision-makers and its preference for open decision-making practices. The Old Local Politics conforms to a more traditional approach to local political behaviour. It can be identified in consensual decision-making structures, a strict adherence to narrow interpretations of the function of local authorities and a clear preference for representative democratic decision-making forms.” Scharf, 241.

inadvertently strengthening parliament.²²⁶ The other conflict was between conservative environmentalists and dogmatic communists who saw hope for the end of bourgeois capitalism in the ecology movement.

The second reason for the difference between the regional eco-parties was that of historical circumstance. Some *Länder*, especially the more urban centres, had a legacy of socialist organization and oppositional politics, while other more rural regions had a tradition of conservative politics. The distinction, however, was infrequently very sharp. In exploring the emergence of the regional ecological voting initiatives first, it is possible to tease out the regional variations which influenced the later Greens, exposing tensions that would not otherwise be explicable.

Forming Regional Green Parties

As Frankland and Schoonmaker have explained, there was something of a pattern to the development of regional green parties or, more accurately, green “lists”.²²⁷ In their attempt to make more easily understandable the diversity of the first regional ecological voting groups, they use a geographic framework. Primarily, the distinction is between the larger and more geographically diverse states, such as Lower Saxony and Hesse, and the comparatively small city-states, like Hamburg, Bremen and West Berlin. The green

²²⁶ Thomas Poguntke, “From Nuclear Building...”, 5: “Even when the Greens first participated in a nationwide election (the European elections of 1979), they avoided organizing themselves as a party and ran as an ‘other political organization’. This highlights the strong orientation of Green activists toward movement politics. In other words, they saw their political formation primarily (or even exclusively) as a ‘promoter’ of new themes and issues without considering winning parliamentary representation a primary goal.”

²²⁷ Lilian Klotzsch, Klaus Könemann, Jörg Wischermann and Bodo Zeuner, “What Has Happened to Green Principles in Electoral and Parliamentary Politics?” in *The Green Greens: Paradox Between Movement and Party*, ed. Mayer and Ely, ed., (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 100: “‘List’ had a double meaning. On one hand, it refers to the electoral system, which usually requires a list of candidates; on the other, it expresses an explicit desire for plurality. A list is an external enumeration of elements, which, except for their enumerative relationship, have nothing to do with one another. Substantive, communicative, and political homogenization or integration of a list’s elements is a task still to be undertaken; it cannot be viewed as solved, as the term *party* inherently suggests.”

lists from the larger (and more rural) *Länder* have tended to be more preoccupied with “politics of space” and directed by pragmatic environmentalists and ecolibertarians. The more densely populated city-states, on the other hand, have tended to focus on the “politics of social identity” at least as much as the “politics of space”. As a result, the green lists from Hamburg, West Berlin, and Bremen have been dominated by an ecosocialist perspective and form the “left faction of the Green party”.²²⁸ This distinction between more pragmatic greens from the larger states and more leftist greens from the urban centres shapes a great deal of analysis of the Greens.²²⁹

However, their framework does contain exceptions. Bavaria, the largest West German state, and Rhineland-Palatinate both have strong conservative political traditions reflected in their comparatively insignificant green parties. The Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein also both had weak green parties, largely due to the prominence of the SPD in the heavily industrial states.²³⁰ Exceptions aside, Frankland and Schoonmaker importantly note the general distinction between the more conservative and pragmatic green lists in the southern *Länder* and the more socialist and activist green lists in the northern states.

The situation in Lower Saxony provides an important case in point. It was not only the *Land* in which green voting lists emerged. The impetus for the formation of these groups came from frustrated anti-nuclear movement activists and the later development of the organization saw a variety of different groups jostling for position

²²⁸ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 75.

²²⁹ For example, see Thomas Poguntke, “Parties in a Legalistic Culture: The Case of Germany” in Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, eds., *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London & New Delhi: Sage, 1994), 205-207; and E. Gene Frankland, “Parliamentary Politics and the Development of the Green Party in West Germany,” *The Review of Politics*, vol. 15, no. 3 (Summer 1989), 395-399.

²³⁰ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 75.

and influence. The electoral organizations in Lower Saxony that began to form quickly after the 1976 decision to construct a nuclear waste disposal facility near the town of Gorleben are commonly referred to as the first ecological voting initiatives to come out of the new social movements.²³¹ In the autumn of 1977, two of the regional electoral alliances that had coalesced in the towns of Schwarmstedt and Hildesheim, both near Hanover, took part in the local elections.²³² Neither garnered close to the 5 per cent of the vote required to enter their respective *Bundeschäft*, or local parliaments. But when the two groups united under the title of *Grüne Liste Umweltschutz* (GLU; Green List for Environmental Protection) and contested the state election in June 1978, they managed a surprising 3.9 per cent of the vote, putting a green electoral list within reach of the 5 per cent hurdle,²³³ thought to be out of reach not long before. Furthermore, it is worth noting that in the region of Lüchow-Dannenberg, where Gorleben and its attendant protests were located, the GLU received a 17.8 share of the vote.²³⁴ The various ecology parties, alternative lists and green voting initiatives that popped up across the Federal Republic throughout 1977, 1978 and 1979, with varying degrees of success, built on the foundation laid by Lower Saxony's GLU.

The situation in Lower Saxony warrants closer investigation. The emergence of the GLU in Lower Saxony and their performance in the fall election of 1977 followed a pattern of development similar to the situations in most other *Länder*. As in most other regions, the GLU were not the only ecologically concerned citizens to form a voting group in the wake of the violent clashes between protesters and police at Grohnde in

²³¹ Sarkar, vol. II, 11; Hülsberg, 82; and Hockenos, 148.

²³² Hockenos, 149.

²³³ Hülsberg, 83.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

March 1977. Rather, there were three groups that contested the elections and each of them was organized by groups with differing political orientations. The succinctly titled *Umweltschutz Partei* (Environmental Protection Party; USP), the first and most influential of the groups, was composed of “bourgeois conservative elements”²³⁵ and founded by Karl Bedderman, a former CDU party member. The party was interested in correcting the problems they saw created by the SPD’s dedication to nuclear power in Lower Saxony but they were not opposed to the ‘system’ as such. In fact, the majority of USP members were “anything but young radicals. Indeed, they were hostile to the *Chaoten*, the longhaired radicals with whom they had little, if anything, in common.”²³⁶ The USP, however, found common cause with the GLU and the two groups united under the GLU-banner in December of 1977.



Figure 11 (Above): Two Green Party representatives, Dieter Drabiniok and Gert Janssen, in Bonn, November 1982.²³⁷

²³⁵ Ibid., 82.

²³⁶ Markovits and Gorski, 193.

²³⁷ *Der Spiegel* “Eines Tages”, <http://einestages.spiegel.de/> (accessed August 15, 2008).

The GLU, in contrast to the USP which was formed in a manner similar to a traditional party, was born out of the Hildesheim citizen's initiative. They considered themselves a complete socio-ecological alternative to the mainstream parties and called themselves a "list" rather than a party.²³⁸ The two groups, the USP and the GLU, were able to work together for two reasons: both were primarily concerned with issues of ecology and Karl Bedderman, leader of the USP, believed that the party should be an alliance of "conservatives ... traditional nature lovers ... ecological rebels of the CDU, FDP and SPD, as well as the citizen's initiatives."²³⁹

The other group in Lower Saxony formed in the region of Hameln-Pyrmont out of a local citizen's initiative that had organized in response to the planned nuclear power plant at Grohnde. The Voter's League, Nuclear Power, No Thanks! (Wählergemeinschaft, Atomkraft, Nein Danke!; WGA), like the GLU, considered themselves an alternative to the established parties but was considerably more leftist than the other two organizations. First, their programme of concerns was not limited to purely ecological issues but included a more wide-ranging package of social and economic reforms. Second, the WGA included a number of members of the Communist Federation (*Kommunistischer Bund*; KB), the Socialist Workers' Group (*Sozialistische Arbeitergruppe*; SAG) and worked with a trade union organization.²⁴⁰ Finally, the WGA did not conceive of itself as an electoral initiative that would function independent of the new social movements but rather, in a saying that would become famous with the

²³⁸ Hülsberg, 82; Markovits and Gorski, 194.

²³⁹ Hülsberg, 83.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 82; and Helmut Fogt, "The Greens and the New Left: Influences of Left-Extremism on Green Party Organization and Policies," in *The Greens in West Germany: Organisation and Policy Making*, ed. Eva Kolinsky (Oxford & New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 94.

emergence of the federal Green party, as “the parliamentary arm of the extra-parliamentary movements.”²⁴¹

These three groups, the USP, the GLU and the WGA, formed the three factions characteristic of most of the regional green lists in the Federal Republic. And much like the situation in the rest of the regional lists, the various factions alternately competed with each other over how ecological concern should be integrated into parliamentary politics, both in terms of the image of the party and the tactics used to contest elections. It was this battle between identity and efficacy amongst the conservative, the moderate, and the radical factions that shaped the party.²⁴²

Once the USP and the GLU united, the WGA became more sincerely interested in hitching their leftist conception of ecological politics to the larger and more successful organization. The GLU, at the same time, understood that the only way to effectively crawl over the 5 per cent barrier would be through creating as broad a coalition of environmental groups as possible – even if those groups were allegedly leftists, or, worse yet, anti-constitutional communists.²⁴³ In the run-up to the June 1978 Land elections in Lower Saxony, the GLU added many more CI activists to its ranks. In the group’s response to the WGA’s desire to have the GLU be more representative of all facets of the ecology movement, the group shifted the balance in the group in favour of

²⁴¹ Hülsberg, 82-3.

²⁴² Tad Shull, *Redefining Red and Green: Ideology and Strategy in European Political Ecology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 45-47. “A strategy of efficacy means articulating the demands of a range of social movements ... A strategy of identity means that the party stresses the characteristic demands of a single social movement.”

²⁴³ For a much more detailed account of the development of the Greens in Lower Saxony, see Anna Hallensleben, “Von der Grünen Liste zur Grünen Partei?: die Entwicklung der Grünen Liste Umweltschutz von ihrer Entstehung in Niedersachsen 1977 bis zur Gründung der Partei Die Grünen 1980” (PhD diss., Göttingen Universität, 1984). The title translates, roughly, as “From Green Lists to Green Parties?: The Development of the GLU from their Origin in Lower Saxony, 1977, to the Foundation of Die Grünen, 1980”.

those more amenable to left-wing and grassroots democratic politics.²⁴⁴ After the elections, where as previously mentioned, the GLU polled a surprising 3.9 per cent of the state vote, Karl Bedderman, then head of the group, voiced his concerns about the rising influence of the left. Bedderman, his fears dismissed as speculation, resigned in favour of Georg Otto, founder of the original, pre-USP GLU, and the organization shifted its programmatic center toward a less conservative, more moderate line; a line that vaguely rejected the existing economic order and was willing to ally with the undogmatic left as well as bourgeois environmentalists.²⁴⁵ The principal difference between the new party center and the leadership of Bedderman was the GLU's belief in the need to combine party politics with extra-parliamentary action.²⁴⁶ The more conservative elements saw the GLU as a nascent party that would pressure the existing, stubborn parties who had ignored the citizen's initiatives. For them, extraparliamentary action had been undone by violence. For the GLU after July 1978, the need to use both methods to advance the ecology movement remained.

Nevertheless, the GLU in Lower Saxony was primarily ecological and that central focus served as the unifying element among the plurality of constituent elements, regardless of their political leanings (excepting, naturally, those conservative elements that felt the extra-parliamentary route need be abandoned). However, the formation of an electoral list in Hamburg was different. In the densely populated, northern port city, the impetus for forming the *Bunte Liste*, or 'Rainbow List', came more clearly from the left. The Lower Elbe Citizen's Initiative for Environmental Protection (*Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz Unterelbe*; BUU) collectively decided in the fall of 1977 to participate in

²⁴⁴ Frankland, 390-1.

²⁴⁵ Fogt, 95.

²⁴⁶ Hülsberg, 83.

the elections scheduled for the following year. The BUU were a regional umbrella CI, in the vein of the BBU but smaller in scale. Many of its BUU members were also active in the Communist League (*Kommunistischer Bund*; KB).²⁴⁷ The KB connected a range of different socialist conceptions from ardent Marxists to the so-called “undogmatic” communists. Helmut Fogt argues fervently, in his study of the centrality of left extremists in the formation of the Greens, that the KB “dominated” the BUU after the failed and violent protests at Grohnde and Brokdorf, very directly linking the resultant *Bunte Liste – Wehrt Euch, Initiativen für Demokratie und Umweltschutz* (Rainbow List – Defend Yourself, Initiatives for Democracy and Environmental Protection; BL) to a leftist organization.²⁴⁸ In addition to ecology and similar to KB inclinations, BL members were expected to oppose limits on extra-parliamentary protest and ‘Berufsverbote’ and to support ‘progressive’ and socialist perceptions of politics and society.²⁴⁹

Similar to but opposite of the Lower Saxony GLU’s distaste for communist involvement in its membership, the Hamburg BL were not interested in right-wing participation in their organization. The BL, however, did not work to exclude any other individuals, involving not only ecologists and members of the KB but those whose causes spanned “the rights of tenants, women, pupils, apprentices ... anti-nuclear activists, homosexuals, urban districts, foreigners, prisoners, conscientious objectors, and groups from the field of health care, education or culture.”²⁵⁰ Even the list’s title, ‘Rainbow’, was used to reflect the spectrum of issues contained within the BL.²⁵¹ In spite of the inclusive

²⁴⁷ Sarkar, vol II, 21; Hülsberg, 84.

²⁴⁸ Fogt, 93-94.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 94.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ “Rainbow” also reflected the choice to allow the groups participating in the List to maintain their external cohesion and autonomy, a choice that the less left-wing lists and parties in other regions, such as Lower Saxony, would not allow as it often meant the allowing the inclusion of communists. Such a choice,

designs of the BL, conservative or rightist groups reacted in a fashion similar to that in Lower Saxony: they left.

In Hamburg, the 1978 elections saw two rival “green” lists compete: the aforementioned BL and the more right-leaning GLU that formed with the support of the identically-named group from Lower Saxony. Showing their political colours, the Hamburg GLU disparaged the BL in the run-up to the June 4 election by claiming that it was being managed by “communists, queers and criminals”.²⁵² The results of the elections showed that the BL was more popular than the conservative GLU but was not popular enough to gain seats in the local legislature. The BL won 3.5 per cent of the vote while the GLU won 1.0.

Hamburg’s Rainbow List was significant because of its contrast with the GLU of Lower Saxony. The leftist BL was neither in name, nor in its primary focus, an environmental protection electoral organization. “The programme of the [BL] went far beyond the traditional concerns of the ecology groups and raised a whole series of far-reaching social and political demands.”²⁵³ The spur for entering elections came from a left-leaning citizen’s initiative. Communists were not excluded from the outset, which led to an exodus of right-leaning and conservative groups. In Lower Saxony, the right also vacated the party but as a result of common ground between the moderate ecologists and leftists. The GLU in Lower Saxony ended up as an organization that focused primarily on ecology as it was the lowest common denominator for the groups involved, while in the BL in Hamburg, “ecology was secondary in the process of party

between allowing dual “party” membership or not, became an important factor in the development of the incipient federal Greens.

²⁵² Hülsberg, 85.

²⁵³ Ibid.

formation”.²⁵⁴ Both of these models were important in the development of the Greens lists and the subsequent formation of a national party.

There was one other model of regional green list worth mentioning. The GLU in Lower Saxony represented a moderately left-leaning but primarily environmentalist electoral list and the BL in Hamburg was more interested in building more appropriate relationships within human society and between it and the natural environment in some kind of socialist society.²⁵⁵ By contrast, in Bavaria, a much more conservative Green party emerged.

The stronghold of the sister party to the CDU, the Christian Social Union (CSU), Bavaria is known as the most staunchly conservative *Land* and this was reflected even in the formation of a regional green list. In contrast to the diversity of ecologists across most of the rest of West Germany, the ecology movement in Bavaria was dominated by conservative environmentalists to the extent that left-wing elements were entirely excluded from the formation of a green list.²⁵⁶ Instead of the process observed in Lower Saxony and Hesse, conservative environmentalists both instigated and controlled the party in Bavaria: similar to the situation in Hamburg, only on the other end of the political spectrum. To contest the scheduled election in October 1978, the GAZ, *Grüne Aktion Zukunft* (Green Action Future), a party founded by CDU Bundestag member Herbert Gruhl and the AUD (*Aktionsgemeinschaft Unabhängiger Deutscher*; Action

²⁵⁴ Horst Mewes, “A Brief History of the German Green Party,” in *The German Greens: Paradox Between Protest and Movement*, 33.

²⁵⁵ Raymond Dominick, “The Roots of the Green Movement in the United States and West Germany,” *Environmental Review*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1988), 20.

²⁵⁶ Hülsberg, 88.

Community of Independent Germans)²⁵⁷ united under the title, in a bit of ironic foreshadowing, *Die Grünen*, winning 1.8 per cent of the regional vote.

In addition to their role in Bavaria, the GAZ were perhaps most significantly remembered for their role as the first ecology party for the whole of West Germany. As most of the regional lists formed as a result, firstly, of the efforts of conservative environmentalists, it should come as no surprise that the first effort to create a federal party was also instigated by a conservative. The GAZ was founded in July 1978 by Herbert Gruhl and a handful of his associates. Gruhl was a noteworthy figure for two reasons: his best-selling book, *The Planet Is Being Plundered*, published in 1975, which warned of ecological catastrophe, and his standing as a CDU backbencher in the Bundestag.²⁵⁸ After his book was published, the CDU distanced themselves from Gruhl and he decided to form the GAZ. As they pertain to the resulting Greens, the GAZ were problematic insofar as the party eschewed grassroots democracy, one of the few fundamental principles of the Greens.²⁵⁹ Instead, the party formed in a top-down style, without ever referring to the citizen's initiatives. In fact, Gruhl was never involved in any of the extraparliamentary movements.

²⁵⁷ The AUD were "independent nationalists, a tiny middle class party" (Horst Mewes, "A Brief History of the German Green Party") led by August Haußleiter, "a neutralist who had left the CSU as long ago as 1949 over its German policy" (R.E.M. Irving and William Paterson, "The West German Election of 1976," *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1977), 217). Irving and Paterson also note that for the 1976 election, though the AUD remained a very small party, they discussed issues that the other parties ignored, such as pollution, nuclear weapons, and the problem of a growth economy. (Irving and Paterson, 218) According to Sarkar, however, the AUD were primarily concerned with "an atomic-weapons-free zone in central Europe." (Sarkar, vol II, 17) In spite of their roots as a independent nationalist party, the AUD had begun advocating ecological socialism in 1974 and were considered less conservative than their counterparts in the GAZ. (Horst Mewes, "A Brief History of the German Green Party", 35). Both organizations ended up playing a role in the formation of the federal Greens a year after their cooperative effort in Bavaria.

²⁵⁸ Sarkar, vol II, 19.

²⁵⁹ Langguth, 11.

The GAZ's independence or isolation from the real mass movement,²⁶⁰ the NSMs, and the suspicion that Gruhl had formed the party to both instrumentalize ecology for his own political ends and oppose the conservative environmentalists' loss of influence in the regional organizations, cast the party in a negative light amongst many others in the ecology movement. As a result, the GAZ never carried as much weight within the plurality of ecology groups as Gruhl wished and was unable to sufficiently unify the movement under the party's direction. Nevertheless, those "environmentalists and nature lovers" who stayed away from the CIs, suspicious of their socialist tendencies and the potential infiltration of hated communists, were attracted to the GAZ.²⁶¹ The GAZ, then was the "bourgeois conservative wing"²⁶² of the ecology movement in the Federal Republic and was important in the formation of the federal party (after its own efforts came up short). In spite of their relative significance, the GAZ's reluctance to accept a grassroots democratic, decentralized form for the party doomed them to the sidelines, as this principle was one of the primary unifying elements for the nascent party.²⁶³ As GLU candidate from Lower Saxony, Martin Mombauer, phrased his response to news of Gruhl's party, "A new ecology movement requires new democratic forms."²⁶⁴

Before Gruhl and his value conservatives were shunted aside entirely, they played an important role in the organization of the SPV, the Other Political Association devised to participate in the 1979 European election. While I have already mentioned the results of the vote in June (the SPV received 3.2 per cent) and that the SPV "emerged [as] a provisional Green electoral alliance dominated by conservative and center/left ecologists

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Sarkar, vol II, 20.

²⁶² Hülberg, 87.

²⁶³ Fogt, 99-106.

²⁶⁴ Sarkar, vol II, 20.

and a very few New Left militants,”²⁶⁵ I have neglected to fully explain how responsible the SPV was for the inertia that led to the formation of federal Greens. For the votes the SPV received, they were eligible for state campaign subsidies to the tune of 4.5 million Deutschmarks. As Herbert Kitschelt explains, SPV had to reconstitute itself as a formal party in order to obtain the funds. “These funds, in turn, would enable the SPV’s organizers to build a national communications network far superior to what the fragmented regional leftist organizations could hope to achieve.”²⁶⁶

As a new vista opened for the Greens at the federal level, it was clear that the first experiments in the Green project focused initially on the ideological orientation of the groups and not on the development of sophisticated forms or even programmes. Both in Lower Saxony and in Hamburg, the degree to which the Green lists were either left, centre or right was the central concern of those involved. The left, either from the radical groups or the New Left middle class, dominated generally, forcing conservatives to form their own organizations. These ideological battles continued in the debates about the formation of the federal Greens.

Forming the Federal Green Party

A series of conferences were organized in late 1979 and early 1980 to formally establish a federal iteration of an ecology party. At these conferences, alongside the conservative and moderate-left organizers of the SPV, the “New Left” militants who had previously avoided the federal ecology party formation process arrived in substantial

²⁶⁵ Kitschelt, 81.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

numbers.²⁶⁷ It was during the course of these formal negotiations that the first factional struggles in the federal party would be fought. The arrival of the “left-extremists”²⁶⁸ and their common ground with the moderate centre-left, along with their hard-earned experiences in organization from years spent in the political ghetto, led to the exit of the conservative and rightist forces. In the early stages, however, delegates of every persuasion and from each regional group desired the involvement of everyone else; alone, crossing the 5 per cent threshold nationally would be unlikely.²⁶⁹ But analogous to the situation in certain *Länder*, by the conclusion of the formative, federal Green party conferences, a left and centre-left alliance resulted in the exit of the right elements in the Greens, previously so significant in providing impetus for the formation of a national ecology party.

The first open program, preparatory congress was called for November 4, 1979 in the town of Offenbach.²⁷⁰ In addition to the motivation that the success – and potential funds – of the SPV provided for prospective federal Greens, the Green List in Bremen (BGL) became the second state green party to edge past the 5 per cent barrier less than a month earlier, on October 7, 1979.²⁷¹ Those in attendance discussed the potential program and strategy for a federal green party, though the most heated debates revolved

²⁶⁷ As Kitschelt notes, the New Left radicals had hoped to create an alternative leftist electoral list apart from the Greens, more along the lines of the AL in Berlin and the BL in Hamburg than that of the SPV, the conservative-moderate ecology alliance. However, considering the results of the June 1979 European election and the BGL crossing the 5 per cent threshold in Bremen, September 1979, the momentum behind a federal ecology party became impossible to ignore. At the founding conferences between November 1979 and March 1980, “the New Left turned out in force to make up lost ground.” (p. 82)

²⁶⁸ This term is borrowed from Helmut Fogt who used the phrase to “denote all organizations and their members whose aims have been classified as left-extremist by the authorities for the protection of the constitution.” See Fogt, p. 92, note 1. For this paper, I have used “left-extremist” to refer to those Green participants who belonged to other leftist organizations that were not ecological and attempted to shift the ideological focus of the Greens toward social and economic tensions more in line with a Marxist perspective.

²⁶⁹ Sarkar, vol II, 27.

²⁷⁰ Markovits and Gorski, 195.

²⁷¹ Horst Mewes, “The West German Greens,” 57.

around the position for leftists in the new party. The SPV party congress called the Offenbach conference and chose only to elect delegates from their own organization and from those regional green party organizations that existed at the time of the European elections. This meant that those in attendance from the alternative lists, and the political left more broadly, were not delegates and were therefore unable to muster enough votes to pass a resolution allowing members of other leftist organizations full membership in the nascent party.²⁷² “However, the assembly refused to ban (by 348 to 311 votes) dual membership in the Greens and in communist groups or [alternative] lists.”²⁷³

Even at this first meeting where not much was decided upon, Werner Hülsberg notes the significance of the coalescing of factions at this early stage. He refers to the “centre” bloc as playing a “Bonapartist role”²⁷⁴ in relation to the conservative ecologist bloc and the “rainbow-alternative” current, appeasing the left by rejecting the proposal to ban dual membership but also not recognizing them as full members of the new party. However, as Fogt describes in great detail, those members of communist groups and those with strong left-wing influences who wanted to participate in the Greens joined the SPV independently between the conclusion of the Offenbach conference and the beginning of the next conference at Karlsruhe, January 12-13, 1980. By then the Greens most direct antecedent, the SPV, boasted a membership of around 10,000 with at least 1,400 of those “left-wing members and activists of multi-coloured and alternative lists.”²⁷⁵

²⁷² Hülsberg, 93.

²⁷³ Fogt, 101.

²⁷⁴ Hülsberg, 93.

²⁷⁵ Fogt, 102.

It was at Karlsruhe that the formal agreement to form the federal party was reached. However, the brand-new party did not come to an agreement on a programme. In the face of the recurrence of the tug-of-war between the conservatives and the radical left on the direction of the party, it was significant that decisions on the programme were to be deferred to a conference which was ultimately held in March 1980.²⁷⁶ As Tad Shull has outlined, the Greens' delay in formulating a programme prevented the party from clearly creating a "*defining identity*"²⁷⁷ and allowed latent tensions to fester. The programme's postponement was principally caused by the thorny problem of dual party membership which the three factions in the party at this time (left, centre and right) could not agree on. As a result, the decision on the programme was delayed, the explicit identity of party shelved because clearly there was no consistent identity within the party held together by ecological principles. The result of this anomalous decision was the second most significant outcome of the Karlsruhe conference: the establishment of a firm left-wing minority in the party.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Sarkar, vol II, 29.

²⁷⁷ Shull, 52.

²⁷⁸ Fogt, 105.



Figure 12 (Top): The Greens' formative party conference at Karlsruhe, January 13, 1980.²⁷⁹ Figure 13 (Bottom): Herbert Gruhl (second from left, standing) with some delegates at Karlsruhe, January 13, 1980.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/img/0,1020,424873,00.jpg> (accessed August 15, 2008).

It was through a return to one of the central points of discussion at Offenbach that the left was able to assert itself in the formation process at Karlsruhe. Dual party membership, again, proved a sticking point. For the conservatives, led by Gruhl, the rejection of membership in two parties alleviated their fear of communist influence.²⁸¹ Their concerns were merited: the left radicals wanted to preserve dual membership to safeguard a role for the left in the Greens while preventing the party from being overrun by “bourgeois influence”.²⁸² However, for the centre, or “‘green’ moderates” as Langguth refers to them, the status of dual party membership was a question of preserving an “open” party, one distinct from the mainstream parties to whom the Greens were attempting, ostensibly, to provide an alternative.²⁸³ Agreements between the ‘green moderates’ and the left radicals on the form of the party, especially as they related to grassroots principles, became increasingly common.

Initially, 60 per cent of the 1400 delegates at Karlsruhe chose to reject dual membership, with the remaining 40 per cent in favour of delegating the matter to the regional parties. But, in addition to the 254 “autonomous delegates” that had chosen to attend the conference in support of their comrades, the left’s influence was felt when they used that 40 per cent stake to hold the formation agreement hostage.²⁸⁴ The SPV had made it a policy that a two-thirds majority of delegates was required in order for a federal iteration to be formed from the existing SPV. To ensure that the necessary numbers were achieved at Karlsruhe, the decision on dual party membership was instead entrusted to the regional green lists. To underscore the significance of these conflicts between

²⁸⁰ *Der Spiegel* “Eines Tages”, <http://einestages.spiegel.de> (accessed August 15, 2008).

²⁸¹ Langguth, 13.

²⁸² Hülsberg, 93-4.

²⁸³ Langguth, 12.

²⁸⁴ Fogt, 103.

conservatives and leftists, the left doggedly pursued the matter of dual membership despite the fact that it hardly mattered for most of the constituent elements of the K-groups. Only the KPD was formally a party and, consequently, members of other leftist groups who wanted to participate in the Greens could do so without violating any dual party restriction.

The Greens, newly constituted, grew to 16,000 members between the conclusion of the Karlsruhe conference and the opening of the special conference at Saarbrücken on March 22, 1980, to draft a party programme. One week earlier, on March 16, the Baden-Württemberg Greens passed the 5 per cent barrier and for the first time, Greens' representatives sat in the legislature of a major state.²⁸⁵ For the fast growing party, the Saarbrücken conference and formulation of the party's programme became a test of strength between the socialists and the conservatives in the party.²⁸⁶ For Gruhl, de facto leader of the right-wing ecologists, the leftist demands for the Greens' programme amounted to a "socialist shopping list."²⁸⁷ The debates at the conference, taking Gruhl's comment as a starting point, only became more antagonistic.

Ecological issues in the programme were decided upon with comparatively little intransigence. The debates became more heated over economic and social positions in the programme, especially following the draft produced primarily by leftist supporters to which Gruhl's aforementioned comment pertained. Particularly sticky were the left's proposals that supported homosexuality and immigration rights in the Federal Republic.²⁸⁸ The left also promoted the trade-union-approved 35 hour working week,

²⁸⁵ Langguth, 13.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 13-4.

²⁸⁷ Hülsberg, 95.

²⁸⁸ Markovits and Gorski, 196.

another proposal that politically conservative environmentalists were unlikely to endorse.²⁸⁹ According to Werner Hülsberg, in the programme drafting committee²⁹⁰ the left-wing in the Greens pursued clauses advocating the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, unilateral nuclear disarmament in both East and West Germany, and the end of *Berufsverbot* and any curbing of democratic liberties including the removal of infamous Paragraph 218 from the criminal code which criminalized abortion.²⁹¹ When compared to the range of causes pursued by social movement activists in West Germany, the left's proposals at Saarbrücken were better described as a new social movement 'shopping list' than as a socialist 'shopping list'.

By supporting and promoting issues championed across the diverse range of new social movements, the latecomer left radicals at Saarbrücken were able to forge a bond with the more centrist elements and use that alliance and the resultant majority numbers in the conference committees to advance concerns that were clearly on the left. According to the daily alternative newspaper, the *taz*, the programmatic resolutions at Saarbrücken “were solely a listing of all the demands which the Left, including its previous dogmatic and Marxist-Leninist factions, had developed over the last 10 years and propagated in public.”²⁹² When the leftists combined their years of organizational experience engaging other left-wing cadres in partisan squabbles with “classic Leninist tactics”²⁹³, they were able to manipulate the agenda for the conference and ensure that the

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ E. Gene Frankland, “Green Politics and Alternative Economics,” *German Studies Review*, vol. 11, no. 1, 112.

²⁹¹ Hülsberg, 95.

²⁹² *die tageszeitung*, March 24, 1980. Quoted in Langguth, 14.

²⁹³ Markovits and Gorski, 196.

programme would address their preferred topics. At the conclusion of the conference, the Greens' programme

contained an array of concrete proposals for environmental policy, framed in what was ultimately a 'utopian' design for a pacifist, environmentally compatible welfare state, with totally emancipated, self-governing green republics existing autonomously in a pacified world of international mutual assistance and political harmony.²⁹⁴

Helmut Fogt, among others, has noted that only 10 per cent of the Saarbrücken programme pertained to issues of ecology while “the extreme left succeeded in incorporating classical features of Marxist ideology into the Green party programme”²⁹⁵, including economic sections which placed blame for environmental destruction on the “exploitation of one group by another”²⁹⁶ and the myopic focus on profit by monopoly capital.²⁹⁷

And so the Greens' *Bundesprogramme*, agreed upon at the Saarbrücken conference, set the party on a far more leftist course than the early involvement of conservative ecologists would have indicated. The three-person federal executive, the Greens' party leadership²⁹⁸ which was also elected at Saarbrücken, notably failed to elect the right's most prominent representative, Herbert Gruhl, opting instead to include the more moderate August Haußleiter, North Rhine-Westphalia GLU member Norbert Mann, and the SPD member turned peace activist, Petra Kelly. This indifference for the conservatives and Gruhl supporters presaged the right leaving the Greens.

²⁹⁴ Mewes, “A Brief History of the German Green Party”, 36.

²⁹⁵ Fogt, 106.

²⁹⁶ Hans Fernbach, trans., 4.

²⁹⁷ Fogt, 106.

²⁹⁸ An awkward term for a party that wanted to avoid any sort of traditional hierarchy but the only one that addresses the position of the federal executive accurately, in spite of the limitations placed on their authority by the principle of grassroots democracy.

The final, intolerable act of disrespect for Herbert Gruhl came at the Dortmund conference scheduled in June in preparation for the October 1980 federal elections. At the Dortmund Conference, the other factions in the party wanted to create conditions for compromise with the jilted right-wing in the party. A perfect opportunity presented itself when Haußleiter was forced to resign from the federal executive after his associations with extreme right-wing organizations in the 1960s were revealed.²⁹⁹ Gruhl was an obvious replacement candidate. However, he was overlooked in favour of a “factory council member”³⁰⁰, Dieter Burgmann. So, in spite of the centrists’ desire for conciliation and the left’s willingness for some compromise with the conservatives over the party platform, putting a commanding personality from the right in any sort of official position of authority within the Greens seemed beyond the pale. As a result, Gruhl and his supporters walked out of the conference and resigned from the party. By the end of June 1980, the “bourgeois Trojan horse”³⁰¹ had left the Greens, failing to make a significant impact in politics on an ecology platform thereafter.

After the left established a foothold in the Greens at Karlsruhe, they kicked the door open for themselves at Saarbrücken and solidified their position by cleverly nudging the party programme further to the left. Still, the radicals or the extreme left did not come to represent the majority of the party, however influential their tactics might have been during the formative party conferences. In fact, after the disappointing 1.5 per cent of the vote the Greens tallied at the October 1980 federal election, a number of prominent

²⁹⁹ Hülsberg, 95.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 96.

Greens launched a petition in January 1981 to protest the involvement of *Z-Fraktion*³⁰² members in the Greens. The result of the petition was a vaguely worded resolution passed at a party meeting in February of 1981 at Kassel, which stated that “groups [attempting] to force their secretly formulated decisions on the Green party *cannot* exist within the Greens.”³⁰³ This sort of proactive behaviour on the part of Green party members to restrict the pressure created by communist elements shows that the influence of the left was not always taken as positive influence. Some Greens wanted to preserve a party united across political divisions under the banner of ecology – a party neither left, nor right, but in front.

The end of the formation of the federal Greens was also the end of the involvement of conservatives in the party. The most significant outcome of the formation process was the exit of the conservative wing that had been so instrumental in impelling the development of an ecology party, especially federally. The flip side, of course, was the alliance within the party between the left and centre wings and the resulting left-ecology party that was unsure of the weight of the dogmatic leftists in its midst, nevertheless contesting elections in spite of the party’s stated desire to retain its extraparliamentary identity. The only surety for the party was that ecology as a central unifying identity was not strong enough to hold the party together. In accommodating left-wing politics, the Greens forced conservative ecologists to exit. The legacy of the left both in the *Bundesprogramme* and in the Federal Executive shaped the Greens until

³⁰² The *Z-Fraktion* was group of communists who had been expelled by the Communist Federation in 1979 (*Kommunistischer Bund* – KB) for their desire to participate in the Green movement and the Green party. The *Z-Fraktion*, however, never acknowledged their expulsion, believing that their political convictions should not be abandoned in their effort to join the Greens. Thomas Ebermann, member of the *Z-Fraktion* and future prominent Fundi, explained that the actions of the *Z-Fraktion* were designed to “ensure the survival of communism” and “to exert more pressure on the Greens”. See Fogt, 101-2.

³⁰³ Fogt, 108: Quoted from *Info Die Grünen*, Hamburg 7.3.1981.

the end of the decade. As Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski put it: “As is so often the case with political organizations, principles and practices stemming from the Greens’ formative phase assumed an aura of universal validity and legitimating power long after the disappearance of the particular historical circumstances in which they were grounded.”³⁰⁴

Conclusion

The Greens’ formative phase did not end with the conclusion of the federal election in October 1980, the first in which the party participated. The Greens election to the Bundestag in 1983 has been marked as their first step outside the formative phase.³⁰⁵ However, the Greens identity as a leftist alternative party was essentially settled by the fall of 1980. Their platform in that election, and their own party programme, was distinctly leftist, coloured though by environmentalism implied by their name’s hue. The Greens’ disappointing result in the 1980 federal election (a paltry 1.5 per cent of the vote) was not an accurate reflection of their capacity as a viable alternative to the SPD. In fact, the poor result was largely a product of the race between the SPD and the CDU. The CDU, to mollify criticism of the party’s direction from its regional stronghold of Bavaria, ran ultra-conservative Franz Joseph Strauss as their Chancellor candidate. Much to the Greens’ detriment, many voters who might have voted for them instead strategically voted for the SPD to prevent Strauss’ potential chancellorship. In spite of the seeming setback, the Greens continued to move from success to success at the regional level immediately after the 1980 federal election.

³⁰⁴ Markovits and Gorski, 197.

³⁰⁵ Poguntke, “From Nuclear Building Sites...”, 5.

From 1981 until the next federal election in 1983, the Greens entered over half of West Germany's *Landtags*, or regional legislatures. The most controversial successes were in Hesse and Hamburg where the Greens displaced the FDP as the third most popular party and became a coalition partner for the SPD. The Greens' experiences in the two *Länder* led to in-fighting over the issue of SPD cooperation versus fundamental opposition. This dispute served to shape the emergence of new factions within the party, founded not on disagreements about the Greens' left or right direction but about radicality or moderation, idealism or pragmatism.³⁰⁶ However, in the immediate post-1980 period the Greens' successes bolstered the position of the left in the party. As Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra have recorded, a common joke among West German politicians during the early years after the Greens establishment was that the Greens were like tomatoes: they started out green and turned red.³⁰⁷

There were other more sincere examples of the left's reinforcement in the Greens. The Greens' programme, published in 1980, focused on the party's economic and social positions rather than expressing its unique environmental perspective. In the 46 page document, the environmental section made up 14 per cent compared to the 44 per cent dedicated to the social issues section.³⁰⁸ Former extreme leftists also moved into prominent positions within the Greens' formal structures. Of the roughly 300 or so

³⁰⁶ Markovits and Gorski, 200-208. Markovits and Gorski examine the failed cooperation between the SPD and the Greens in Hamburg and the relative success in Hesse. The more fundamentalist Hamburg Greens' idealism led them to misjudge the division inside the SPD and the prevalence of the ecological crisis' inevitability, thus naïvely believing that they could reject compromise and stand on principle. The result was an SPD majority in the December 1982 election. The situation in Hesse involved a substantial amount of compromise by both the SPD and the Greens, and most importantly, the absence of "unconditional demands" by the Greens. The more moderate Hesse Greens were heavily influenced by a pragmatic current led by Sponti-scene veterans, Dany Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer. The end result was the first red-green coalition government in 1985 and the appointment of Fischer as the first Green Minister of the Environment in the Federal Republic.

³⁰⁷ Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra, *Green Politics: The Global Promise* (Bear & Co.: Santa Fe, 1986), 150.

³⁰⁸ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 129.

individuals who held a party office or represented the party in the Bundestag, a Land parliament or in the European parliament between June 1979 and April 1987, at least 33 per cent (about 100 people) were at one time members of a left extremist or radical party or organization.³⁰⁹ 5 per cent had been members of the SDS, the core organization of the student movement in the late sixties.³¹⁰ In 1982, Rainer Trampert, a member of the breakaway Z-Group from the *Kommunistischer Bund* in Hamburg, was elected to the federal executive committee as one of three party spokespersons.³¹¹ Trampert, described as an expert political tactician, was interested in forming closer relationships between the Greens and the trade unions.³¹² Rudolf Bahro was also elected to the federal executive committee in 1982 at the Hagen conference.

By examining the development of the Greens through the lens of Rudolf Bahro's involvement in the party and his speeches and articles, the Greens' identity as an ecology party and as a left-alternative party becomes clearer. Bahro's "eco-socialism" and the role leftists played in shaping the party by contesting conservative involvement show that the Greens were influenced significantly by an Old Left "style" of party politics but focused on New Left themes. Bahro's reformed socialist perspective called the Greens to lead voters and eventually society toward an ecological utopia, by way of a post-Marxist, anti-industrial socialism. In the regional and federal development of the party, former student movement activists and members of the K-groups pulled the party leftward, allying with the *Mittelgruppe*³¹³ or moderate, NSM members on New Left issues like the role of the grassroots, minority and immigrant rights, and the perils of hierarchy. The

³⁰⁹ Fogt, 112.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Horst Mewes, "The West German Green Party", 70.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 129.

left-leaning new social movement activists who were involved with the formation of the party, to say nothing of the conservative NSM members, lacked experience in political organization and many were reluctant about forming a party. Both of these elements made the early Greens more susceptible to influence from those less reluctant (on both the right and the left) and more experienced in political activity.

Despite Bahro's exhortations about the necessity of an 'historic compromise', differences in political perspective surmounted similarities in ecological thinking. As a result, the left, either moderate or radical, found more common ground with each other about social issues than they did with the conservatives about the environmental crisis. The non-SPD left in West Germany that had operated outside parliamentary politics splintered in the wake of the student movement and extraparliamentary opposition in 1969 and found a common vehicle in the Greens. Whether the party should invest itself entirely in the political process and effect change through moderate reform or whether its goal should be to continue to support the social movements and oppose wherever possible the continuation of the degradation of the environment and the repression of individuals due to bureaucratic hierarchy was a decision that would occupy the party from 1982 onward.

In assessing the history of the Greens, it is important to consider the diverse nature of the party's early membership, stemming from the new social movements, and the shift into the space on the left in West German politics. By 1981, the Greens had become, contrary to what many of their own members stated³¹⁴, a left-alternative party that focused on the ecology crisis. Thereafter, debates within the party did not end.

³¹⁴ Petra Kelly's reference to the "antiparty party" was one shared by many of her colleagues. See Spretnak and Capra, 5-27.

Rather, the programmatic focus of the Greens (ie. ecology and other issues of new politics) shifted away from the centre of discussion and was replaced by the degree to which the Greens should or would invest themselves in parliamentary politics.

It is also important to consider, on the one hand, the continuities within the Greens from the socialist left of the turbulent late 1960s and the motley early 1970s and, on the other hand, the substantial transformation of the (alternative) left in terms of its programmatic orientation on ecology and its forms of political organization and mobilization (grassroots democracy, social justice and non-violence). The Greens' expedient rise represents both the renewed influence of an alternative left that had been abandoned by the generation that survived the war and the alternative left's postmaterialist transformation. While Rudolf Bahro's vision of the Greens' historic compromise persuading the majority to abandon industrial growth and materialism for the salvation of an ecological utopia was never realized, his idea that the party should fuse the strands of the left under the auspices of ecology had seminal influence. The Greens' importance as a subject of historical inquiry is due not solely to their bearing the flag of ecology into parliamentary politics but also because the banner was held aloft by a left transformed.

Conclusion: “Useful for Repairs”

The Greens in West German Parliamentary Politics and the Limits of the “Antiparty” Party

The previous chapters have explained how the Greens’ roots in new social movements and subsequent development resulted in a party that experimented within the opportunities available to it. Chapter One showed the Greens’ links to the student movement and how the resultant social movements were established. In the staid stability and security politics of the West German republic, these movements used novel extraparlimentary forms to pursue the grievances shared by other new middle class postmaterialists, an emerging electorate ignored by the mainstream parties. In Chapter Two, the formation of the Greens and the factional struggles this entailed were explained as a toe-in-the-water of parliamentary politics. The Greens’ foundation lay on the left of West German politics, their emergence an indirect response to the weakness of the both communism and social democracy in the Federal Republic. Their electoral successes capitalized on the opportunities available and their programmatic stance was a product of in-party compromise.

Both chapters also indicate that the Greens and their predecessors had to respond to limits, both outside the political mainstream and within the structures of parliamentary politics. In 1968, the student movement splintered and tried more localized, grassroots initiatives after direct conflict with the state proved unsuccessful. In 1977, the anti-nuclear and ecology movements began to form electoral organizations once the limits of protest outside the political mainstream were realized. By 1981, the Greens existed

federally as a hybrid, retaining some social movement ideals but increasingly structured themselves like the other *Stinknormale* parties.

The early history of the development of the Green party shows its significance in the transformation of the political left in the Federal Republic. The Greens also had a significant impact on party politics more generally, their surprising successes forcing the *Volksparteien* to address the political issues championed by the Greens. While the pre-history of the party can be traced through the student movement and the various iterations of social movements in the 1970s, the Greens were an experiment in shifting that locus of dissent inside the structures of democracy. The process of party formation shaped the Greens into a party that professed their antiparty sentiments but were subject to many of the same pressures as other new parties. The Greens were able to retain some elements of their movement identity, specifically the party's close relationship with its membership. But the tensions of the Greens' transformation into a parliamentary force created a party that struggled with inclusion in the Bundestag and the realities of forming coalitions.

Following the party's first federal election campaign in 1981, regional green organizations crossed the five per cent hurdle and entered state legislatures. During this period and leading up to the Bundestag election in 1983, the Greens continued to deal with intra-party factional disputes about the structure and programmatic direction of the party. To conclude this thesis, a brief examination of the post-1981 Greens provides further evidence that the periodization of the party's development developed by Greens scholars, notably Thomas Poguntke, is misleading.

The Greens' formative period saw them become a new party of the left in West Germany, reoriented to include the fractured offshoots of the radical student movement and the postmaterialist local activism of the citizens' initiatives and the anti-nuclear movement. But from late 1982 on, beginning with the first possibility of red-green coalitions with the SPD in Hamburg and Hesse, the deepest fault line in the party separated two competing conceptions of the Greens' role in politics: to maintain its identity or to develop its efficacy. As the party oscillated between success and stagnation during the 1980s, gaining more Bundestag seats in 1987 than in 1983, the resolute Fundis and the pragmatic Realos struggled to control the party's direction. For a number of reasons, both within the party itself and due to external pressures, the idealistic Fundis had left the party by 1990.

The triumph of the Realos led to a homogenizing of the Greens at the federal and regional levels which caused the ecology party to behave more predictably – more like a typical party. Coalitions and political compromises were normalized as an acceptable method for the Greens to exert influence in parliament. In 1998, the Greens and the SPD agreed to the first federal red-green coalition. A brief examination of the shifts within the Greens after 1981 is helpful in summarizing the Greens' significance in transforming the landscape of the left in German political history.

In the years following the 1980 election, the Greens maintained a leftist ideological position. From early 1981 until the next federal election in 1983, the regional Greens experienced continued successes in the legislatures. At the same time, in the federal party, the Greens' informal leadership in the Federal Executive was dominated by those whose concern for ecological politics was tempered by their concern for social and

economic reform. In 1982, both Rainer Trampert and Rudolf Bahro were elected to the Federal Executive, both leftists however different their individual perspectives may have been. However, the ideological struggles that had plagued the party in its formative period were no longer the central concern. By the 1983 Bundestag elections, the Greens' fault lines were drawn over other issues: principally, the young party's position on cooperation with the Social Democrats.

Horst Mewes has claimed that the party's three ambitions in the pre-1983 period were to become an environmental party, a social movement party and to remain committed to principles of participatory democracy. As the last chapter illustrated, the Greens clearly developed into a party that married ecological concern, social movement activism and the ideal of the grassroots, tempered, however, by the factional strife that resulted in a party that leaned left of the SPD. Horst Mewes notes that the three desires the Greens pursued had drawbacks: attempting to put environmental politics 'ahead' of the traditional political spectrum naively ignored the possibility of environmentalism becoming an arena for ideological battles; representing the miscellany of the new social movements in the party forced groups to form inside the party in order to defend their own particular interests; and participatory democratic principles exacerbated the atomistic tendencies already mentioned as informal elites coalesced despite hindering the oligarchization symptomatic of traditional parties.³¹⁵ Put simply, the Greens' early goals in some ways created the Realo-Fundi dispute that followed.

After the 1980 election, the Greens' early goals found fertile soil in the deteriorating conditions in which the social-liberal coalition was operating. In 1982, unemployment in West Germany rose to over 1 million, which led to the cancellation of a

³¹⁵ Mewes, "A Brief History of the German Green Party", 30.

number of social programs by the SPD-Schmidt government: programs that formed the foundation of the social-liberal coalition.³¹⁶ Even the trade unions responded negatively to these cancellations, organizing nation-wide demonstrations in the fall of 1982.³¹⁷ At the same time, both the implementing of the double-track decision and the continued construction of nuclear power stations and other large projects such as the extension of Startbahn West at the Frankfurt airport were animating the peace movement and the other new social movements.³¹⁸ The Greens' run of success in the *Landtage* should be seen in light of these developments.

Immediately following the disappointing results for the federal party in the 1980 election, the regional green lists across the Federal Republic, one by one, began to push through the 5 per cent barrier. In May 1981, the Berlin Alternative List garnered 7.2 per cent. In 1982, Hamburg's Green List achieved 7.7 per cent, Lower Saxony's Greens obtained 6.5 per cent, and the Greens in Hesse gathered 8.0 per cent of the votes. Including the Greens' successes in Bremen and Baden-Württemberg in 1979, by the end of 1982 the Greens were represented in more than half of the regional governments of the Federal Republic. Given the variety of opinions within the party about the extent to which the Greens should engage in parliamentary activities, it should not be surprising that their regional successes were not straightforward.

As Tad Shull has observed, the rightward trajectory of Schmidt's SPD government after the 1980 election caused many SPD members, especially the young and left-leaning, to leave the party. Many joined the Greens thereafter.³¹⁹ The result for the

³¹⁶ Hülsberg, 98.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Markovits and Gorski, 203.

³¹⁹ Shull, 95-97.

left-ecology party was a continued shift to the left but more importantly an influx of new members with party membership experience and a sincere interest in parliamentary participation.

In both Hamburg and Hesse after their 1982 elections in which their respective Green lists crossed into the *Landtag*, the Greens could have potentially formed a government with the SPD. The idea of influencing a regional government directly, from within, clashed with many Greens' self-conception as the antiparty party. In both regions, the Hamburg and Hesse Greens responded differently. The June 1982 regional election in Hamburg, location of one of the Greens' most left-wing regional organizations, yielded only two possible majority governments: a grand coalition between the SPD and the CDU or a red-green coalition between the SPD and the Greens. In a move typical of the Greens' atypical politics, Hamburg's GAL (Green Alternative List) offered to "cooperate" with the SPD instead of forming a formal coalition. However, the GAL's "cooperation" was contingent on some "unconditional demands"³²⁰ being met by the SPD. After the GAL helped the SPD overcome a no-confidence motion introduced by the CDU shortly after the June election, the SPD-GAL cooperation in Hamburg deteriorated.³²¹ The GAL's overly ambitious and radical tactics in the Hamburg *Bürgerschaft*, including the submission of a proposal to declare the city-state a "nuclear-free zone" and Thomas Ebermann's controversial challenge of the SPD's "capability and willingness for peace", failed to split the SPD along its own internal left-right fault lines; the SPD circled its wagons and, after 196 days, the shortest legislative period in

³²⁰ Markovits and Gorski, 200.

³²¹ Charles Lees, *The Red-Green Coalition in Germany: Politics, Personalities and Power* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 28-9.

Hamburg's history, the coalition ended.³²² In the next Hamburg election, the SPD garnered enough votes for an absolute majority: the GAL had misinterpreted the inexorable rise of their party.

In order to expand their base of support, the Greens believed that they needed to do only two things: first, to increase consciousness about the crisis [ecology crisis], and second to make it clear that only they represented a progressive solution to it. Dialogue, negotiations or cooperation with the SPD were useful only insofar as they furthered this end.³²³

The Greens' experiment with the Social Democrats played out differently in Hesse, a more substantial region than the city-state of Hamburg, dotted with large cities like Frankfurt and university towns like Marburg. Since 1949, the SPD had formed the government of Hesse, frequently in coalition with the liberal FDP.³²⁴ However, the election in September 1982 saw the Greens overtake the FDP, winning 8.0 per cent of the vote and dropping the liberals below the 5 per cent threshold. As in Hamburg, the SPD were faced with a choice between the CDU and the Greens in forming a majority. Negotiations between the SPD and the Greens about a coalition did not begin immediately. In fact, due to the *Startbahn West* controversy (the addition of another runway to the Frankfurt airport), which the Greens viewed as flouting many of their ideals, the young party initially refused any notion of cooperating with the SPD.³²⁵ However, their stance gradually changed and Greens agreed at first to tolerate passively an SPD government and later to a "continuous cooperation" provided the SPD legislation did not violate matters of "life and survival".³²⁶ In contrast to the Hamburg GAL, the

³²² Markovits and Gorski, 201.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 202.

³²⁴ Lees, 30.

³²⁵ Markovits and Gorski, 204.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

Hessian Greens did not issue any unconditional demands, choosing instead to consider compromise with the SPD in passing legislation. In fact, an SPD bill in 1982 regarding unemployment in Hesse was the first piece of significant legislation passed with the assistance of Green votes.³²⁷ After a series demands and concessions, the Greens helped the SPD pass its budgets in both 1983 and 1984 before the two parties formed a formal coalition in 1985 with the Greens being given a ministerial post.³²⁸ Joschka Fischer became the first Green Minister of the Environment in Hesse and the first Green to hold a ministerial portfolio of any kind in West Germany.



Figure 14 (Above): Joschka Fischer and his famous white sneakers after being sworn in as Minister of the Environment in the Hessr Landtag, December 12, 1985.³²⁹

Joschka Fischer`s rapid ascent from former political activist turned bookstore owner and cab driver in Frankfurt to the Greens first minister is largely a reflection of the

³²⁷ Lees, 31.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ *German History in Documents and Images* (GHDI), <http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/images/Joschka%20Fischer.jpg> (accessed August 15, 2008)

role the pragmatic and cooperative elements within the Hesse Greens played in the party. It was also a reflection of the influence the ex-Spontis had on the rise of the “Realo” faction in the Greens. Markovits and Gorski place the origin of the Realo-Fundi dispute “in 1982 in Hesse as the ‘Fischer/Cohn-Bendit’ gang wrested control of the state party from the Frankfurt fundamentalists around Jutta Ditfurth and Manfred Zieran.”³³⁰ It was in Hesse, then, that the most salient episode in the Greens’ history after their formation and entrance into the Bundestag, the Realo-Fundi divide, flared up. Pragmatists like Joschka Fischer clashed with fundamentalists like Ditfurth and Petra Kelly regarding, most especially, the proper relationship the Greens should have with the SPD.

Author Paul Hockenos juxtaposes the prominence of Petra Kelly early in the party’s history to the later rise of Joschka Fischer. The Realo-Fundi divide can be seen through this comparison as well. Kelly’s standing among the Greens, her veritable celebrity status earlier in the party, represents the formative phase for the party and its rapid growth thereafter. Her dedication and passion matched the antiparty aims of her envisaged “fundamentalist anti-war, ecological, and pacifist party”.³³¹ Dubbed by one journalist “the Cassandra of the nuclear apocalypse”³³², Kelly impelled the Greens through her unstinting position at the head of the peace movement in West Germany. However, as the peace movement floundered after the failure of the movement to prevent the stationing of the new Euromissiles in the fall of 1983,³³³ so did the singular position of the fundamentalists like Kelly. Inspired by Willy Brandt’s words (about a “majority

³³⁰ Markovits and Gorski, 119.

³³¹ Hockenos, 159.

³³² Jürgen Gottschlich, “Mit dem Herzen Denken,” in *Taz* journal, *Die grüne Gefahr: Eine partei auf dem Weg zur Macht*, 1998, 14.

³³³ Hockenos, 185-197.

left of the [Christian Democratic] Union”³³⁴) following the collapse of Helmut Schmidt’s SPD-FDP government in September 1982, Joschka Fischer began his committed participation in the Greens. From the very start, Fischer saw the Greens’ future as a “results-oriented party that would wheel and deal and broker compromises, as other parties did, in order to turn its objectives into policies and laws.”³³⁵

Contrasting two individuals as representative of more widely held ideas has its flaws and therefore the preceding comparison of the Hamburg and Hesse experiments in red-green coalitions should also be seen as an example of the Realo-Fundi struggle operating on a larger scale. The two nicknames also blanket the byzantine factions within the Greens that hardened largely after the formative period and primarily in response to the question of SPD coalition. However, Roland Roth and Detlef Murphy have stated that the blocs can be boiled down to four essential groups: the eco-socialists and radical ecologists were the Fundi factions, while the eco-libertarians and the realists composed the Realo side.³³⁶ The primary difference between the eco-socialists and radical ecologists on the one hand and the realists and the eco-libertarians on the other involved their opinions on forming coalitions with the SPD.

Both the eco-socialists and the radical ecologists believed that the system of parliamentary democracy and industrial capitalism was flawed; to support an SPD government only propped up one of the institutions they believed required dismantling. While they shared distaste for the SPD, the eco-socialists and the radical ecologists differed in a few ways. The most obvious distinction between the two was the role of the

³³⁴ Ibid., 167.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ It should be noted that the authors of the cited article managed to compile a list of nine other factional names and their labels are designed to clarify a complex web of sometimes overlapping factions. See Roth and Murphy, 53-54.

working class. The eco-socialists retained a modified Marxist perspective with the working class at the heart of an ecological reconstruction of industry and society. The labouring classes need only to be shown where “true” societal and individual wealth lay which structures of industrial capitalism were obscuring.³³⁷ On the other hand, the radical ecologists’ position was reminiscent of the SDS in the student movement: the working class had lost its revolutionary potential.³³⁸ The radical ecologists were also more ardent than the eco-socialists in their demands that compromise was tantamount to surrender: the eco-socialists’ commitment to the conversion of the industrial system and the role of the working class contrasted with the radical ecologists’ belief that withdrawal from and resistance to the system was the only possible way to avert ecological catastrophe.³³⁹ Jutta Ditfurth, one of the most prominent Fundis, articulated the radical ecologists’ extreme position clearly, stating that theirs was a “path between reformism and armed militancy.”³⁴⁰

Both factions saw the creeping advance of realist tendencies as a common foe and worked together to secure the organizational positions within the Greens’ unique grassroots structure. By the mid-1980s, Fundis consistently dominated the party’s federal executive. In contrast, the realists consistently composed a larger percentage of the Greens’ parliamentary representatives.³⁴¹ The Fundis in the party organs and the Realos in parliament were the principal combatants in the struggle between the interpretations of the Greens’ purpose: systemic outpost for extraparliamentary politics or participant in Bundestag politics.

³³⁷ Ibid., 55.

³³⁸ Ibid., 57.

³³⁹ Ibid., 56.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Frankland and Schoonmaker, 111-113.

The Realos, both the realists and the more marginal eco-libertarians, felt that the party needed to attempt compromise and coalition as much as possible and that electoral gains were a measure of success.³⁴² Renovation and reform were terms associated with the Realos rather than the Fundis' opposition and revolution. Eco-libertarians were the programmatic opposites of the eco-socialists and felt that mainstream politics were the proper arena for an ecology party, not the local protests and amateur grassroots democracy of the Greens' origins.³⁴³ In fact, they were the first to favour ecological capitalism, a position that leading realists began to take toward the end of the 1980s.³⁴⁴ The realists were not as severe as the eco-libs and shared a number of ideas with their Fundi counterparts. The significant difference, of course, was the realists' positive attitude toward red-green coalitions and an understanding of the Greens as a party rather than a movement.

During the Greens' formation, in order to combat the potentially integrative tendencies of the parliamentary system and to maintain links with the social movements, party founders installed a unique organizational structure. The Greens, at least the leftist alliance that took control of the nascent party, wanted to maintain its identity as a movement. The grassroots principles, designed to ensure amateurism³⁴⁵ in Green politics and characteristic of the social movements, clashed with the party's growth and successes after 1983. Mid-term rotation, collective leadership, the imperative mandate and the collection of eco-funds ran against the current of parliamentary politics to the point that

³⁴² Roth and Murphy, 58.

³⁴³ Ibid., 56.

³⁴⁴ The end of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the seeming rapid collapse of communism likely influenced this new found support of capitalism altered to not harm the environment. Nevertheless, it was a substantial turn for the Greens and the socialist roots of many of its members.

³⁴⁵ Poguntke, "Unconventional Participation in Party Politics: the Experience of the German Greens," in *Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2 (1992), 242.

they often exacerbated structural problems within the party.³⁴⁶ Many of these principles were abandoned by 1987. Nevertheless, the ideas were originally employed to preserve the movement's origins.

Collective leadership was employed to encourage the involvement of a wide swath of party members to engage in internal party politics directly.³⁴⁷ Rather than individuals as leaders of party institutions, the Greens operated with three chairpersons or 'speakers' as the representatives of both the Federal Executive and the Bundesfraktion, or group of Federal parliamentary representatives. As the two groups became strongholds of the Realo and Fundi factions, the collective leadership of the party was often unable to present a unified public image and was frequently portrayed as quarrelsome.³⁴⁸

Mid-term rotation did nothing to stunt the image of the bickering Greens. Parliamentary representatives were expected to serve half of their 4 years terms, turning their mandate over to a junior partner, hopefully avoiding the creation of a Green political elite.³⁴⁹ After some adherence to the principle in various Länder up until 1984, the first set of Bundestag Greens balked when their rotation arrived in 1985. Most grumbled but conceded their mandates, though Petra Kelly and Gert Bastian did not give up their posts. In the meantime, other Green representatives were rotating diagonally, from the federal party to the Land or European organizations and vice versa, undermining the principle.³⁵⁰ Taken together with outside observers' charges that rotation was unconstitutional, the Greens abandoned mid-term rotation in 1986.³⁵¹

³⁴⁶ Klotzsch, et al., 116-118.

³⁴⁷ Poguntke, "Unconventional Participation," 241.

³⁴⁸ Paul Hockenos notes that the "Realo-Fundi battle could make the party look like a pack of squabbling school kids." See Hockenos, 213.

³⁴⁹ Poguntke, "Unconventional Participation", 243.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Klotzsch, Könemann, Wischermann and Zeuner, 117.

Both the collection of eco-funds and the imperative mandate were principles that worked to keep the party itself close to its grassroots support, preventing professionalization and the formation of elites. Eco-funds were collected from the remainders of parliamentarians' salaries that were above the average income of a skilled worker, thus affording Green politicians no material advantage over their membership and potential electorate.³⁵² The imperative mandate, though, was a principle to keep Green parliamentary representatives close to the grassroots by obliging them to bring important issues to their riding before making a decision.³⁵³ Given that this principle conflicted with the constitutionally-instilled free imperative West German politicians retained and that it infringed on the Greens' belief in a responsible, autonomous individual, the principle never played a role in the party's functions.³⁵⁴ It was primarily symbolic and a reminder to Green representatives to maintain close contact with their base of support.

There have been a number of theoretical arguments advanced about why the Greens could not sustain their principled adherence to "amateur" politics and why the Fundi position was untenable in the long-term. Famously, Robert Michels published a study of socialist parties in 1911, arguing that any political organization, no matter how democratic or egalitarian its intentions, would inevitably move toward oligarchic leadership structures. For Michels, political parties were constrained by an "iron law of oligarchy".³⁵⁵ Summarized by Darcy Leach, the basic claims of Michels' "iron law"

³⁵² Pogunkte, "Unconventional", 242.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Klotzsch, Könemann, Wischermann and Zeuner, 117-118.

³⁵⁵ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, translated from Italian by Eden and Cedar Paul in 1915, 2nd edition. (New York & London: Collier-Macmillan, 1968).

thesis were threefold: first, “bureaucracy happens” because of the increasing requirement of administrative efficiency in the division of labour required by an expanding organization; second, “if bureaucracy happens, power rises” because a professional leadership is required in a rational-bureaucratic structure due to structural imperatives and the “supposed ‘incompetence’ of the masses”; and third, “if power rises, power corrupts”, meaning that a leadership will always act in the interests of preserving its own power, even if those interests conflict with the organization’s membership.³⁵⁶ Critics, especially aggrieved socialists,³⁵⁷ have challenged Michels’ theory, though it has remained significant enough that scholars have referred to it in their studies of the Greens.³⁵⁸

Michels claimed that the “organization which [gave] birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy.”³⁵⁹ Maurice Duverger, writing in the 1960s, revised Michels’ ideas, taking into account the changing nature of parties and the shift from caucus parties to larger “mass” parties.³⁶⁰ Duverger claimed that parliamentary representatives no longer would dominate parties unopposed and would instead be rivalled by an internal party leadership that would try to limit the formidable power

³⁵⁶ Darcy K. Leach, “The Iron Law of *What Again?*: Conceptualizing Oligarchy Across Organizational Forms” in *Sociological Theory*, 23(3), September 2005, 313.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ For example, E. Gene Frankland, “Parliamentary Politics and the Development of the Green Party in West Germany,” in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 51, no. 3 (Summer, 1989), 388; Frankland and Schoonmaker, 18 & 100; Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Politics in Belgium and West Germany*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 43-44; Dieter Rucht, “Linking Organization and Mobilization: Michel’s Iron Law of Oligarchy Reconsidered,” in *Mobilization*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1999), 151-169.

³⁵⁹ Michels, 365.

³⁶⁰ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, translated by Barbara and Robert North, (London: Methuen & Co., 1954)

resources of the parliamentary group, often resorting to “demagogy”.³⁶¹ These theories, both of which are not new and have been criticized many times since their publication, are useful lenses through which to view the post-formation development of the Greens. In the Greens’ development, it would be difficult to ignore the immediate comparison of the formation of and conflict between the Green elites, the Realos and Fundis, and Michels’ firm belief in the inevitable formation of oligarchies.

As has already been stated, the Greens formed in response to the traditional parties and the neglect of new politics issues by those parties. The myriad groups of the social movements were undecided on both forming a party and on the forms a new party should take. They agreed that the nascent party should avoid becoming just like other parties and, to that end, instilled a few “prophylactic measures”³⁶² designed to prevent the professionalization of the Greens. While some of these measures, including the policy of mid-term rotation, remained in place for a few years, they were unable to persist in the face of the Greens integration into mainstream politics. Joschka Fischer and Otto Schily became famous, professional politicians and represented an elite faction in the party. While fundamentalists held on to the idea that the Greens were both party and movement, the realpolitikers (Realos) distinguished between the two: “The party is the party and the movement is the movement. They are two different pairs of shoes.”³⁶³ Furthermore, the Realos believed that the party had to behave like a party in order to survive. Quoted in *Die Tageszeitung* in 1984, Karl Kerschgens, a leading Realo in Hesse, compared the Greens to “the yeast in the dough.” In order to be effective, the yeast cannot remain in the

³⁶¹ E. Gene Frankland, “Parliamentary Politics”, 1989, 388-89.

³⁶² Michels, 368: “Historical evolution mocks all the prophylactic measures that have been adopted for the prevention of oligarchy.”

³⁶³ Saral Sarkar, *Green Alternative Politics in West Germany*, vol. II, 149.

refrigerator; it must come in contact with the dough.³⁶⁴ The “logic of party competition”³⁶⁵ then was not inescapable, even for the unique and exuberant antiparty party.

Beyond party formation theory, other scholars provide more reasons why the Greens lost some of their initial verve and bizarrely informal organization. Some have noted that the very distinctiveness of the Greens’ grassroots tenets set up the party membership for disappointment. The West German “Law on Political Parties”, passed in 1967, outlined organizational rules for parties, listing the basic structural norms to which any legal party in the Federal Republic had to conform. Each party had to have a “vertical structure, written statute and programme, regular party conventions, election of party organs – in particular executive committees – [and] distribution of responsibilities between members’ assemblies and executive committees,”³⁶⁶ among other requirements. In the very act of forming a party and having to adhere to the Federal Republic’s party law, the Greens shifted away, incontrovertibly, from their movement roots, the party itself instigating the challenges to its own antiparty principles.

By 1990, the identity versus efficacy battle ended with the Fundis, dedicated to a Green party that projected the movement identity into parliamentary politics, abandoning the party. Efficacy, and the Realos who supported an earnest commitment to compromise in politics, superseded identity as the Greens focus. In conjunction with the theoretical arguments about the centralizing pressure of party formation, the aforementioned waning of the peace movement after 1983 and the emergence of the prominent politicians in the Bundesfraktion, the Greens moved toward pragmatic politics

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 151: Quote is from *Die Tageszeitung*, January 16, 1984.

³⁶⁵ Kitschelt, 4-5.

³⁶⁶ Jürgen Brenneke, “Introduction” in *The Law on Political Parties*, (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1994), 9.

because their electorate responded positively to the possibility of coalitions. “More than 90 per cent” of Greens supporters have approved of the possibility of coalitions with the SPD through the 1980s.³⁶⁷ Additionally, the Greens’ membership activity stagnated during the 1980s, problematic for a party wanting to rotate grassroots activists and party members through the organization. Poguntke explains that in spite of the likelihood of Greens supporters participating in their party being twice as high as the other parties, internal participation was often low. He attributes this to two reasons: first, intra-party participation was often confused with participation in movement activities³⁶⁸ and second, the Greens’ “cognitively mobilized”³⁶⁹ and sophisticated electorate tended to marry a high level of concern for politics with a low level of loyalty to a political organization.³⁷⁰ Taken together, the fading of the unique circumstances in West Germany that existed during the Greens formation and the pressures of parliamentary participation made a more realist and less utopian left-ecology party much more likely.

Rudolf Bahro realized this inevitability earlier than most. As we left his story in the last chapter, Bahro was elected to the Federal Executive in 1982 and remained there until 1984. After the Greens entered the Bundestag in 1983, Bahro’s rhetoric became increasingly utopian and more intensely uncompromising. Prior to a planned delegate conference in Hannover, June 1983, Bahro first proposed a “broad commune movement” which would become “the germ cell of the social formation which [would] replace the existing one, the basic unit of the new social network.”³⁷¹ Later in the summer of 1983, in

³⁶⁷ Thomas Poguntke, “Unconventional Participation in Party Politics: the Experience of the German Greens,” *Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2 (1992), 248.

³⁶⁸ Poguntke, “Unconventional Participation...”, 244-246.

³⁶⁹ Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 359.

³⁷⁰ Poguntke, “Unconventional Participation...”, 247-250.

³⁷¹ Bahro, “To What End Are We Consolidating Our Forces?”, *Building The Green Movement*, 57.

August, Bahro visited the rural commune of Rajneeshpuram in Oregon, founded in 1981 by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, an Indian guru and philosopher. In a conversation with a *Tageszeitung* reporter while at the commune, Bahro stated that, “insofar as the mind (unlike reason) is only a functionary of the existing society and its Big Machine, it must be rejected ... not [only] for the success of the commune, but for self-transformation.”³⁷² For Bahro, by 1983, the Greens needed to more actively pursue the transformation of both the basic infrastructure of society and economics and of the population’s spiritual well-being.

In 1985, Bahro left the Greens. The final straw was a proposed piece of legislation that included clauses on animal experimentation. Bahro demanded that the Greens seek a ban on the “use of concentration camp methods and torture upon animals.”³⁷³ Instead the party sought heavy restrictions on experimentation instead of an outright ban. For Bahro, these compromise politics affirmed the Greens as a party “useful for repairs to the façade of the social and political system”³⁷⁴, not as a radical and potentially utopian alternative. Similar to the Fundis in 1990, Bahro chose to leave the party, no longer content to “defend enlightened reason”³⁷⁵ and “scientific barbarism”³⁷⁶ alongside the Greens.

However, the Greens and their grassroots democratic experiment should not be considered a failure. While the party was forced to comply with limitations, both within the political structure of the Federal Republic and in West Germany society more generally, they have also able to leave an indelible mark on the social and political history of West Germany.

³⁷² Bahro, “In America There Are No Cathedrals”, *Building The Green Movement*, 99.

³⁷³ Bahro, “A Lesson in Compromise”, *Building The Green Movement*, 196.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

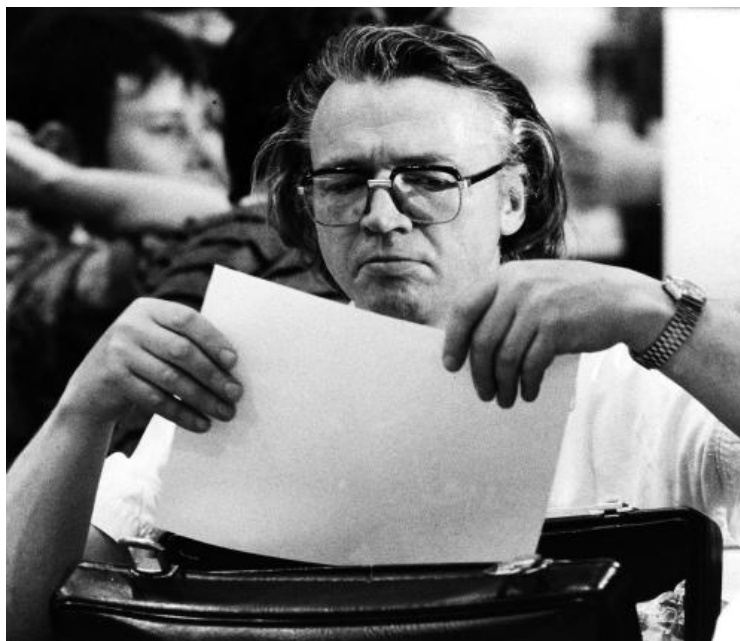


Figure 15 (Above): Bahro leaving the Hagen conference in 1985 after announcing his departure from the Greens over the issue of animal experimentation.³⁷⁷

The formation of the Greens marked the entry of a few new phenomena into German politics. First, and in spite of some scholars' early interpretations of the party,³⁷⁸ the Greens links with environmentalism in German history were weak to non-existent. The nationalist, *völkisch* traditions of the pre-WWII *Heimatschützer* and *Naturschützer*, and their later association with the Nazis' 'blood and soil' ideology, were not a part of the Greens: their most immediate ancestor was the student movement of 1968.³⁷⁹ Additionally, using Dobson' definitions, the Greens were shaped by an ecological perspective more than an environmental perspective. Green activists and supporters wanted to shift the focus of politics, society and economics to include more than just

³⁷⁷ *Der Spiegel* "Eines Tages", <http://einestages.spiegel.de/> (accessed August 15, 2008).

³⁷⁸ Namely, Anna Bramwell's article in a 1984 issue of *History Today*, titled "Was this man 'Father of the Greens'?" Bramwell attempted to draw the Greens' lineage back to the Bund Heimatschutz (League for the Protection of the Homeland) and the nationalist and ultimately racist philosophy of Richard Walter Darré. Darré, whose picture graced the first page of Bramwell's article, was made Reichsbauernführer in 1933 and propagated a mystical relationship between Germany's peasants and their soil. He was also crudely racist. (Riordan, 24-5) The Greens have almost nothing in common with the Nazi's "green" policies which were primarily a capricious instrument of Hitler's wider emotional politics. (Riordan, 25)

³⁷⁹ Riordan, 24-32.

humanity. However, the Greens were the advocates of new politics more broadly; a postmaterialist party built out of bits of the mass of local and leftist movement groups that proliferated after 1968.

It is in that sense that I compare the Greens to Stephen Jay Gould's essay on the principles of evolution and the panda's thumb: the Greens, like biological organisms, were not a 'contrivance' but rather a 'contraption', constructed circumstantially out of parts already nearby.³⁸⁰ While the party formally introduced ecological politics to West German politics, the Greens were always more than an ecology party. The Greens included the remnants of the student movement and extraparliamentary opposition of the late 1960s, the citizen's initiatives, new social movements and splintered radical left of the 1970s. Their politics included elements of all those predecessors.

By 1981, the Greens were evidently a party of the "new type,"³⁸¹ especially in light of their principled but vague programme and their grassroots organizational structure. But they were also decidedly leftist in orientation; the factional struggles of the formation process forced conservative ecologists out of the party. In spite of the wide variety of West Germans with ecological and anti-nuclear concerns, the majority of Greens' supporters traced their pedigree back to the student revolt and extraparliamentary opposition (APO) that culminated in 1968. Their pioneering resistance to the authoritarianism of the years of growth and stability in the Federal Republic, as well as the grassroots forms founded in the citizen's initiatives and anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s, provided the basic model for the Greens. The political issues championed by the

³⁸⁰ Gould, 30.

³⁸¹ Robert Harmel, "Michels + 75: The Iron Law of Oligarchy Revisited." Paper presented at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., August-September 1987, 19-21. Citation originally found in Frankland and Schoonmaker, 110 & 120.

pre-Green activists – ecology, direct democracy, women’s rights, civil rights, minority rights and the problems of state-industry corporatism - catalyzed like-minded citizens, principally the young, educated, new middle class.

The formation of a political party out of the social movements in the Federal Republic after the Hot Autumn in 1977 was never a certainty. The process mirrored the organic development of the citizen’s initiatives and NSMs, moving from electoral lists at local levels to regional parties. Spurred by the factional struggles of conservative environmentalists and radical leftists, the Greens became an agglomeration of activist interests united under the banner of ecology in a uniquely open political party. The Greens’ commitment to grassroots principles and new politics issues - social, economic and ecological – as well as their position relative to, and relationship with, the SPD, produced a party of the left despite some members’ assertions that the Greens were “neither left, nor right but in front”.

To most profitably examine the Greens’ history, their emergence as both an ecological party and a left-wing party is of paramount importance. They integrated what movement ideals they could with parliamentary norms, bringing the potential catastrophe of Beck’s “risk society” and the postmaterialist beliefs of the sixty-eighter generation into the political mainstream. Though the party and its support adjusted after the entry into the Bundestag in 1983, Frankland and Schoonmaker stress that the Greens did not sell-out their original ideals as they gradually shifted toward compromise politics: the Greens became a “semi-parliamentarized”³⁸² party.

In order that we do not myopically assess the Greens on the basis of their achievement of ecological goals established in 1980, the early history of the Greens is

³⁸² Frankland and Schoonmaker, 170.

significant. Following the ban on the KPD in 1956 and the SPD's transformation into a People's Party after 1959, the West German left stagnated. As new political concerns emerged, the Greens energized leftist politics and created new mathematical possibilities for parliamentary coalitions. They also, in extending the anti-nuclear, peace and ecology movements into the electoral arena, reinforced democracy in Germany.³⁸³ The Greens gave a parliamentary voice to those groups who had been previously ignored by mainstream parties. However, the tensions in the Greens' transition from the new social movement and splintered radical left into a parliamentary party changed the nature of the party and its goals. There were opportunities for a party that married ecology and a leftist bearing in West German politics. In taking advantage of space on the left, the Greens were shaped by their experience in party competition, forced to accept compromise politics, but also heralded a shift on the left in West German politics. While the Greens have become more mainstream than either Petra Kelly or Rudolf Bahro may have desired, their formation and entry into West Germany's parliaments was a significant milestone on Rudi Dutchske's long march.

³⁸³ Karapin, 17; and Koopmans, 238-245.

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