

THE GERMAN GREENS: PREPARING FOR A NEW BEGINNING?

1 Introduction

The German Greens are an exception. Not because their career as a political party began relatively early and thus secured attention for ecological issues in the political system of their country as early as the first half of the 1980s. They are an exception because they have become, much more than any other 'green' party in Western Europe, the object—indeed the victim—of a myth. Although the well-intentioned myths about Germany's Greens have fostered a positive view of the chances of Green parties in other countries, they nevertheless hinder understanding of the convoluted and irritating course of development followed by the party 'Die Grünen'. Unless one knows the background to the Greens' emergence, and the problems associated with their organisation, their assimilation of experience, and their elaboration of strategy, one cannot understand why, in the process of German unification, the Greens ended up on the periphery of political events, and even lost their seats in the Bundestag.

One of the chief myths is the notion that the foundation and early electoral successes of the German Greens were due to a particularly strong ecological-cum-pacifist mood in West German society. 'Ecological issues' have indeed become a 'standard topic' in the media and amongst a large number of younger people, but this is not sufficient to account for the existence of the 'Greens'. Unconditional pacifism and the tendency to engage in an ecological critique of

civilisation are features confined to a tiny segment of the population, and to only a minority of Green voters. Combative commitment to the environment was, in any case, not a German speciality: the anti-nuclear and environmental movement in 1970s France was markedly stronger, but it was only about ten years later that a viable Green party came into being there. Again, the West German subcultural milieu never attained the creativity and radiating power of the New Age 'consciousness revolution' which began on the West Coast of the United States in the 1960s and left its mark all over the world—even in places where Green parties have remained unheard of to this day.

Also mythical is the belief that the German Greens are the successful creation of charismatic personalities such as Petra Kelly or Rudolf Bahro. However important the role of such personalities was in bringing together groups and individuals during 1979 and 1980, the fate of the Greens took shape largely uninfluenced by the wishes and actions of their prominent founders.⁽¹⁾ Another myth, finally, is the notion that the activities and conflicts of the Greens were always, and primarily, concerned with the issue of ecology, with ecological values and the critique of industrialism. There is a very important difference here between the picture which the media painted of the Greens (and which for many years determined public perception of them) and the issues on which they actually concentrated as they formulated their objectives and conducted their disputes. Thus, until very recently, the Greens were accused of being a single-issue party, although from the very beginning they had concerned themselves with the full range of global and social themes, as well as pursuing the ambitious programme of a movement of democratic and moral renewal.

The various chapters of this book, most of which were written as contributions to the strategic debate conducted in the circle around the Greens, would have remained unwritten if there were only those kinds of Greens evoked in the myths. The real Greens, both members and party-officials, experienced a different reality: a deep gulf between favourable opportunities for effective social action on the one hand, and immense internal party difficulties on the other.

Many an internal conflict gave rise to hostilities that were more intense than any dispute with other parties. If, despite this, one can currently observe a positive trend in the development of the Greens, this is due primarily to the commitment and sacrifice of countless local activists, who refused to trust in any favourable-looking trend, and, despite the factional disputes going on in all the different bodies, sought repeatedly to give public proof of the Greens' political potential.

Whereas the other chapters of this book deal with the rival strategic concepts and material options of Green policy, this chapter attempts to plot out an interpretive framework within which questions about organisational development and organisational structure may be answered: What were the institutional conditions under which the unique phenomenon of 'greenness' emerged? (section 2) What marks have the Greens left on society? (section 3) What is the explanation for their dual ideological identity, (section 4) and for the ambivalent results of the grass-roots experiment? (section 5) And finally, where do the Greens stand today, twelve years or so after their foundation and in an unexpectedly united Germany? (section 6) The chapter closes with an analytical summary of the problems which any party of reform now faces in shaping itself. (section 7)

2 Attractions and Handicaps: The Opportunity Structure

Comparative political science views the emergence of the new social movements and Green parties in Western Europe as part of a profound change in the social structures of industrial society. From this standpoint, the environmental movements and parties appear as new forms of participation by new social categories, namely the new middle classes.⁽²⁾ Unfortunately, however, this characterisation can only capture the common aspects of a phenomenon which presents itself in nationally and culturally highly varied permutations. Since the phenomenon

does not exist anywhere in a 'generalised' or 'average' form, it becomes interesting—and comprehensible—only through its peculiarities. Thus it should come as no surprise that the emergence, development, and prospects of the German Greens have all been influenced to a great degree by the peculiar historical-cum-cultural features of the Federal Republic.

Naturally, the influence exerted on the Greens by historical/cultural factors can be seen clearly only when one looks back over a sizeable stretch of development. As far as the shaping of political image is concerned, this influence has manifested itself in a decidedly 'left-green' bias, with strong traits of a 'generation-based party'. For one thing, the party has maintained an outlook on society and political conflict that was prevalent amongst substantial sections of its membership at the time of its foundation; in addition, the generations associated with the party's foundation—these are primarily contingents with birth-years falling between 1945 and 1965—form a disproportionate percentage of the membership in relation to the population as a whole. In somewhat overstated terms, one can say that the Greens still 'think' like their founders, and—since their way of thinking is shared less and less by younger generations—they are also 'ageing' with their founders.

In order to understand the political and cultural image of the Greens, one has to recall some of the peculiar features of German post-war history. West Germany—here for once regarded not as a symbol of the economic miracle, but as a political/cultural syndrome—was obliged to 'reinvent' the Germans' collective view of themselves, their social and political values, following the downfall of the Hitler regime. As is well known, early post-war policy, i.e. the governments of Chancellor Adenauer, discharged this task through unconditional political and economic attachment to the West, and through two equally resolute 'separations'. One was the dissociation from National Socialism, and the other was the strict rejection of all things 'communist' or 'socialist'. These latter were equated with Stalinist domination and repression.(3)

Both the climate of opinion, characterised as it was by repression and taboo, and the

political leanings of the Christian Democrat governments prevented the demarcation from National Socialism and from the crimes of the Hitler regime from being carried out as honestly and consistently as was the rejection of everything that could be associated, however remotely, with any manifestation of 'Soviet domination'. Thus it was that until well into the 1960s, official policy displayed an obsessive McCarthy-like anti-communism, whereas the National Socialist past was treated as a taboo subject, i.e. was suppressed from public discussion. It is one of the paradoxes of post-war Germany that in 1956 the Communist Party (KPD) was outlawed, whilst associations of former SS and SA members were tolerated, and met with considerable success in their socio-political demands. Later on, the infamous Berufsverbot or professional ban was introduced for use against any members of the German Communist Party (DKP)—labelled 'extremists'—who wanted to work as teachers, railway workers, postmen, or civil/public servants. During this same time, former Nazi judges were still at work, and concentration-camp superintendents who were being sought for murder and torture could expect their crimes eventually to come under the statute of limitations (until its application to Nazi murder was abolished in 1979).

Post-war Germany was characterised not so much by social divisions as by moral/cultural and political 'cleavages'. In comparison with the majority—probably 90 per cent—of consumer-minded, security-oriented, and politically abstinent citizens, there was only a small minority of left-wing, left-liberal souls with an eye for the past and a critical attitude to cultural developments—though they were no more interested in institutional politics than were the majority. It was only in the years around '1968' (now the symbol of democratic awakening) and as a 'joint product' of internal political democratisation and the external relaxation of relations with the East, and also as a belated effect of the student movement,(4) that the present liberal, pluralist society of the Federal Republic, with its capacity for self-critical analysis, emerged. Only a generation after '1945', in the 1970s and 1980s, did knowledge of the National Socialist past combine with moral horror at the fact this that past had been possible and was

irreparable.

Only once did that Old German authoritarian state, with its unashamed propensity for stirring nationalist emotion, for snooping into people's political convictions, and for conducting witch-hunts against intellectuals, seem to resurrect itself. This was in 1977, a year of 'extreme events' in politics, the high point of a wave of left-wing terrorist actions(5) and the last surge of the mass movement against the construction of nuclear power stations. A number of large-scale demonstrations were literally fought down by police using quasi-military means. If '1968' had been the symbol of a phase of liberalisation overloaded with utopian revolutionary ideas, '1977' became the negative symbol of a 'German autumn' which not only provoked justified worries in civilian society about politically motivated terror, but also served as a reminder of the dangers that emanate from a ruling élite that is unnerved but, equally, has great power of interpretation and repression.

When, from 1977, following the blossoming of the 'citizens' initiative' movement, 'green' electoral associations began to be formed at local and state level, the protagonists of these groups regarded themselves as being motivated not only by considerations of the natural 'limits to growth', by the fear of a 'silent spring' (Rachel Carson), and by the risks of nuclear energy, but also by their desire for a genuinely democratic kind of politics, open to participation and moral scrutiny. However, the greater willingness to take part in collective action which manifested itself in the extensive participation in civil action groups and mass demonstrations, was not transmitted to the political parties. Whereas the social democrats had still managed, at the end of the 1960s, to recruit young people as members and supporters with their watchword of 'daring more democracy', the Greens developed, from 1979, from a very small base of members who were ready to undertake organising activities: representatives of the first 'green' lists, individual pioneers of the ecological critique of civilisation, disillusioned social democrats, and, last but not least, the remains of the groups and small-scale parties left over from the student movement—some of undogmatic 'socialist' bent, others of decidedly 'marxist-leninist' outlook.

With this mixture of policy-related motives for participation and 'anti-capitalist' standpoints (as is well known, the student movement was accompanied not only by the expansion of the education system, but also by the return—with considerable impact—of Marxist and 'critical' theories to the universities), the Greens became the first party to succeed in defining itself discursively and independently⁽⁶⁾ in terms of a quest for social reform, of criticism of the repression of National Socialism, and of an anti-institutional understanding of politics and democracy. In so doing, they filled a gap in supply of a kind that was unknown in the political systems of other Western European states, namely the specific German lack of a socialist opposition, resulting from the division of the country, the Cold War, and the semi-official anti-communism. They found themselves pushed into this role, and were simultaneously the subject and object of an unexpected 'push effect': as interlocutors and representatives of social minorities,⁽⁷⁾ as systematic advocates of the effective enforcement of equal rights for women, as champions of egalitarian principles and morally sound decisions.⁽⁸⁾ It goes without saying that this brought pitfalls as well as opportunities: 'structural' overstrain of the Greens was to some extent preprogrammed. The more pleasant consequences of the task of multiple representation will be discussed in the next section.

The fact that the Greens did not collapse under this strain but managed rather to establish themselves within the network of political actors in the Federal Republic might be described as an effect of various institutional 'pull-factors'. Thanks to comparative political research, these factors are well known, and mention of four special features of the Federal German political system will therefore suffice to give a rough picture of what, for many sceptical observers, was an unexpected chance of institutionalisation for the Greens.

1. The first, and probably most important, condition of success is satisfied by German electoral law, under which all parties at the various levels of representation obtain parliamentary seats in proportion to the votes cast. Whether a member of parliament has stood for election in a constituency and won that constituency, or whether she owes her mandate (parliamentary

seat) solely to her place on her party's list of candidates (the so-called Landesliste) is of no significance once the election is over. This means that even parties with only small reserves of voters have some chance of success, and the securing of absolute majorities by a single party are the exception rather than the rule in the multi-party system that results from these arrangements. Thus the various parliaments are, in principle, open to any interest that shows itself capable of organisation and is able to win at least 5 per cent of the votes (this is the so-called Sperrklausel or 'barring clause'). In addition, because in certain circumstances majorities come about only when coalitions are formed between a number of parties, the 'small parties' also come in for consideration as potential participants in government.

2. The 'five-per-cent-clause' performs the function of preventing a fragmentation of the party-system. It is supposed to ensure continuity and predictability. Not every viewpoint, not every minority interest is to be able to send its own representative (or handful of representatives) to parliament. As far as the creation of the Greens is concerned (who incidentally support the abolition of the Sperrklausel), this rule was a strong incentive—perhaps the decisive incentive—to construct the party as an alliance of at least four variously oriented forces. In addition to green, the 'spectrum of green colour-theory' contains a hefty dash of of 'red' (in the form of Marxist, Leninist, Maoist, Trotskyist, anarchist, and Spontaneist groups), as well as the somewhat weaker streak of 'lilac' of the feminist movement (Joachim Raschke, 1991, pp. 19—22). At any rate, had it not been for the institutional pressure to put aside the many differences that existed, the Greens would not have emerged in 1980, and not in this form. But neither could any single current have asserted itself alone.

3. The party system in the Federal Republic owes its stability not only to the 'constitutional patriotism' (Jürgen Habermas) of its citizens, but also to systematic precautions taken by the political parties, who were keen to safeguard themselves against unwelcome competition.⁽⁹⁾ The CDU/CSU and SPD, operating as 'catch-all parties', came to an agreement very early on with the much smaller, and therefore organisationally very weak, Liberals (FDP)

to 'unshackle' themselves from the fluctuating commitment of their members in regard to participation and financial support: they created a legally based system of party-finance, the stoutest pillar of which is the so-called Wahlkampfkostenerstattung, or refund of electoral campaign costs. According to this, all parties taking part in state or federal parliamentary election-campaigns and receiving at least 0.5 per cent of the vote are awarded a certain sum of money for every vote.⁽¹⁰⁾ Although on the one hand this arrangement makes the older parties markedly less dependent on voluntary commitment, and thus less dependent on the political will of their members, it also constitutes a kind of spur to innovation, operating to the benefit of small-scale parties which cannot themselves finance repeated candidacies. Because, in accordance with democratic principles, the system of subsidy to parties begins to operate a long way below the five-per-cent hurdle, parties with shares of the vote between 1 and 5 per cent receive a reliable aid to organisation. This explains why twenty to thirty other parties, besides the four parties in the Bundestag, regularly woo the voters. And it also explains how an initially small party like the Greens, despite many handicaps and the absence of any donations by financially strong members (let alone industry), managed to build up a network of party offices and an electoral campaign organisation.

4. Finally, the federative structure of the German political system provides comparatively favourable opportunities for new parties to develop. It is relatively easy to acquire initial experience and a public profile through participation in local elections (for seats in the city council) or in elections for the state parliament. The state parliaments and governments may be subject to federal decisions in many important areas, but because of their responsibility for education, for the promotion of the economy, for developmental and structural planning, and for monitoring local-authority operations, they offer many opportunities for 'new' political approaches to make their mark. Less striking are the effects of the principle of democratic proportional representation which is part of German federalism. According to this, representatives of all the parties present in parliament are, in time, sent to take part in

consultative and supervisory organs of the most varied kinds. In addition, members of parliament receive invitations to discussions and educational events—by no means uninfluential—at academic institutions associated with the Church, the trade unions, or the universities. Thanks to the many opportunities for participation, even small parties can benefit from the multiplicatory effect of media coverage.

Summarising the combined effect of these four elements of relative openness in the political system, one can say that the 'political opportunity structure' is definitely favourable as far as a green party is concerned. As regards the chances of success for social movements, the responsiveness of established politics may appear slight, as Herbert Kitschelt (1986) observes; but for newly arrived political actors, the institutional obstacles are perfectly capable of being overcome. Indeed: as long as it is possible to mobilise increased potential support and secure re-election, self-assertion within the political system brings a series of 'feelings of achievement'. The new actor receives incentives to view his survival as an endorsement of his political programme and of his interpretation of reality, even though they contradict those of the other parties. In the case of the Greens, this meant not only that they were subject to the temptation to satisfy society's 'demand' for a resolutely left-wing party, but also that they found themselves being 'rewarded' with institutional recompenses and increasing opportunities for influence, the more they played this role. In addition to the various advantages flowing from a gradual adaptation to the set forms and routines of the political system (on this, see the detailed analysis by Claus Offe, 1990), there were also premiums for non-adaptation and for the demonstrative pursuit of 'otherness'.

3. The Greens as a Stimulus to Social Learning-Processes

Society and politics in the 1980s were characterised not only by the revival of conservative and

liberal forces but also by the rise of the Greens. In 1983 they succeeded in getting into the Bundestag and won seats in nine out of eleven regional parliaments.(11) Here and in countless municipal and district councils the agenda and style of political debates was transformed under the influence of the Greens. It sometimes seemed as if the journalists in the press and in broadcasting, and even individual civil servants in the various administrations, had just been waiting for the change initiated by the Greens: they seized on quite a few 'green' themes, provided the Greens with useful background information, and thus secured greater public attention. The Greens did not function only as vehicles for environmental interests and the concerns of disadvantaged groups but also as monitors of the conduct of governments, mayors, and administrations. With great persistence they set about uncovering corruption, tacit partnerships between politicians and business, and instances where competencies had been exceeded. The influence of the Greens is thus scarcely measurable in terms of votes. Their very presence, their politics, and even their internal disputes have left unmistakable marks. Four points illustrate this.

1. The general acceptance and 'normalisation' of the environmental issue, including the related problems of the link between the industrialised and developing countries, of agricultural policy, of energy policy, etc., are not, of course, due solely to the Greens. But their effect as a catalyst and reinforcer of this set of issues was and is enormous. By transporting the doubts, critical viewpoints, and anxieties of the social movements into the political system and securing a hearing for 'counter-experts', they ensured greater variety in the relevant information and arguments. Thus, although the nuclear industry's abandonment of three large-scale projects(12) during the second half of the 1980s is not attributable directly to the activity of the Greens, the fact that politicians regarded the continuation of these projects as too costly is due chiefly to the changes which the Greens brought about in the criteria for determining political legitimacy and economic reasonableness. A similarly unchartable strand of influence reaches into the environmental ministries at state and federal level. Because the SPD was forced, under

competitive pressure from the Greens, to develop a comprehensive environmental programme, the ruling CDU/CSU also found itself unable to carry on with its purely symbolic policy. Measured against the situation in the 1970s, or the environmental policies of other countries, the 'material' effects brought about by the Greens appear considerable; measured against the much more rapid growth in the problems themselves and in the need for action, they continue to be inadequate. Even in Germany, ecological factors are far from being regarded as the self-evident premisses for decisions relating to economic innovation and investment. Thus, although German environmental policy has attained a quite high level (as far as the strictness of standards for emission and licensing procedures are concerned), the majority of the population quite rightly considers that environmental problems are the most urgent and least satisfactorily handled political issues.

2. Somewhat less striking but no less important is the political 'change of style' fostered (again, not caused solely) by the Greens. Initially, the Greens had a tendency to champion their ideas of egalitarian political participation, of openness and transparency in the political debate, and of unmediated self-expression by concerned interests in a way that was not only provocative but also dogmatic and formalistic. Nevertheless, positive effects of this confrontation are visible in many areas of politics, and even within rival parties. Naturally, the established parties at first tried to deflect the barrage of 'radical' arguments against economic growth, against militarily based concepts of security, and against the multiplicity of social inequalities, and to classify Green reasoning as naïve, one-sided, and failing to take consequences into account. But they did not succeed for very long with this approach. Whether because of the dialectic of communicative understanding or because of the career-opportunities which up-and-coming 'non-green' politicians saw in a 'serious' approach to Green issues, the forms as well as the themes of 'green' politics—and indeed something of the radical impetus of the early Greens—became part of political culture. At the same time, toleration of unusual or differing views has also increased in civilian society. A positive view of pluralism established itself, in which even

the representatives of the 'fundamentalist' position enjoyed respect and achieved a certain prominence in the media. Mention should also be made of the successes brought about by the Green-inspired 'feminisation' of politics, initially confined to the symbolic but now a yardstick for women's demands and women's presence in all political bodies (women are often more strongly represented than men in the official bodies of the Greens). The Greens' intensive experiments with 'grass-roots' forms of operation had a similar effect. It seems as if the predictability of the lower levels has gradually diminished in other parties as well, as if those at the top of the organisation can no longer rely so easily on the 'obedience' of their members, or ensure discipline simply via the allocation of official positions and career opportunities.

3. One of the surprising, and perhaps paradoxical, effects brought about by the Greens is the reinforcement of left–right polarisation in inter-party rivalry. This has several causes. One is related to the 'political ecology' developed by the Greens. The ecological approach would be doomed to failure if there were not simultaneous and equally serious attempts to champion the material needs of the poorest members of society. An environmental policy that relied solely on change in individual behaviour appeared ineffective, whereas comprehensive intervention by the state in the economic process seemed indispensable. Given that environmental interventions are necessarily mainly restrictive in character, it was calculated that there would have to be trade-offs in terms of income and employment. The Greens therefore attached great importance to social guarantees for workers. They pledged to offset the material burdens occasioned by environmental policy.

In order to fulfil this promise, the Greens had to enter into competition with social democracy in the field of social policy—thus contributing further to the new left–right polarisation. Following its fall from government in 1982, the SPD was in the process of trying, by means of comprehensive employment and social programmes, to suppress recollection of the fact that it was not a conservative but a social democratic government—that of Helmut Schmidt—which had initiated the roll-back in social policy. Because the SPD was afraid it

would lose voters to the Greens, it declared itself to be the only socially responsible party and castigated its new rival, the Greens, for focusing exclusively on the environment and for not paying any attention to the unemployed or to workers affected by crisis. The unjust accusation of hostility to the workers greatly affected the Greens, who saw themselves as both critical of capitalism and socially oriented. They responded with even more voluminous programmes of social action, which, like those of the Social Democrats, adhered to Keynesian logic. But because both business and a majority of the electorate were against the idea of higher taxes and higher public borrowing, the Greens soon fell into the same attractiveness and credibility trap as the SPD. An intense competition for precedence in determining opinion within the left-wing spectrum of voters widened the gulf with the government and hindered the updating of both the SPD's and the Greens' programmes.(13)

Finally, the internal competition between Green 'pragmatists' and the ethically motivated 'fundamentalists', may be seen as a fourth causative factor in the increased polarisation. The latter group, who lost their dominant position in the formation of the Greens' political goals and objectives only in 1989, did not just reject any form of continuous political co-operation between Greens and Social Democrats but attempted to depict the SPD as a party of 'right-wing' bent, which now differed only in minor traits from the ruling conservatives. Under fundamentalist dominance, the Greens narrowed down the ecological dispute to class conflict and assumed the role of 'linesman' in the party system. They disallowed any other lines of conflict—besides the crude left–right dimension—along which political alliances, particularly with the Social Democrats, might have been concluded.

4. The most significant success produced by this competition between Greens and Social Democrats is undoubtedly the transformation in programme and 'style' undergone by the SPD. The one-time bastion of 'socio-technocratic' state-interventionism, as represented by ex-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the former Defence Minister Hans Apel, is scarcely recognisable any longer. As well as 'green' terminology, the SPD adopted various items from

the Greens' programme of action in the areas of energy and environmental policy, global economic policy and policy on development, and even peace and (military) security policy. This was both the result of an unconscious 'learning response' to changes in the SPD's constituency(14), and the intentional effect of a competitive strategy initiated by Oskar Lafontaine. Lafontaine, who, with his unorthodox political proposals and enthusiasm for controversy, has contributed greatly to the revival of German politics (yet was defeated in the 1990 federal elections by Kohl, the 'chancellor of unity'), had from the outset regarded the Greens as a force to be reckoned with—and had overstrained them with his strategy of tactical embrace. Those sections of the SPD which drew their inspiration from Lafontaine (notably in the states of Saarland, Berlin, Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen, Hessen, and Rheinland-Pfalz) adapted a part of the Green range of ideas and surprised the Greens, whenever the electoral results seemed to permit this, by putting forward proposals for the formation of joint administrations. By so doing, they stoked up the internal dispute between the co-operation-minded Realos and the identity-obsessed Fundis, each of whom occupied diametrically opposed positions on the question of a 'red-green' coalition.

Whatever the result of the conflict, it redounded to the advantage of the SPD: if the fundamentalists won the day, this seemed to prove to the voters that the Greens were politically incapable, and the SPD could then regularly reap a substantial percentage of the 'green' vote for itself at the next election; if, on the other hand, the pragmatists amongst the Greens got their way, the SPD gained a coalition partner with which it shared a greater area of agreement than with the Free Democrats (FDP), and it then had good chance, working on the basis of joint successes, of building up a new, 'ecological' image, which would improve its prospects with younger voters. One problematic consequence of this double game, however, is that the SPD is transforming itself rather too quickly into a 'post-modern' party, i.e. the rate at which it is modernising its image is greater than that of the (post-) modernisation of attitudes amongst its constituency. In the working-class milieu, which is traditionally union-oriented and

of industrial-conservative bent, 'Auntie SPD's' new style is frowned upon. One section of the constituency is migrating to the conservatives. The poor figure cut by the SPD in the five 'new' federal states is a sign of this dilemma: the modern SPD, which was sceptical in regard to German unity, which would like to see a change in the Federal Republic's 'tried and tested' constitution, and which for the most part condemned the Gulf War and regards the delegation of German soldiers to take part in UN operations as a prelude to the remilitarisation of German politics—this party is regarded by many classical SPD voters as a populist version of the Greens. The competition from the Greens, the 'Lafontaine' strategy of adopting Green issues, and a number of very successful red–green coalitions in various states have helped the SPD achieve a new and, in the long term, promising image.⁽¹⁵⁾ That what is involved here is not mere superficial retouching of the party-image but irreversible changes is demonstrated by the fate of the right-wing Social Democrats: they have lost some of the key positions of influence in the parliamentary party, the national executive, and the cabinets of the state governments.

4. The Greens' Dual Identity

A brief glance has already been cast, in the second point of the last section, at the history of the Greens' internal conflict. Because the background to this conflict, and the forms it has taken, are one of the most misunderstood aspects of the Greens, it deserves somewhat closer inspection. For this, we may turn to social-scientific analyses which deal with the Greens' fundamental conflict not (or not only) from the point of view of committed Green activists,⁽¹⁶⁾ but (also) from that of a critical observer concerned to understand the phenomenon. This is the approach that characterises the empirical studies conducted by Herbert Kitschelt (1989) and Joachim Raschke (1991), from which at least the first two of the following three points derive.

In contrast to what uncritical admirers of the Greens (e.g. Fritjof Capra and Charlene

Spretnak, 1984) suggest, there is almost no proof of the development of a common basic stance or central idea amongst the German Greens. This thesis naturally does not dispute the existence of diverse proposals for a unified Green philosophy; it simply records the differences—indeed the rivalry—between these. The great susceptibility of the Greens to ideological conflict is to be explained by the peculiar nature of issues in the 'new politics' (Kai Hildebrandt and Russell Dalton, 1978): there is no central 'cleavage' along the lines of the 'labour versus capital' split; instead there is a multiplicity of conflictual aspects touching on almost all social spheres—from production, through upbringing and education, state and law, science and technology, to patterns of consumption and individual life-styles. There is no one concise 'key issue', and no permanent 'prime enemy'. As far as the choice of political ends and means is concerned, facile dichotomies between 'true and false', 'good and evil', 'us and them', are of little use. What is required is well-considered decisions that take account of reciprocal relations and learning-processes.(17) The unclear and fluctuating conflictual structure manifests itself in problems of orientation—after all, a party can secure its existence only if it can rely on the stable involvement of its members, and those members, in their turn, are most easily recruited where there are a number of fundamental shared convictions. Given that the Greens' orientation problem springs from a 'simultaneous radicalisation of problems and deradicalisation of the means available for solving these' (Joachim Raschke, 1991, p. 39), radicalisation of thought and desire is one way of still being able to stabilise group-identity and involvement.

This is one reason—probably the main reason—why catastrophic scenarios, apocalyptic forecasts, and an impassioned critique of civilisation and capitalism were such marked features of the 'philosophy' of the early Greens. Radicalness in diagnoses and therapies promised on the one hand to offset the lack of a fully-developed theory—a lack of which those concerned had been painfully aware since the crisis of Marxism. On the other hand, reference to a radicalised concept of politics provided a means of containing the difficulties occasioned by the model of identity prevalent in the new social movements: that model is subjective, particularist, and

marked by a strong preference for autonomy which runs counter to the requirements of any kind of formal organisation. But there was another reason why ecological fundamentalism became the most influential current of opinion during the Greens' initial phase. The income from official party-funding did not suffice to establish local party-offices with paid officials in every locality. Quite apart from the fact that paying party workers an appropriate wage would have violated grass-roots principles, it was vital to recruit committed members for voluntary, unpaid work. As Herbert Kitschelt (1989) shows, only those members who derived some 'private benefit'—the corroboration of their own philosophical standpoint by others, or involvement in important organisational decisions—would undertake poorly paid, or even unpaid, work for the party.(18)

Of course, the fundamentalists did not have a monopoly on the organisation; they had to share power with adherents of a basically moderate view of politics, who, because they had participated in the foundation of the party and because conditions of entry to the party were 'lax', could not be refused membership. However, because the fundamentalists were the ones who continually devoted themselves to the development of the organisation and, until very recently, held the majority in party congresses, they had a monopoly on the intellectual interpretation of the party's image. It was thanks to this monopoly that there occurred what for outsiders was an astonishing reversion to the traditions of the early workers' movement, to its rhetoric and its schemes of institutional reform (expropriation and socialisation of the means of production, establishment of a system of councils in addition to parliament, integration and equalisation of systems of social security). At the same time, issues concerning the organisational 'form' of politics were declared to be key political issues: on the one hand via the establishment and impassioned defence of grass-roots principles (the problems associated with this will be discussed in the next section), and on the other hand by a fetishisation of the role of the parliamentary opposition. True to the principle that political practice consists primarily in the manifestation of identities and intentions, parliament was to be used only as a 'stage', not as a

means of participating in the elaboration of political decisions, let alone the formation of governmental coalitions.

Strictly speaking, the ideological predominance of fundamentalism was broken not so much by 'better' arguments from the pragmatists, but by side-effects of the growth in the Green constituency. Lobbyism and parliamentarism contributed greatly to the change in image and in the processes whereby demands and objectives were formulated. I shall deal first with the function of Green 'lobbyists', who come in two versions. The first are advocates of the kinds of specific collective interests which figure in the list of issues of 'new politics': e.g. representatives of citizens' initiatives, of environmental or conservation groups, of women's refuges, of ?. The second group consists of lobbyists who represent not only collective interests but also legitimate individual interests, namely those involved in self-managed businesses or projects (production companies, bookshops, alternative newspapers, cultural centres, music and theatre groups). The 'lobby faction' regularly succeeded in persuading the fundamentalists to support particularised, more realistic and more short-term political objectives. In return, they gave their backing to the fundamentalists when it was a question of occupying positions of influence or of defending 'radical' formulas of identity against the pragmatists' practical view of politics.

However, because the 'lobbyists' now and again—e.g. before important election-dates—alleged themselves with the 'pragmatists', they were able to hold fundamentalism in check and to stop the pragmatists leaving the Greens. Although the champions of ecological and social special interests began by being scarcely less radical than the convinced fundamentalists, as they experienced the (individual and collective) benefits of parliamentarism, their view of politics came closer to that of the pragmatists. As experts or 'specialist politicians', they enjoyed a certain amount of attention in the media and were respected even by officials of other parties—a fact which had a beneficial effect on the interests which they represented. It gradually became obvious how much social influence the Greens were throwing away when they did not, like the other parties, steer their followers towards vacant posts in civil and public service (e.g. as

mayors, public administrators, judges, or school heads). As the political weight of the 'lobby politicians' in the Greens increased, so too did their dissatisfaction with the fundamentalists' anachronistic approach to conflict, which threatened to squander the hard-won influence that had been gained within the political system. But it was only in 1988 that they determined to organise a third Green current, under the name 'Aufbruch' or 'New Beginning'.(19)

Given the triply fragmented way in which the Greens' experience was shaped, it is no surprise that their image continues to be a disunited one. The tendency to identify adversaries solely as a means of reinforcing the party's own identity, and to evoke an inexorable apocalypse has, it is true, been curbed; but the makeshift solution of borrowing various elements from the labour movement (expropriation, council systems) is still current practice. The 'anti-capitalist' impetus is also kept alive through ideological 'rivalry' with certain sections of the unions and of social democracy which see themselves as (eco)socialist. For a long time, this meant that radical but politically ineffective criticism was regarded as an alternative to practicable environmental intervention, e.g. in the spheres of energy, waste, and transport policy. The internal party scepticism in regard to a policy of reform that is necessarily incrementalist but is rejected by the other parties as 'going too far' has now given way to a positive attitude. The Greens too have learned to appreciate the 'effects' of their parliamentarians and ministers. However, the competition to appear as 'left-wing' as possible, from which even the pragmatists could not escape, has prevented the elaboration of all those proposals which aim at a loosening of society's dependence on economic development and thus damage the vested interests of workers as well.(20) Again, the idea that at the end of the twentieth century capitalism should more appositely be thought of as a kind of drug-dependency of the whole of society, and no longer as a kind of fist-fight involving only capital and labour, was one that did not occur to the majority of Green politicians.

5. Organisational Democracy as a Test of Self

As is well known, the Greens' approach to politics has a formal as well as a material (or policy-oriented) side. There has been an attempt, through the choice of organisational structures and procedural rules, to take account of the fact that attitudes and preferences do not simply flow into the party from outside but are also shaped by the party itself, indeed are in some cases self-generated—i.e. endogenous. What the party wants and how it acts is dependent to an important degree on how it is organised. In order to guarantee the effective operation of members' interests—which in bureaucratic organisations and hierarchical decision-making structures are often at a disadvantage—the Greens expressly pledged themselves to the principles of 'grass-roots democracy'. These principles are familiar from the anarchist and syndicalist traditions of the labour movement. The Greens established the principle of the rotation of official posts, which allows for short periods of office (from one to two years)(21) and excludes re-election of office-holders. They prohibited the simultaneous holding of a number of offices, particularly the combination of a party office and a parliamentary mandate (the 'incompatibility rule'). They experimented with the imperative mandate, which binds delegates to the resolutions of the body that has delegated them. And they tried (prompted also by a lack of money) to fulfil most organisational tasks using voluntary, honorary, and unpaid workers rather than a paid staff.(22) Not much importance was attached to the decisions of executive committees and elected functionaries. What was expected of the latter was not so much political initiative and organisational capacity but a readiness to ensure that the resolutions taken by members' and delegates' conferences were put into practice.

The effects of Green grass-roots democracy were, to put it cautiously, highly ambivalent. Above all, one has to distinguish between the effects which it had outside the Greens and those which it had inside—i.e. for the Greens themselves. The 'external' effects of the Green experiment in democracy can be adjudged to have been unreservedly positive, and

may be said to continue to be felt to this day. The fact that organisations could not only function but also be politically effective without permanent functionaries, provided members occupied a 'strong' position and there was a high degree of transparency in all (formal) procedures, came as a positive surprise. There was a 'radiating power', which affected many other organisations (e.g. tenants' and consumers' associations), setting them under pressure to democratise. One has to bear this in mind when one assesses the internal effects, which appear much less favourable.

Grass-roots principles are typically justified with arguments such as those developed by the party-sociologist Robert Michels (1962) in explaining the emergence of an 'iron law of oligarchy'. Division of labour, power hierarchies, and expert knowledge alienate elected leaders from their constituency, so that the latter's will is either ignored or, indeed, changed into its opposite. It was principally the fundamentalists amongst the Greens who wished to preclude this kind of scenario of detachment, in which those who represent members' interests are wont to change into charismatic leaders who end up managing to impose their own personal will on the membership. In fact, however, the situation of the Greens, as Herbert Kitschelt's precise analysis shows (1989, pp. 68–73), cannot be likened to the relationship between members and leaders in the Social Democratic Party of the Kaiserreich. Members of the Green Party have access to sufficient information and resources to be able to ensure that their interests are enforced. The party does not have an organisational monopoly, with no alternative available; nor are its members prevented by any subjective or institutional factors from themselves seeking higher-ranking offices within it. Quite the contrary. Provided they act jointly and not purely individually, members who are at all informed or articulate have a relatively good chance of helping to determine the course of the party by means of 'voice' and (the threat of) 'exit'.

The problems posed by the relationship between members and party are quite different ones in the case of the Greens. Because the overwhelming majority of the members come from the new middle classes, the Greens are presented with some very varied subjective motives for participation. The members do have some normative attitudes in common, but their

commitment is based not on any binding ethic but on a desire for self-fulfilment and on high expectations as to the direct benefit of political action. The preconditions for stable group-solidarity are thus scarcely satisfied. If party-life makes great demands on members—e.g. by having meetings dominated by ideological controversies and an excess of formal issues—the commitment of the 'average' member quickly dissipates. This discontinuous pattern of participation, punctuated by 'shifting involvements (Albert O. Hirschman, 1982), became a typical feature of the Greens. Problems developed which were not healed but aggravated by grass-roots principles.

The formal application of the principle of rotation, of the incompatibility rule, and of various other forms of 'grass-roots monitoring' of elected party representatives produced the same sort of tendencies to alienation and detachment as are claimed for a rigid ruling hierarchy. Instead of a lively organisational democracy, what often developed was a 'culture of distrust' (Kitschelt, 1989, p. 72). The most serious effects were those brought about by rotation and the incompatibility rule. They prevented the accumulation of experience and the building-up of stable informational and communication links with other actors inside and outside the party. The tight chronological and functional restriction on the mandates ran counter to the interdependent nature of the problems with which Green politics is concerned. Because party functionaries and members of parliament were not allowed to stand for office again, they lost an important incentive to communicate with the grass roots—they 'became detached' and concerned themselves only with that which they personally considered to be important. Accountability and willingness to assume responsibility dwindled. Because there was a strict ban on plurality even of party offices (e.g. a member of the regional executive committee could not also be treasurer of the local party organisation), an important channel of communication between the different levels of the organisation was lost.

Two—fatal—consequences in particular are to be regretted. In the first place, a disproportion developed between the large number of posts that had to be filled and the meagre

stock of members that were sufficiently qualified and motivated to fill them. As a result, individuals had to be called on who appeared unsuitable. The only rudiments of competition to be observed, if there was any competition at all, emerged when candidates had to be selected for parliamentary seats. In the second place, the party soon became fragmented into a multiplicity of different spheres of action, in which actors operated in parallel or against each other, instead of co-operating. At local, state, and federal levels the bodies in which posts had to be filled included not only executive committees and delegates' conferences, but also supervisory forums (finance and steering committees) and twenty to thirty specialist working-parties. Because delegates and grass-roots representatives are only willing to commit themselves on a discontinuous basis, the various conferences have a greatly fluctuating make-up, with a high proportion of first-timers and last-timers. In 1990, the executive committee chairperson Ruth Hammerbacher complained in her farewell speech that the basic principle which the Greens had established—namely, the 'principle of division rather than that of meaningful connection'—was a false one, indeed that they had made the 'lopping-off of connections into a systematic practice'. Herbert Kitschelt (1989, p. 72) diagnoses a structure of 'fragmented, compartmentalised "stratarchies"'.

Grass-roots democracy became an arena chiefly for two groups of actors. On the one hand, there were those who regarded the formal principles of grass-roots democracy as having great value in themselves—these were the (mainly younger) fundamentalists. Their concern to pledge the party to strict definitions of identity coincided with the opportunities made available to them for gaining self-knowledge and self-fulfilment in public roles and in exciting party-conferences. On the other hand, informal networks began to form within the different wings, the members of which prepared the formal decisions through covert arrangements and took it in turns to occupy the most influential posts. The latter happened in full accord with the rotation principle, since this only prohibited standing again for the last-held post, but not for a different one. These two groups determined the shape of the party's work in many areas, and they furnish

most of the delegates who are present on a continuous basis. A certain mis-match already exists between the motives for participation in a strongly reform-minded party and the complexity of the problems and tasks which are to be considered, and the difficulties associated with the design of the organisation are multiplied if the party is seen as a means of attaining direct satisfaction of 'aesthetic organisational' interests, in addition to comprehensive social reforms. The directness and ease of evaluation of organisation-related objectives gives such objectives almost automatic precedence over the complex, long-term social goals. Bureaucratic rule is not the only regime able to pervert the claim to a viable and worthwhile society; grass-roots democracy can also do this.

If the well-considered balancing of different democratic principles (such as representation, participation, pluralism, and accountability) is abandoned in favour of one single principle, this may satisfy participatory desires but it also frustrates participatory motives. The motives of those who wish to participate not so much for reasons of self-fulfilment but more in the interests of long-term collective goals remain unrealised. The predominance of the one democratic principle destroys the others' chances of being realised. When one looks at the situation from this point of view, the fundamental problem of the Greens become clear: 'They are unable to combine legitimacy and efficiency' (Joachim Raschke, 1991, p. 10). What they regard as legitimate—namely laxer rules of membership and a high degree of fluctuation, institutionalised distrust and intense self-reflection—is inefficient as far as intervention in society is concerned. The things that would be efficient—the fostering of creativity, the ability to communicate and co-operate, the delegation of responsibility for a fixed term, the acknowledgement and corroboration of successful work—are considered illegitimate. When the Greens failed to secure entry into the first all-German parliament in December 1990, they were not just paying the penalty with the voters for having shown themselves indecisive and petty-minded vis-à-vis the historic opportunity offered by unification; their predicament was also a consequence of their irritating 'performance', a result of the distrust fomented by Greens

against other Greens.

6. Where Do the Greens Stand Today?

The failure in the federal elections of 1990 profoundly shocked the Greens. All wings of the party, apart from the fundamentalist 'radical ecologists' around Jutta Ditfurth, reacted with impassioned self-criticism. In spring 1991 the organisation's constitution was reformed by a national delegates' conference: compulsory rotation was abolished, the incompatibility rule was toned down,(23) conditions of pay for executive-committee members were changed, a procedure for postal ballots was introduced, and the filling of posts on the national steering committee was assigned to the regional executives. These organisational modifications are being applied to a party which, under the pressure of considerable changes in its milieu, is beginning to project a different ideological image.(24) These changes are: 1) the erosion of Green fundamentalism, and 2) the consequences of the break-up of the GDR.

1. Fundamentalism started to lose support when the option of red-green coalitions began to appear a viable one in more and more states. This in its turn was due more to the growing dissatisfaction of the voters with conservative-liberal coalitions than to any attractive proposals of reform put forward by the SPD and Greens. A certain weariness with the same old fundamentalist plea for a critical attitude to the system and for abstinence from politics, a fall in the number of votes won in the fundamentalist strongholds, and the seemingly attractive opportunities offered by participation in government meant that even in erstwhile 'radical' regional executive committees majorities emerged in favour of political co-operation and policies of reform.

The readiness of the West Berlin Greens (AL) to form a municipal administration with the SPD in 1989 gave the impression of a real breakthrough to a productive conception of

politics.(25) It was the second instance of a red–green administration, the first being the red–green coalition in Hessen, renewed in 1990. The pattern was followed shortly afterwards by the Greens in Niedersachsen. The traditional alliance between fundamentalists and 'left-wingers' in the regional executives of Nordrhein-Wesfalen, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hamburg began to collapse. As late as 1990, the 'eco-socialists' around Rainer Trampert and Thomas Ebermann left the Greens; in spring 1991 the 'radical ecologists' around Jutta Ditfurth announced their departure.(26) The rump consisted of moderate 'left-wingers', now transformed into critics of the fundamentalism which they had previously supported. There is now a ubiquitous willingness amongst them to team up with the pragmatists, their erstwhile pet enemies, a factor which strengthens the party's capacity for integration and action in most states. Since spring 1991, the national executive committee itself has been made up of a majority of pragmatic 'left-wingers', and these are striving to establish a relationship of co-operation with prominent pragmatists of ministerial status (in particular Joschka Fischer, the Green Environment Minister in Hessen).

Any appraisal of this change of image will necessarily register a 'narrowing-down' of the spectrum of Green positions. On the one hand, the Greens have seen the departure not only of the spokespersons of fundamentalism but also of prominent pragmatists (such as Thea Bock and Otto Schily, who are now SPD MPs in the Bundestag). On the other hand, the internal conclusion of peace between pragmatists and left-wingers has meant that the middle-of-the-road current operating under the label 'New Beginning' now feels itself pushed to the periphery. Since it began in 1988, the 'New Beginning' itself has changed character. Originally intended as a melting-pot for specialised (lobby) interests and as a mediator between the mutually hostile Realo and Fundi camps, it is now the sole group in which any reflection occurs about the central ideas and fundamental issues relating to the Green concept of politics—an activity that occurs in opposition both to the simplistic left–right thinking of the 'left-wingers' and to the pragmatism of the Realpolitiker.

2. The collapse of the socialist states of Eastern Europe, the flow of refugees from the GDR, the end of the SED regime, and, finally, the unification of the two German states constituted another shock for which the Greens were unprepared. Their political activity was geared to overcoming confrontation between the blocs and achieving equality of rights and understanding between them; it did not aim for the 'triumph of the West'. They had always advocated acceptance of the dual statehood of Germany and the extension of co-operative relations between the GDR and FRG. The Greens were far from being supporters of state socialism, and, through their long years of support for civil rights activists in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR, they had helped reinforce the movement for democracy; at the same time, however, they appreciated real socialism as a counterweight to the power pretensions of the Western alliance, and also as a symbol of the 'counter-system'. There was always the idea that at least the experiences that had been gathered under socialism could be used as material for a fundamental restructuring of capitalism. Even Gorbachev's 'perestroika' evoked ambivalent feelings, because it was unclear whether its aim was to improve or to abolish Soviet communism; but the actual end of the socialist system initially left the Greens utterly speechless.(27)

Understandably, the West German Greens felt affinities primarily with the left-wing and ecological sections of the civil-rights movements in the GDR. They supported both their attempts to organise themselves as well as the goal of converting the GDR into what would be a second democratic but the first 'social-ecological' (because non-capitalist) German state. The explosive growth in the East German population's desire for arrangements to be made as quickly as possible for them to live in the same state and enjoy the same living-conditions as the West Germans astonished the whole left-wing movement in West Germany, including the Social Democrats. East German civil-rights movements, East and West German Greens, and the majority of Social Democrats opposed the course to unification which the government and Chancellor Helmut Kohl succeeded in pushing through in the face of the erstwhile allies and, in

particular, the USSR. However, the standpoint of the German left, which was somewhat romantic and sidestepped the real needs, was not well received by the voters in West or East Germany. Because the East German Greens and social movements also gave in to the temptation to indulge in profuse self-reflection, they have as yet been unable to solve the problem of their fragmentation into a handful of parallel, small-scale organisations. They managed to overthrow a state, but their influence on the subsequent process of unification and on current developments in the new Germany has been minimal. There is, quite rightly, talk of the decline of the West German left (cf. Padgett and Paterson, 1991). Even if one adds the votes of the post-communist PDS to the votes of the SPD, Greens, and citizens' movements, the 'strength' of the left at the national level now amounts to only 41 per cent of total votes. The German parties of the left are currently stuck in the minority ghetto.

This means that there is for the present no prospect of the Greens and Social Democrats ousting the Kohl government and bringing a 'social and ecological turn-around' to the Federal Republic. The 'narrowing' of the Green spectrum, the loss of seats in the Bundestag(28) and a jading of the willingness to enter into grand debates about future schemes make the Greens currently appear weaker than they really are. All observers do believe, however, that the Green will 'survive', even if they do not reappear that quickly in the seat of government. The voters have long since come to regard them as an indispensable part of local and regional politics. At the level of the national party, where the great issues of world-view and strategy were debated, the Greens have caused as much disappointment as they have attracted attention. All in all, therefore, their absence from national politics need not be adjudged negative. One feature that is problematic, however, is the lack of incentives in the present situation for overcoming weakness of ideas and for developing an autonomous left-ecological strategy of reform, independent of the distributive interests of the Social Democrats and trade unions. Confining oneself to ecological reforms which at best impinge only on the purses of big earners, no longer seems appropriate, given the state of the problem and the wealth of Western industrial societies.

However, any other, more thorough-going reforms presuppose a transformation of priorities and institutions, and these, in their turn, can be brought about only by well-founded arguments, attractive partial goals, and judicious strategies based on a well-developed awareness of one's opponents. Only in the wake of institutional change can desires for more thorough-going changes develop. The first phase of this endogenous moulding of political preferences was inaugurated by the Greens during the 1980s.. Will they also be able to give the signal for a second new beginning?

7. Two Analytical Conclusions

The Green experiment contains a wealth of valuable experience. This seems as yet scarcely to have been tapped, let alone put to use by the Green Party in shaping itself. Instead of providing a summary, I should like to close this chapter by outlining two perspectives on key problems of the Greens. These relate to the particular problems associated with rational operation in ambient conditions which, from the one perspective may be viewed as systemic links, i.e. a web of non-linear causalities, and from the other as an interdependence between strategic actors.

1. The prolific attempts of the social movements (and the early Greens) to awaken a sense of 'involvement' amongst people and to move them to take part in collective protest-actions or to become members of the party through exaggerated diagnoses of problems, catastrophic scenarios, and a radicalised conception of the enemy, were by no means unsuccessful. Fundamentalist arguments appear neither illogical nor ineffective. Yet they have no effect on the causal structure of the problems which are the butt of their disapproval. There is no channel of influence leading from intensely felt involvement and moral rigorism to causal therapies in the form of institutional changes aimed at bringing about certain effects. Every material or institutional change (of laws, of the premisses on which legal decisions are based, or

of collective interpretations of how things hang together) seems to be indebted to at least one additional factor, namely knowledge of the existence of alternatives that can be implemented with a reasonable amount of effort. Moral reasoning may strive to raise the threshold of reasonableness, but success is dependent on realisable alternatives. Alternatives that are inadequate or lacking in credibility do not appear to be increased in value by being linked to an appeal for greater individual sacrifice. The fact that the moral fundamentalism of radical ecology, or of 'deep ecology', is geared to the generation only of the need for action but not of alternatives for action, is what makes it politically weak. Viewed thus, fundamentalism is parasitic, because it remains dependent on the readiness of those with 'other' motives to engage in pragmatic action.

What we have here is probably a problem located in the overlap between individual psychology and cognitive science—one that we regularly observe when emotional affectedness vis-à-vis 'global' problems is accompanied by a resolute rejection of the decision-making calculus relating to 'local' political alternatives. Even where this state of affairs is occasionally acknowledged by the relevant actors to be a problem, the latter see this not as a compelling reason to analyse their situation as regards social (or political) action but rather as an invitation to expound their emotions. One explanation for this is that the emotional actor has an intense need to indulge in cognitive simplification and therefore comes to the conclusion that problems regarded as 'big' can only be tackled with 'big' solutions. However, since 'big' solutions themselves again present one with 'big' problems, the emotional actor becomes the victim of circular thinking. Matching up 'big' problems with what are the only available solutions, namely 'little' ones, is, in contrast, a task that requires not emotionality, but a readiness to tolerate ambiguity: given the inherent uncertainty, the notion of a chain of 'small' steps precludes any allusion to success. But only such a notion can open one's eyes to the conditions that permit a type of action that is geared to effect and is, to this extent, causally adequate.

The inability to tolerate ambiguities that are real and rooted in the operational context

has considerably hindered the Greens in their attempt to develop their potential for influencing society. This was demonstrated in the quasi-confessional formulas used to comment on peace policy (e.g. 'Out of NATO!'), on women's policy (which was always modelled on the life-style of the 'most radical' feminists of the day), on German unity (which was declared to be the resurrection of the German Reich), or on the Gulf War (which was regarded as an example of the material colonialism of the West, not as a response to the Iraqi occupation and not as having anything to do with Israel's interest in survival). Abstracting equally well-founded interests, which clearly appear to bear some relation to the one interest that is championed, may relieve one of the effort of having to weigh up all the factors and to present a discriminating case, but it leads to an arbitrary simplification of the true complexity of the world. This in its turn brings about a reduction in potential support, because it expressly excludes—or indeed declares as enemies—those who hold a more differentiated view of the world yet agree on many concrete proposals for action.(29) It is a well-attested sociological finding that voluntary organisations are wont to ensure their cohesiveness by means of emotionally satisfying collective interpretations which regularly prove to be insufficiently complex and of little instructive value when it comes to selecting strategies of action. Sociologists can be content with the elucidatory value of this finding, but actors who wish to influence society in a purposeful and responsible manner face a hard task: they must be constantly guarding against the temptations and consequences of simplification.

2. A look back at the 'fundamentalist' phase of Green politics seems to prove the case for developing an awareness of ambiguity, for a 'culture of the scale-pan', and for tolerance of multiple rationalities. Indeed, for some time now a number of Greens of academic bent, most of whom consider themselves as belonging to the 'New Beginning' group, to the smaller, pragmatist section, have been expressing great disquiet at the Greens' crudely simplified perspective on problems, and at their rigid 'zero-sum-game' understanding of political conflicts. These critics of ecological and political fundamentalism (with whom the author sympathises)

cannot acquiesce in a situation where political strategy, whose targets are complex systemic reciprocal relations (e.g. between science, the economy, and culture), is still based on patterns of thought deriving from Newtonian mechanics—i.e. notions of linear causality—on a mechanistic model of social interaction, and an antagonistic conception of conflict. They point to findings in system-theory and evolutionary theory(30) and draw attention to the 'social construction of reality' through interpretive action that has no firm anchor in absolute truths or exogenous preferences.

Resisting the temptation of biologicistic 'naturalism', which seeks to explain politics and society on the pattern of non-cognitive organic processes (cf. the critique by Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, 1989), these critics, aware of the complexity of reality, tend to call for attention to be focused on the procedures and rules of 'sensible' politics. This deferment of issues follows on from a fruitful renaissance of 'institutional' approaches in political theory (cf., for example, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, 1989), and shifts attention towards issues raised in present-day theory of democracy and towards the debate about the preconditions for the development of 'civil society'. Its significance for political actors lies in the way in which procedural norms influence the quality of the outcomes of political decision-making. It is obvious that a more complex knowledge of context and a higher level of reflection within politics would also make possible 'more' consideration of consequences, as well as more accurate strategies. The only 'residual' problem would appear to be the emotional and expressive needs of the members of the organisation, which up to now have been satisfied by crudely simplified world-views and 'gratificatory' organisational routines (e.g. party conferences). These, it is suggested, would have to be 'diverted' into a new democratic organisational culture, such as would appear to be achievable by replacing 'in person' democracy with plebiscitary procedures for participation (e.g. postal ballots).

However attractive such ideas may appear at first glance, they do not offer a way out of the dilemma faced by a party of reform in resolving the issues of participation and the

determination of objectives. It only seems as if the substantial fundamentalism that is based on the need to express identity could profitably be exchanged for a procedural fundamentalism which attempts to follow the ethics of communicative understanding as formulated by Jürgen Habermas (cf. the proposal by John S. Dryzek, 1990). A party of reform that wishes to act as the agent of new issues and as the promoter of comprehensive democratisation cannot confine itself to reflexive decision-making and ethical deliberations. Even to win support for such an approach it would need to take strategic decisions in which the strategic options and probable moves of other actors were taken into account.

On the realistic assumption that actors have non-identical preferences and do not share the same world-view (this is not to say which of them must be regarded as 'right' and which 'wrong'), politics will always be a game of strategy, in which 'true' intentions should not be laid bare without consideration of the consequences. In other words: duplicating social complexity in the discourses of the collective actor threatens to make that actor incapable of joining in the strategic game with other actors. The successes—and they are urgently needed—of ecological and social politics will be successes brought about by judicious politics—or they will not be brought about at all. Green politics cannot afford to confine itself to the joys of communicative aesthetics. When some part of the basis of life disappears every day, when lives begin and end without hope, before a single trace of happiness has been experienced, ecological politics cannot display the kind of patience suited to a philosophy seminar. Equally, it must not become addicted to the pleasures of emotion.

The correct response to emotional reductionism is therefore not to be found solely in an increased awareness of complexity and in ethical reflection. It can only come as a result of weighing-up defensible against indefensible simplifications, co-operative against antagonistic urges, mobilising against paralysing 'truths'—in other words, weighing-up 'good' against 'bad' politics. Because the name of that response is 'politics', it has no transcendental premisses. It need wait on nothing and no one.

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Notes

1. Although Petra Kelly was one of the three chairpersons of the Greens from 1980 to 1982, and was a member of the Bundestag from 1983 to 1990, she took no part in the impassioned factional disputes and debates about strategy which took place in this period. The few (oral) comments which she did make on the development of the organisation had little influence. The same is true of her suggestion—which aroused a lot of interest outside the Greens—that the Greens should be thought of as an 'anti-party party', the object of which was by no means simply to 'freshen up' the other parties by introducing Green ideas to them (Kelly, 1983, p. 21).

In contrast, Rudolf Bahro, who was a member of the national executive committee from 1982 to 1984, strove to give the Greens the image of a radical force that was critical of civilisation and which, although it determined the topics of public debate, resisted the temptation to participate in political decision-making and the exercise of power. Bahro left the party in 1985, following the party conference's rejection of his proposal of an unconditional ban on animal experiments. In his most recent published work, where he advocates a spiritualistic avant-garde concept of the radical reform of civilisation, the Greens figure merely as 'factotums' of the industrial system (cf. Rudolf Bahro, 1987).

2. On this, see Ferdinand Müller-Rommel (ed., 1989), Russel J. Dlaton and Manfred Kuechler (eds., 1990), and Herbert Kitschelt (1989).

3. This was comprehensible both to the extent that the assessments of the situation which prevailed at the time—and which were reinforced by the Cold War—saw grave threats

emanating from the Soviet sphere of power (one should not forget the Korean War and the blockade of Berlin), and to the extent that the Iron Curtain put up by the hostile power-blocs ran right through the middle of Germany until autumn 1989. Both post-war German states—the FRG and GDR—regarded themselves (though not always explicitly) as 'front-line' states, in the strict sense of the term.

4. The first two factors cited are directly attributable to the participation of the Social Democrats in government, whereas the third factor, namely the student movement, was expressly targeted against the limits to development and notions of order implied in the social democratic model of society.

5. The President of the German employers' federation, Hans-Martin Schleyer, was kidnapped and murdered by terrorist commandos of the Red Army Faction (RAF). The passengers travelling in an aircraft hijacked by RAF supporters and made to fly to Mogadishu were freed by force. Immediately after this, three prominent members of the RAF (Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe) died in mysterious circumstances in prison in Stuttgart-Stammheim. These events, and the circumstances surrounding the death of the prisoners, came to be regarded by a small circle of young militant Autonomer (non-conformist) as mystical high points in the struggle against 'the State'. The German Left, on the other hand, saw them as marking the end of the romantic notion of revolution.

6. I.e. not like the still-marginal DKP, which was duty-bound to criticise German capitalism and the national-socialist past on account of its 'unswerving loyalty' to the USSR.

7. In line with their inclusive concept of representation, the Greens give particular support to the rights of children, young people, and the elderly. Their commitment, as expressed in parliamentary initiatives (parliamentary questions, draft legislation), has been concerned with the social situation of the jobless, of recipients of welfare, of migrant workers, of asylum-seekers, of refugees, and of ethnic and sexual minorities. For example, the Green parliamentary group in the Bundestag took up the case of the Roma and Sinti peoples, who are still being refused compensation for the injustice perpetrated against them by the Nazis in the concentration camps.

8. One of the earliest appraisals of their work in the Bundestag bears the title 'Ankläger im Hohen Haus' ('Pointing the finger in the House') (Dirk Cornelsen, 1986).

9. —and were successful in doing this until the appearance of the Greens. Hence the various extreme right-wing and crypto-fascist parties have not yet succeeded in getting elected to the Bundestag. All they have managed to do is get elected—temporarily—to one or two regional parliaments. The pro-Soviet left (DKP) has also until recently been present in only a very small number of local councils (and will have to quit these positions, now that its followers have been surprised by the collapse of real socialism).

10. Parties currently pay themselves DM3.50 per vote. This so-called 'refund of electoral costs' makes up more than half of the total income of all parties.

11. The Greens are not represented in the parliaments of either Saarland or Schleswig-Holstein. These two cases display interesting parallels. Before the election, the fundamentalist-dominated regional executives rejected the offer of co-operation put to them (for thoroughly tactical reasons) by the SPD. The regional SPD groups, led by younger 'carriers of hope' (as Oskar Lafontaine called Björn Engholm), won absolute majorities. As far as the state parliaments elected in October 1990 in what was formerly the GDR are concerned, the Greens are represented by their own members of parliament in Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, and Thüringen. In the state of Brandenburg, where no alliance was formed between the Greens and the democratic citizens' movements, only the latter are represented in the parliament. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern both the Greens and the citizens' movements, having fought the election separately, failed to clear the five-per-cent hurdle.

12. These were the fast-breeder reactor in Kalkar, the high-temperature reactor in Hamm, and the reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf.

13. Cf. the excellent account of the decline of the party-political Left in Germany recently produced by Stephen Padgett and William Paterson (1991).

14. On this, see Section 2 in the Chapter entitled 'Between Identity and Modernity'.

15. This development has also been reflected in political science, where the concept of 'catch-all' parties that has prevailed up to now has been revised: Volksparteien now no longer appear as slothful and hostile to innovation but as compelled, at the risk of going under, to show sensitivity to changes in society (cf. Czada and Lehbruch, 1990; Wolinetz, 1991). They only survive if they react flexibly to social change and ensure that new social interests are carried over into the political system.

16. The reader will have noted that the author is inclined to see himself as belonging to the group of the committed activists, although he likes to adopt the position of a neutral and detached observer—ultimately returning to the battlefield with the insights and arguments he has gained. The observations that follow do not claim anything more than this kind of 'tactical' objectivity.

17. It is no coincidence that normative theories of ecological politics readily borrow from concepts relating to biological systems, and argue the case for 'interwoven thinking'. Cf. Hinchman and Hinchman (1989).

18. 'For ideologues, party organization is a laboratory to explore new forms of social solidarity and decision making. Because the gratifications derived from organizational experiments are immediate and the collective benefits or comprehensive social change are more likely to be realized only in the distant future, ideologues may be more concerned with the party's appropriate organization than with its long-term program' (Kitschelt, 1989, p. 50).

19. The most prominent politician associated with the 'New Beginning' is the former member of the Bundestag and chairperson of the parliamentary party Antje Vollmer.

20. Thus almost all attempts to develop an independent Green labour and social policy—e.g. the elaboration of a scheme of guaranteed basic income—have failed. The adoption of current union demands in relation to wages and working-time, on the other hand, have met with approval.
21. The members of the first federal parliamentary party had to give up their seats after two years and were replaced by the so-called 'follow-on brigade'.
22. It is sometimes said that the Greens were to have reached their decisions according to the consensus principle, i.e. they would seek to secure the agreement of all those involved. But this is not the case. Even in the highest bodies such as the national executive committee, majority decision-making was the rule from the outset.
23. However, members of the Bundestag may still not stand for a seat on the national executive committee, and vice versa.
24. However, developments have given the lie to those optimistic observers who, like Elim Papadakis (1988, p 449), believed that the Greens had managed to develop 'a reflexive and analytical approach both to issues of organization and political ideology', and thus to spare themselves the choice between radicalism and reformism. In contradiction to what Papadakis thought, what one observes instead is that Green radicalism did allow itself to be tamed by means of various self-restricting arrangements that were capable of commanding consensus, but only after it had caused considerable losses in terms of power of attraction and effectiveness.
25. The alliance was badly prepared in terms of its political programme, and it lasted only a short time. It was terminated by the SPD on tactical grounds, a few weeks before new elections were held in autumn 1990.
26. A number of prominent adherents of 'eco-socialism' (like Jürgen Reents and Michael Stamm) acted as electoral advisers or press spokespersons for the PDS, the party which succeeded the official East German SED and currently has 17 members in the Bundestag. The radical ecologists, for their part, are seeking to establish an organisation engaged chiefly in extra-parliamentary work.
27. Speechlessness seems to have become the hallmark of Green politics in relation to the fundamental upheavals in Europe. Neither the complex processes of transformation in the new eastern European democracies, nor the nationality disputes that are erupting at every turn, nor even the bloody civil war between Serbs and Croats has elicited a single clear comment from the diligent Euro-Greens in Brussels and Strasburg.
28. There are nine individuals from the east German Greens and citizens' movements sitting as MPs in the Bundestag, but because of their origins, the emphases of their individual interests, and the looseness of their links with the Green Party, they are not perceived as representing the west German Greens.
29. In the examples cited above, a number of people felt offended: a) those who thought

Germany had a useful role to play in the transformation of NATO; b) those who thought women's choice of life-style should be left to women themselves to decide; c) those who recognised in the desire for a united Germany the needs of people who felt frustrated and had suffered years of disadvantage; and d) those who realised that Iraki-cum-German poison-gas represented a real threat to the Israeli population.

30. e.g. on multiple causality, autopoietic self-referential processes, paradoxal emergence phenomena, perverse effects of purposive action, and evolutionary selection mechanisms.