Chapter 1

Who Are the Greens?

On 22 March 1983 newspapers around the world published photographs of a new political force entering history. Twenty-seven recently elected parliamentarians from the Green party took their seats in West Germany’s national assembly, the Bundestag, forming a river of colorful sweaters, shirts, and dresses that flowed down the middle of the chamber between the tiers of black-and-white-suited politicians of the conservative Christian Democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union, CDU) on one side and the liberal-left Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD) on the other. The new parliamentarians had refused to be seated to the left of the Social Democrats, whose party consists of a left wing as well as the dominant liberal wing. In calling for an ecological, nonviolent, nonexploitative society, the Greens (die Grünen) transcend the linear span of left-to-right.

The Greens consider themselves the political voice of the citizens’ movements, that is, ecology, anti-nuclear-power, peace, feminist, and others. Most members of the Green party are also
activists in one or more of those movements, and this diverse orientation is reflected in loose and overlapping alignments within the party, although there are no actual factions based on ideology.

"Visionary/holistic Greens" have as their central concern and guiding principle the evolution of a new society based on ways of thinking and being that reflect the interconnected nature of all phenomena. They want people to move beyond the mechanistic world view that has dominated Western thinking for the past three hundred years to a fuller understanding of the subtle relationships and dynamic flux that comprise life on Earth. They call for more sensible, postpatriarchal ways of interacting with nature, individuals, groups, and other countries. They question what the economy should produce in addition to how and how much. These people are sometimes called the "moral" or "ideological Greens." They are concerned with inner development as well as a comprehensive politics.

Eco-Greens, or "green Greens," focus their efforts primarily on protecting the natural world from toxic wastes, radiation, air pollution, and other hazards, as well as promoting "ecodevelopment," that is, the use of renewable resource technologies for energy and industry. Ecological motivation has been central to the growth of the Green party and its political successes. This cluster includes the "value conservatives," who see the need for far-reaching changes in many government policies but insist on preserving traditional values. The value conservatives often live in rural areas and are somewhat comparable to the Republican populists in the United States today. Also in this cluster are the "ecological reformists," who come from a liberal background.

"Peace-movement Greens" concentrate primarily on garnering public support for the Green party's peace program, working closely with the larger West German peace movement, and networking with peace activists in other countries. Many of these people came into the Greens from the antimissile movement, that is, the activism aimed specifically at halting deployment of the 108 Pershing II missiles and the 96 cruise missiles in West Germany as part of the NATO defense system. However, the peace proposals of the Greens extend far beyond this one issue; they include bloc-free thinking, phases of demilitarization, social defense, and a regionalized global community.

Greens who entered the Green party from various Communist groups, especially the Communist Alliance (Kom


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nuisterischer Bund or KB) in Hamburg, united to form the numerically small "Group Z" within the Green party. Although Group Z members are in frequent contact with one another, they have not met formally since 1982 and are now a loosely defined network of socialist colleagues. These people emphasize the needs of workers in industrial cities and call for effecting social change by working with trade unions although ironically many leftist trade unionists reject these "red Greens" as having become too ecologically oriented at the expense of class struggle and unqualified economic growth.

Usually the Greens are classified according to their position on political strategy. They have drawn some votes from the Christian Democrats and are expected to increase that trend as more conservatives realize that the corporate interests of the CDU often conflict with their own desires for an unpolluted environment and a community-based economy. It is the Social Democrats, however, with whom the Greens are more compatible, although there are numerous points of departure in their programs. The question that is continually debated among the Greens is whether their small party of 30,000 members should form a coalition government with the Social Democrats. Those Greens who feel that the integrity of their positions would be compromised and eventually destroyed by a general coalition are called the "fundamentalists" or simply Fundis. Those who favor a coalition, usually with specific conditions, call themselves the "realists," or Reals. These two camps comprise the primary alignments in the Green party today, but many Greens, especially Green women, have not affiliated with either side.

The ages of Green party members fall mainly between twenty and forty-five. We were told that the West Germans who are now over sixty are the "economic-miracle generation," who rebuilt their country from the postwar rubble into affluence. They and their children feel they have been served well by the industrial and political mechanisms of modern "progress" and are not interested in questioning its problematic aspects. However, the Greens do attract some members from the over-sixty-five
group specifically because they remember life before heavy pollution, industrially processed food, dying forests, and nuclear missiles. The Greens are not starry-eyed romantics attempting to turn back the clock, but the older Greens’ experiences of a prewar childhood enable them to gauge environmental damage and agree with the call for an ecologically wise society.

As we traveled around West Germany talking with Green party officials and legislators in villages, university towns, suburbs, and cities, we noticed a refreshing contrast to political parties in the United States: the Green party is not run by lawyers! Just imagine. The broad range of occupations represented by the Green parliamentarians in the Bundestag (see Preface) is typical of all their elected officials. For example, the Greens in the state legislature of Hesse consisted in 1983 of four teachers, four sociologists, two social workers, a minister, a nurse who was formerly a nun, a former priest, a psychologist, a translator, a writer, a salesman — and one lawyer. (This group of eighteen includes the nine legislators and their nine successors under the Greens’ rotation system, which we explain in Chapter 2.) The Green party’s executive committee in that state was comprised of two university students, a teacher, a business consultant, a sales trainee, and a social worker. The Green city council members in the university town of Freiburg consist of two homemakers, one of whom is a grandmother and formerly a farmer; an architect; and a sociologist. The profession with the largest representation in the Greens is probably teaching, and religious studies was often cited as the area of specialization among Green teachers. In addition to their wide range of occupations, the warmth, humor, and spontaneity of the Greens’ style make them unique in West German politics.

Throughout this book we introduce dozens of Green activists, but the one who is best known in America is Petra Kelly. In 1983 she made two trips here, along with other Greens, and presented Green political positions on nationally broadcast television programs: “Meet the Press,” “The Today Show,” and “The MacNeil-Lehrer Report.” In addition, she accepted a long-standing invitation to address the Foreign Relations Council in New York and the National War College in Washington, D.C., as well as delivering numerous lectures on campuses, at conferences, and for peace groups’ fundraising events in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In Philadelphia she was presented with the Woman of the Year Award by the Women’s Strike for Peace. Kelly has been profiled in many American newspapers and magazines as the Green leader with the American connection: her stepfather is a retired U.S. Army officer, and the family lived in Georgia and Virginia while she attended high school and then earned a degree from American University’s School of International Service in Washington.

Petra Karin Kelly was born of German parents in Bavaria in 1947. After their divorce she was raised by her mother and grandmother and spent six years in a convent school. Although her parents and half-brother now live in Virginia, Kelly’s grandmother has remained in Nuremberg and the two are very close. Kelly’s half-sister died at age ten from cancer in one eye, and Kelly feels her death was the result of excessive radiation during treatments in the late 1960s which caused her to lose her nose and nearly an ear. Kelly subsequently founded and chairs the Grace P. Kelly Association for the Support of Cancer Research in Children, a European group that studies the relationship between children’s cancer and environmental factors, especially radiation.

During her college years in Washington, Kelly worked in the presidential campaign of Robert Kennedy and became friends with Hubert Humphrey. She was also drawn to the civil rights movement and the tactics of nonviolent civil disobedience called for by Martin Luther King. By the time she returned to Europe in 1970 Kelly had been involved for years in the antiwar movement and had also been influenced by the feminist movement. She earned a Master of Arts degree in political science from the University of Amsterdam before taking the position of administrator in European health and social policy questions with the European Economic Community (the Common Market) in Brussels. Kelly held that post from 1972 until her election to the Bundestag, which necessitated countless all-night commutes to various cities in West Germany for her central participation in founding the Greens and achieving their electoral victories.

It was during her years at the European Economic Community that Kelly began to develop a systemic, or new-paradigm,
mode of analyzing societal problems. Kelly joined the Social Democratic party—where she encountered “so many men who knew so little”—and became involved with the Union of German Ecological Citizens’ Groups (Bundesverband der Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz or BBL), which promoted ecological consciousness on a large scale and was the first organization to structure a grassroots movement. Throughout the 1970s she lectured in Japan and Australia as well as Europe on antinuclear and feminist issues. Like so many others who felt the need for a new politics, Kelly left the Social Democrats at the beginning of 1979; however, unlike other people she sent a personal letter to the Chancellor and head of the party, Helmut Schmidt, informing him of her departure.

Many journalists who describe Kelly compare her to Joan of Arc. They note her short, sandy hair and attractive features, her deep engagement, her urgent speech... and her air of a martyr. They say she is humorless and driven. She does indeed seem almost possessed at moments when she brilliantly condenses complicated Green political positions into the tight constraints of an interview, gazing over the dark circles of fatigue that always rim her eyes and speaking at such a clip that the need for breathing seems hardly indulged. Yet there is another side to her: warm, caring, and laughing easily. We saw these traits during the times she invited us to spend with her in Bonn and when she passed through San Francisco on her lecture tours in September 1983 and October 1984.

When we began researching this book, we wondered about the paradox of the role of Petra Kelly and the Greens’ rejection of the idea of strong, charismatic leaders. The answer, we discovered to our surprise, is that Kelly is appreciated very little within the Greens. The major complaint is that she is too enamored of personal publicity. “But if she didn’t give the interviews,” we pointed out, “Americans and others would have learned nothing about the Greens except through the often sensationalist and inaccurate media coverage. Don’t you see her interviews and first-rate performances on news programs as being good for the Greens?” Shrugs. She could share the spotlight more, they countered. That may be true, but whether she does or not will not exempt her from the ill will often directed toward women in public positions of power: resentment from men and jealousy from women. A national conference of Green women in June 1983 resolved that Kelly is “not really feminist, only when it suits her purposes.” Recalling all the strong feminist positions she has expounded in her writings, her interviews, her speeches, and her parliamentary work, we asked if even one person in the hall had stood up to defend her. No, we were told, no one did.

“Petra Kelly’s deepest layer seems to be an extremely ambitious Catholicism, although not in an ecclesiastical sense,” we were informed by Rudolf Bahro. The context of Bahro’s statement is that he was raised on the Lutheran turf of northern Germany and is a great admirer of Luther. Moreover, he himself is no stranger to ambition, having produced a stream of lectures and articles since leaving East Germany, as we subsequently discuss. Except for that apparently irresistible Protestant jibe, however, Bahro does not speak ill of Kelly and professes “a deep loyalty” to her. In that, he is quite unusual among the men in the Greens who come from a leftist background. Many of them consider Kelly an irritation for two reasons: Her heroes are Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and the Berrigan brothers rather than Marx, and she includes spiritual values in politics. One of the Green parliamentarians who was formerly a Communist told us that the Bundestag is not the proper place for Kelly specifically because she has “a certain religious tendency in her politics” and therefore is not pragmatic enough. We found that a rather astounding position since many of the Greens told us of their sense of a spiritual dimension to Green politics and since Kelly’s pragmatism is wanting only from a Marxist perspective. “To push her out of the forum of power because you don’t believe there is such a thing as the spiritual dimension in life would be an ideological purge,” we responded. He then asserted that Petra is someone who can “rouse the masses” but that such talent is not necessarily suitable for the Bundestag. Another man told us simply, “While it is probably true that the Green party is still too patriarchal, it may also be too Petra-archival.”

Some Greens complained that Kelly is “too individualistic” and rigidly demanding. More common, though, was talk of her allegedly spending all of her time giving interviews. In fact, she
rejets most requests for interviews and spends most of her time, along with four assistants, trying to deal with the two hundred letters per day she usually receives—some addressed merely “Petra Kelly, Germany”—and doing peace work and mobilization on behalf of the Greens. The resentment toward Kelly is nearly relentless, but many Greens suggested that certain of her traits exacerbate the friction: she is considered a high-strung genius, a loner, an impatient theoretician, a bearer of the world’s burdens who is always embroiled in several crisis situations simultaneously.

Perhaps the Greens’ “Petra paradox” can best be summarized by juxtaposing Kelly’s own perception—“I have no personal life. I am almost married to the Greens”—with a typical response from a member of the Greens’ national executive committee: “Petra Kelly was very important in the formative stages of the party because charismatic personalities are necessary to create stability and to establish the new ideas in the public’s consciousness. However, that function is no longer needed.”

How the Greens address the tensions between Kelly and other key members will be one of the most intriguing internal dynamics to watch over the next few years. She is certainly as frustrated with the party as it is with her. Will the Greens find a meaningful role for someone with such unique talents and widespread public appeal even though she can be difficult to work with—or will the party forfeit her contributions?

The cultural and political forces that led to the formation of the Green party have been the subject of much speculation in this country. Several publications have asserted that forming Green-type movements is simply something German youth do every few decades. They compare the Greens to the romantic Wandervögel of the late nineteenth century and even to the Nazi youth groups, who were taught that nature—within German borders—is sacred. A second common assumption is that the Greens have their roots “in the counterculture of the 1960s” (Los Angeles Times, 18 September 1983). That is a projection of the American experience. While Amsterdam, London, and San Francisco were inundated with the colors, music, flowers, blind trust (of people under thirty!), and surging optimism of the hippies, West Ger-

man youth were enmeshed in the angry, Marxist-dominated student revolt of 1968 and its aftermath. It is true that one can connect certain aspects of Green politics to strains in German culture such as regionalism and a romantic love of nature. However, the Greens must be understood as a postwar phenomenon because their roots, their context, and their memories lie on this side of the great trauma that severed the continuity of the German experience: the Nazi era.

The majority of the Greens were born during the fifteen years following World War II. The collapse of the “thousand-year Reich,” which fortunately lasted “only” for twelve, destroyed all the ideologies and values that had guided the culture, leaving a void and a shocked aftermath. History and tradition were put under the carpet because they could no longer be shown—not to other countries, not to other people, not to one’s own children. Adults threw themselves into the task of rebuilding an industrialized Germany and reflected little on the Holocaust. Their children grew up in a world without a past, knowing only that their parents had done something wrong.

By the 1960s a youth rebellion had erupted to challenge the older economic miracle (Wirtschaftswunder) generation, which had lost its authority because of its Nazi past. The young people censured their parents for their cooperation during the Nazi regime, and they chided them for their obsession with material accumulation. They grew up hypercritical, resisting every attempt to ideologize or moralize or mystify their social context and development. They felt betrayed because the continuity of their tradition and their existence as a people had been broken by their parents’ generation, which had allowed the Third Reich to prevail. The “angry young Germans,” as they became known, were rebels with a cause.

In school these young people were educated to be objective, critical, and skeptical. Official policy supported a version of democratization that provoked students to distrust authorities, social institutions, and hierarchical ordering. Only by critiquing everything was it believed that a nightmare like the Nazi regime could never happen again. The generational conflict grew more intense as the students identified their parents’ characteristics as products of Nazi socialization: to be dutiful, tidy, obedient, and
production-oriented. When these postwar children reached the universities in the mid-1960s, they were brimming with revolutionary fervor looking for a form.

The German university system they encountered was perhaps the only institution that had resisted the postwar democratization. It consisted of an authoritarian hierarchy of 5,000 full professors nationwide, accorded great esteem by the public, and making every possible decision over the pyramid of faculty underlings and, below them, the 300,000 students. The students demanded democratic reforms in that elitist system. As the momentum of their protests gathered, they often disrupted lectures and faculty meetings. Some protesters shocked the German public by throwing eggs, tomatoes, and paint at the professors. During the upheavals, many of the students experimented with self-organized learning in collective structures and other new forms.

Like the student movement in the United States during those years (which had begun with the Civil Rights movement and then opposition to the Vietnam War), the German student rebellion eventually became dominated by Marxist thinking; it also maintained close ties with the French student revolt of May 1968. Also important was the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. The Surrealist- and Dada-oriented currents in West Berlin were influential, where the “transformation of everyday life” as a means of overcoming authoritarian socialization and “one-dimensionality” was combined with carnivalesque and “fun guerilla” protests. These often focused around the innovative Kommune 1. The mainstream of the German New Left lay in the German Socialist Federation, S.D.S. The key figure was Rudi Dutschke, an East German émigré who was later to play an important role in the early stages of the Greens. Dutschke articulated an eclectic, nondogmatic, visionary Marxism influenced by his friend Ernest Bloch, the philosopher of hope and utopia.

After 1969 the Marxist/student movement splintered into dozens of Communist groups, or K-Gruppen, which can be categorized as either the “dogmatic left” (adhering to the Communist party lines of the Soviet Union, China, or Albania) or the “nondogmatic left” (unaffiliated and less doctrinaire Marxists). Related to the latter are the Spontis, that is, spontaneous move-
protest movements were apolitical or politically moderate. They had become materially comfortable enough to pause and question the ongoing destruction they saw around them.

We were told by many Greens that the ecological concerns being formulated during those years were given a focus by the widely read Limits to Growth, published by the Club of Rome (Universe Books, 1974), and later by Ein Planet wird geplündert (A Planet is Plundered, Fischer Verlag, 1978) by Herbert Gruhl, a conservative politician who subsequently became a founder of the Greens. Also popular were Ivan Illich's books and his articles on institutions. By the late 1970s, many Marxist groups had begun to work with the citizens' movements primarily because the Marxist women convinced the men that people's everyday concerns are as valid as abstract rationalism. The major lesson in the extremely heterogeneous citizens' movements was the importance of tolerance and compromise and the possibility of unifying diverse perspectives, a process that continues today within the Greens.

By the mid-1970s another movement arose that was related to the student protests, the citizens' movements, and the "inner migration" phenomenon: the alternative movement. Very much influenced by the counterculture in the United States and England, these people focus on addressing the practical needs of an alternative culture, for example, appropriate technology, renewable-resource energy systems, organic agriculture, and holistic healthcare. They were particularly inspired by E.F. Schumacher's Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered (Harper & Row, 1973) and Ernst Callenbach's novel Ecotopia (Bantam Books, 1977). More than 4,000 of them joined the Self-Help Network, a fund started in Berlin in 1978 to support "alternative development." Members paid 14 Deutschmarks (about $5.60) per month, which resulted in funding of nearly 50,000 DM per month that was distributed by a board of directors to various projects. The alternative movement was roundly attacked during its early years by the radical left as being "individualistic utopianism," but as more and more people saw the need for developing real alternatives to what they were protesting against, the combination of political activism and alternative projects became accepted. The alternative movement fostered multiple developments with similar intentions, rejecting forced adherence to any one dogmatic line of thought, a mode of politics they associate with both the Nazis and the Marxist/student protests. They emphasize the connection between inner power, or spiritual strength, and political power. Moreover, they have reclaimed the term utopia, as one of their popular sayings demonstrates: "If you don't dare to dream, you have no power to fight."

By 1978 all the elements that formed the Green movement were in place. A small group of liberal and conservative ecologists, the Action Committee of Independent Germans (Aktionsgemeinschaft unabhängiger Deutscher, AÜD) had been advocating a number of Green positions such as environmental protection and nonalignment for West Germany since 1973, when they had published their first program, based on the American Declaration of Independence. August Hausleiter and other leaders of the AÜD contacted Herbert Gruhl, author of A Planet Is Plundered and then a Christian Democrat parliamentarian in the Bundestag, urging him to leave the CDU and join them. Instead, Gruhl decided to form his own group, Green Action Future. It was he who created the slogan "We are neither left nor right, we are in front." During 1978 local groups of ecologists in the states of Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Schleswig-Holstein ran Green electoral lists for the legislatures, but did not win the five percent of the vote necessary for representation.

A decision was made by Gruhl and the AÜD people to form a Green association in order to run candidates for election to the European Parliament, the Common Market's political organization, in June 1979 and thereby acquire enough money to build a Green party. (West German law awards political parties—and political associations in local or European elections—3.5 DM [$1.40] for every vote received.) They contacted two members of the executive committee of the BBU, the umbrella organization of anti-nuclear-power and other ecological groups: Petra Kelly and Roland Vogt. Many members of the BBU vociferously opposed the proposal to enter electoral politics because they feared cooption and corruption. Rather than responding with a groundswell of enthusiasm among those citizen groups for a new party, the grassroots were more or less dragged into the earliest stage of the Green party by Kelly and Vogt, who were expelled
Throughout 1979, the FPA-The Greens gained members from various citizens' movements, not only ecological but also feminist and Third World activists. The dogmatic left (Marxists affiliated with one of the Communist parties) and many people in the looser nondogmatic left had scorned the Green association before the European Parliament election, but after its promising showing they reconsidered. They mostly kept their distance until after the Green congress in Offenbach in November. Over Gruhl’s objections the assembly was addressed by both Rudi Dutschke and Rudolf Bahro, who had just been released from an East German prison to which he had been confined for writing a critical book, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* (Shacken Books, 1981). Around that time many of the K-groups were dissolved, their members going either into the Greens or the Alternative Lists (AL). The Alternative Lists, and also the Multicolored Lists (named for the multiplicity of groups), are usually local Marxist-oriented organizations that agree that environmental activism is necessary but maintain labor issues as their top priority. In certain cities the AL eventually worked with the Greens; however, these alliances experienced schisms during 1983.

The Green party held its constitutional convention in Karlsruhe in January 1980. The delegates numbered 1,004, each representing ten members at the local level. The new party temporarily kept the executive committee from FPA-The Greens, whose speakers were Gruhl, Haussleiter, and Helmut Neddernmeyer. The weekend congress was racked by raging disagreements, and it appeared by Sunday afternoon that they would fail to achieve a constitution. Lukas Beckmann recalled for us that many delegates had to leave at 4:45 P.M. in order to catch their train, so he and some others quietly prevailed upon the janitor of the assembly hall to stop the clock several times. “I believe the constitution was approved at about 5:30,” he told us with a wry smile in between puffs on his pipe. Beckmann is a tall, handsome blond whose unflappable calmness made him seem the eye of the Green hurricane when he held the job of general manager of the national party.

The Green party assembled delegates for the second time in Saarbrücken in March 1980. They elected a new executive committee to staggered two-year terms; the speakers were Haussleiter
(later replaced by Dieter Burgmann), Kelly, and Norbert Mann (later replaced by Manon Maren-Grisebach). The major business was to approve the forty-six-page Federal Program, which involved very heated arguments over the abortion issue, social issues, and withdrawal from NATO.

Delegates assembled for the third time in Dortmund in June and decided to participate in the Bundestag election in October, but won only 1.5 percent of the national vote. The Greens did win representation, however, on many town councils, following the first such victory in Bremen, in 1979, which received a great deal of attention in the national media. They then won seats in the legislatures of Baden-Württemberg in March 1980, Berlin (where they ran as members of the AL) in May 1981, Lower Saxony in March 1982, and Hesse in September 1982. Even in the very conservative state of Bavaria the Greens achieved a near miss of 4.6 percent in the October 1982 election. (Five percent of the total vote is necessary for representation.) In these campaigns they incorporated comprehensive strategies for peace into their program for an ecological society. Also in 1982, Grüne Zeiten (Green Times: Politics for a Future Worth Living) by Wolf-Dieter and Connie Hasenclever, two Greens who had been involved from the beginning of the party, brought the story of the Greens to a wide audience.

November or December was selected as the time for the Greens’ annual delegates’ congress; they also call special issue assemblies. In 1982 their congress was held in Hagen and became known for the Frauenprotest (women’s protest), in which women who had prepared position papers on the evolving economic program presented them as a separate group because they said they had not been allowed to incorporate them in the various working groups. There was so much disagreement over the economic program that only a two-page declaration was approved. This became the basis for continuing work at the assembly in Sindelfingen in January 1983, where a full thirty-nine-page program was approved—after much struggle. The Hagen congress also voted to replace Petra Kelly and Dieter Burgmann as speakers with Wilhelm Knabe and Rainer Trampert.

After Sindelfingen the Greens turned their attention to the Bundestag election of 6 March 1983. They ran some TV spots, participated in televised discussions, printed about a dozen colorful posters, set up information tables in town squares, and addressed local groups. But the most popular part of their campaign was the “Green Caterpillar,” a bus that brought well-known German rock and New Wave musicians and singers to benefit concerts, featuring brief speeches by Green candidates and frequent satires of traditional German political rallies wherein the musicians would don loden hats, pick up tubas, and howl the West German national anthem. The campaign cost the Greens approximately $600,000, which was more than covered by the $3.2 million they received for the two million votes they won.

The results of the election stunned millions of West Germans. Not only did the tiny Green party capture 5.6 percent of the vote to win a voice in the Bundestag, but Helmut Kohl and his Christian Democrats won a landslide victory that dethroned the long-reigning Social Democrats in the federal government as well as in many cities that had had an SPD government throughout almost the entire postwar period. The electorate told pollsters that they voted for the conservatives mainly because they thought Kohl’s people would be more able than Hans-Jochen Vogel’s to remedy the economic crisis. However, the failure of confidence in the Social Democrats was not limited to economics. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the left had been associated with fresh insights and innovative approaches. With the breakdown of the economic miracle, Schmidt’s decision in December 1979 to deploy even more nuclear missiles, the SPD support of centralization in schools and district government, their inability to address the concerns of the citizens’ movements, and their growth-at-any-cost policies, it became apparent that the left no longer comprised the cutting edge of intellectual and political life. Many observers feel that role is being earned by the Greens, who demonstrate again and again that the fine clothes draping the emperor (old-paradigm politics) are merely illusions.

Among the more complicated dynamics within the Green party is the role of the left. The majority of Greens who came from a leftist background had been introduced to Marxist thought during their university years and joined nondogmatic-left
groups or had independently identified themselves as leftists. As
the Marxist influence in the universities waned around 1976,
numerous groups within the left intensified self-critical discus-
sions about their world view, their assumptions, and their ac-
tions. They came to admit that their politics had ignored many
vital and compelling issues raised by the ecology, feminist,*
and alternative movements. A crisis developed within the K-
groups, that is, Communist groups, concerning their traditional ac-
teptance of power politics: Were they correct in perceiving every
movement as a movement against the state, in which tight organi-
zation was the only concern and content was irrelevant? More-
over, they had to acknowledge that the socialist commandeering
of the power structures in Eastern Europe had not transformed
society in a positive way.

The process of moving from leftist groups or identities in-
to Green politics was extremely difficult for some people,
especially those from the dogmatic K-groups. Lukas Beckmann
recalled that many of them joined the Green party, then left, then
rejoined, and that some almost had psychological breakdowns
because Green political philosophy required them to change
their deeply held convictions about the relationship of the indi-
vidual to the state. By late 1979, however, when the left entered
the Greens in substantial numbers, most of them were sincere-
ly seeking a new politics and have since become "transformed,"
as we were often told. The experience of Marieluise Beck-
Oberdorf, one of the three speakers for the Greens in the
Bundestag, is typical:

I grew up in a middle-class household and was educated as a Protestant
with corresponding social and ethical principles. In the student move-
ment I came in contact with Marxist ideas, which I found tremendous-
ly fascinating at first. Then I left that environment and began to work
in the world, and now things look different to me. During the past ten
years, I have learned to think. I have a different world view now, and so
do many others.

*The West German feminist movement grew out of the student protests of 1968,
so until the mid-1970s much of it had a Marxist orientation. We were told by
many West German women that the best feminist analysis had come from the
United States because it was not limited to parameters of class struggle.

These people work hard in the party and legislative bodies for
Green ideals and are completely accepted by the original Greens.
The antagonism between the left, especially Greens from the
dogmatic left, and the rest of the Greens was so intense dur-
ing the early stages of the party that many Greens laughed when
we asked about the current factions: "There are no factions now
compared to those days!" The left eventually found its place in
the party and has made many positive contributions. It is often
said that the leftists contributed political strategy to Green con-
tent (although some Greens point out that die Grünen received 32
percent of the national vote in June 1979 without the radical left
and only 15 percent of the national vote in October 1980 after
the left had joined the party). Wilhelm Knabe, a gentlemanly,
gray-haired ecologist and one of the three speakers for the na-
tional Green party, told us what the "Eco-Greens" had learned
from the leftist Greens:

From a practical point of view, the chief lesson for the ecologists was
organizing—how to organize a conference, a demonstration, or a
boycott. A great deal was learned in that area. They also emphasized
the role of capital in environmental destruction. And from us they
learned that external relationships between people and nature have
a great effect, that not everything can be explained by internal, societal
forces. In addition, I think many people from the K-groups found it
a relief—in fact, a pure psychological release—to be able to be for
something.

Joachim Müller, a Green economist in the Bundestag who
describes himself as a post-Marxist, also spoke of the contribu-
tions of the left, but at the same time pointed out the necessary
role of value conservatives: "If you want to build up something
new in Germany without the protection function of the value
conservatives, discrimination and suppression come very quickly.
With the value conservatives included we are protected; they
simply can't outlaw poodle owners. Our success lies in this com-
bination, this integration."

In the summer of 1983 it was apparent that tensions still ex-
isted between those party members proposing "radically Green"
positions and those who had come from a dogmatic-left back-
ground. We often asked our interviewees, as we traveled around
West Germany, whether a particular goal or strategy they had described was embraced by everyone in this heterogeneous party: "Does everyone in the Greens support nonviolence absolutely?" we asked. "Yes...except certain Marxist-oriented Greens." "Does everyone in the Greens see the need for the new kind of science and technology you have outlined?" "Yes...except certain Marxist-oriented Greens." "Does everyone in the Greens agree that your economic focus should be small-scale, worker-owned businesses?" "Yes...except certain Marxist-oriented Greens." Finally, we traveled to Hamburg and interviewed the three best known Group-Z Greens: Thomas Ebermann, Jürgen Reents, and Rainer Trampert. All three men are tall with blondish hair, Reents and Trampert resembling each other slightly, rather like curly-haired cousins.

When we told the three men that their names came up often in conversations with Greens around West Germany, they responded good-naturedly. The gist of our discussions with them on nonviolence is presented in Chapter 2. We also asked Reents whether they really have relinquished the Marxist goal of ever-increasing industrial production. He explained that they want the Greens to understand that advocating no growth is an inadequate position unless they examine which class benefits from it. We asked him about the standard Marxist vision of giving workers more leisure time so they can create art, which is expressed in the Marxist-oriented section of the party's economic program: "If you're serious about your brief mention of nonexistence division of labor, why don't you propose mechanisms for encouraging workers to put that leisure time into wiping babies' bottoms, taking care of invalid grandparents, and scrubbing toilets?" we asked. He replied, "I would say that this is a fully justified critique of the traditional unionist and Social Democratic position. What is right about the new ecology concept is that it addresses changing not only the material conditions but also the cultural and psychological conditions of society. However, our critique of the narrow ecological tendency is that the material question is being eclipsed."

We asked Trampert about the charge that the Marxist-oriented Greens are limited to an economics of "workerism," believing the only way to transform society is through the trade unions. "Some Greens say unions are part of the industrial bloc," he responded, "and hence adversaries. Others, like us, say that if we want to avoid a permanent societal schism we must find a convergence. This means we also have to enter the unions and work within them." He pointed out that not everyone will be able to work in small-scale businesses and that in some cases large-scale factories are more efficient. He also seemed not to take the Green ideal of worker-owned small businesses seriously, giving an example of a failed pub where friends had expected the owners to sell drinks cheaply. Overall, we learned that the Hamburg Greens serve to prevent the rest of the party from being head-in-the-clouds theorists on certain issues.

Perhaps the most interesting visionary Green theorist is Rudolf Bahro, who evolved into post-Marxist politics all the way from the inner circles of the East German Communist Party. On the thirtieth anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, 6 October 1979, 20,000 criminals were released from prison under a general amnesty. Bahro was included because of public outcry from the West at his sentencing for writing *The Alternative in Eastern Europe.* Some people had discerned "a hidden Green" in his book, and when he moved to West Germany he was warmly welcomed by the nondogmatic leftists who were part of FPA-The Greens. Only a few weeks later he was a keynote speaker at the Green association's assembly at Offenbach, where he surprised the radical-left Greens by stating, "In our own civilization Christ was incontestably the first teacher of our ultimate goal, the first teacher of the general emancipation of humanity." He has continued to surprise and confound the left—and to inspire the majority of the party—with statements such as: "The Greens are to Marx and Marxism what Einstein was to Newton and Newtonian physics—in short, a qualitative transformation of a worthwhile system whose time, however, is up." Of the tensions within the Greens he told us: "Although no one any longer contends that Marx was correct in a general sense, a big problem within the Greens is that we are still operating with the remains of Marxism, legitimizing things in terms of the old tradition."

Bahro is a charming combination of insight, originality, and innocence, seeming rather like a middle-aged, bespectacled schoolboy with soft-spoken, almost impish ways about him. We
were surprised, however, to see his mild-mannered demeanor give way to a style of public speaking that can become quite animated and intense. Bahro has framed influential post-Marxist arguments—which are different from antagonistic anti-Marxist positions, he emphasizes—in a number of areas, although some are judged too impractical even by his admirers. Several of his lectures have been collected in a book titled *Socialism and Survival* (London: Heretic Books, 1982). In his first American lecture tour, in September 1983, Bahro attracted leftist audiences who often went home with puzzled or angry expressions. A journalist in *The Guardian*, an American leftist newspaper, reported on several lectures and concluded that the choice is “socialism or Bahro.”

Ultimately, the role of the left within the Green party may be described most accurately with the joke we heard frequently: “Two Greens, two opinions.” However, the left evokes three general categories of responses. The Group-Z Greens maintain that they are contributing pragmatic economics and attention to workers in industrial cities. Even though they are at odds with the majority of Greens on several issues, the Group-Z Greens emphatically feel that they are core members of the party; and they are accepted as such. Thomas Ebermann told us “I think those who define themselves as ‘the real Greens’ make a mistake and are dishonest. The Greens are that spectrum that has come together, and no one can say he is the authentic Green.”

A second view, held by some portions of the party, is that the Group-Z Greens hinder the evolution of Green politics, as Roland Vogt explained: “The materialist-leftist approach is destructive within the Greens. Whenever the visionary or spiritual people make a proposal, the Group-Z Greens neutralize it as effectively as acid.” Because of the Marxist-oriented Greens, Gruhl left the party in late 1980, as did many members in the state of Schleswig-Holstein (where a takeover by former-Communist Greens was bitterly resented) and in the city-state of Bremen. Gruhl’s attempts to form a coalition among those former Greens failed, and he then founded a small organization, the Ecological Democratic Party. (However, tensions between the Group-Z Greens and the rest of the party are much less now than in the early days, as Vogt and others agree.)

A third view is represented by August Haussleiter, who often plays the role of mediator within the party:

My former colleagues in the Christian Social Union (the Bavarian counterpart of the conservative Christian Democrat Union) often say to me, “We have underestimated the Greens. Green thinking is as sharp as a knife; and we never expected that.” This results from our having conflicts between the left and the rest of the party and going through the conflict. The arguments with them, in short, are good training and they force us to think about certain issues.

These three views of the left were historically important in the Green party but are overshadowed today by the alignment of *Fundis* versus *Reals*. The current situation brings to mind the American saying: “Politics makes strange bedfellows.” Group-Z Greens, generally known since 1985 as the “eco-socialists,” now work together with visionary/holistic Greens as *Fundis*. In the summer of 1983, when we conducted our interviews, no one could have guessed such a development.

As we traveled the Green network around West Germany, we became fascinated with the endless diversity of the citizens involved. “What is the glue that holds the Green party together?” we asked again and again. The most disarming reply came from Helmut Lippelt, a historian and Green state legislator in Lower Saxony: “Success.” He then became serious and reflected, as the others had, on the primary unifying focus: “We are fighting for survival.” Green politics have appealed to so many West Germans because theirs is a densely populated, heavily industrialized nation where the limits to growth are visible at every turn, where the madness of nuclear deterrence has made them prime candidates for thermonuclear holocaust, and where the level of affluence allows “big picture” reflection. They are fighting to save the natural world and humankind, not through force but by awakening the consciousness that a new orientation for society is imperative. When accused by old-paradigm politicians of being dreamers, the Greens respond: “Who is realistic about the future and who is naive?”