

FUNDAMENTALISM OR REALISM: THE FUTURE OF THE GREENS IN WEST GERMAN POLITICS

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The German Green Party is at a critical juncture in its political development. With enough political weight to influence elections, it faces a choice between its practice of total opposition to the established system or collaboration with that system to bring about change. In her article, Catherine B. Ševčenko compares the present dilemma of the Greens to that of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) at the turn of the century. Arguing that both parties have represented anti-establishment movements searching for a utopian ideal, she states that the path chosen by the SPD offers the Greens a model for political survival. In the end the SPD compromised its ideals and recognized political reality, and Ms. Ševčenko concludes that the Greens must also balance principle and pragmatism if they are to survive as a political party.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Green Party first emerged in West German politics in the late 1970s, and its subsequent rise to national prominence was swift. In October 1979 the Green/Alternative List barely squeaked into the Bremen parliament with just over the 5 percent of the vote required for entrance into government; the following spring the party won six seats in the Baden-Wurtemberg parliament; and, despite a disappointing 1.5 percent showing in the national elections in 1980, it had managed to find a place in the local governments of West Berlin, Lower Saxony and Hamburg by June 1982. After the national government led by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt fell in October 1982, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Chancellor Helmut Kohl called an election in March 1983 to consolidate his party's power. In it the Greens won twenty-six seats, with 5.6 percent

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of the popular vote.¹ After this election the popularity of the Greens grew steadily, as they capitalized on the disaffection of left wing Social Democratic Party (SPD) voters dismayed at the shift of their party toward the center. In particular, the many in the SPD opposed their party's agreement to station nuclear warheads in West Germany to counter the Soviet deployment of SS-20s. The weak leadership of Helmut Kohl, and the "Flick Affair," which revealed that politicians in all three of the main political parties had received illegal contributions from a large West German conglomerate, also added support for the Greens.

So long as the Greens could count on protest votes for entry into the legislature neither the contradictions in their doctrine nor the disagreements among their leaders posed any serious problem. But by 1985, when the controversy over the Pershing missiles and the Flick Affair had faded, voters began to scrutinize the Greens more closely. Whether the party survives that assessment will depend on whether its members can reconcile the essential contradictions in their principles and the resulting strife within their ranks. To do so they will have to find a balance between total opposition, on the one hand, and absorption into the established left, on the other, while still maintaining their position as the "uncompromising anti-party party."² The SPD, a party which the Greens regard as practically indistinguishable from the conservative CDU, faced the same dilemma at the turn of the century. Tracing the development of the SPD from 1890-1914, the period in which it modified its Marxist program in order to survive, sheds light on what might happen to the Greens as they struggle to establish themselves in West German politics.

II. IDEOLOGY AND PARTY PROGRAM

The party program drafted in 1983 provides a good summary of the Greens' original position. In it the Greens deplore the dire state of affairs in the German economy, environment, foreign affairs, and defense policy, and demand reforms to repair the situation. Reflecting the range of Green party membership, the proposed reforms range from the reasonable to the patently unrealistic. According to the platform, the aim of "environmental politics" is "to understand ourselves and our surroundings as a

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1. The percentage figures in this paragraph were taken from Wolfram Bickerich, ed., *SPD und Grüne: das neue Bündnis?* (Hamburg: Spiegel Buch/Rowohlt, 1985), p. 10. See also Robert Pfaltzgraff et al., *The Greens of West Germany* (Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1983), p. 96.
 2. Petra Kelly, *Um Hoffnung Kämpfen: Gewaltfrei in eine Grüne Zukunft* (Bornheim-Merten: Lamuv Verlag, 1983), p. 14. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

part of nature,"³ to harmonize society and the environment not only by banning atomic power and restructuring industry, but also by alleviating social and racial tensions. But before these changes can be made, the program suggests the central government must first be dismantled and its authority delegated to municipalities. A Green foreign policy would involve West Germany in a partnership with the Third World, in strengthening the United Nations, agitating for human rights, and abolishing nuclear weapons.

The program's economic analysis is based on a primitive Marxism: "the working man does not determine the pace of the machines, but these dictate his work and its tempo."⁴ Economic crisis, capital export and advances in technology have produced unemployment and fear among workers. According to the Greens the only way to reduce the growing numbers of unemployed — a situation particularly traumatic for the West Germans who had grown accustomed to full employment during the postwar "economic miracle" — is to abandon what is in any case a futile quest for economic growth. Pushing industrial capacity beyond its limitations could only destroy the environment and lead to political and economic catastrophe. The Greens' remedy is far-reaching reform that includes a guaranteed income, a 35-hour work week, generous unemployment compensation, early retirement, and a massive retaining program for those working in dying industries; the Greens would also resist consolidation of industry, and increase worker participation in management, through either consultation or the unlimited right to strike.

Too great a faith in economic growth is what keeps politicians from recasting economic policy in a form favorable to the environment and the worker, the Green's maintain and results in "unlimited growth in the use of energy which jumps over all natural borders and leads to the self-destruction of the ecological system."⁵ It has also led to the use of atomic power, which is not only risky in itself, but diverts resources from research into safer forms of energy. It is the ultimate symbol of the "dictatorship out of the wall socket"⁶ in which the state seeks to maintain its power through the control of energy. To end what they call the "march into the atomic state,"⁷ the Greens demand an immediate moratorium on the construction of new atomic power plants, the gradual dismantling of those already in operation, a policy of strict conservation, and intensive research into solar, wind, and water power. Saving the forests, cleaning

3. Die Grünen, *Das Bundesprogramm* (München: Verlag Die Grünen, 1983), p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

7. *Ibid.*

up the air, and introducing organic farming methods (which are labor intensive and therefore also aids to full employment) are also crucial, they say, to the restoration of the German ecological system. Decreased reliance on the car, will end the waste of land for highways and shopping centers; neighborhoods should again become self-sufficient villages.

Green foreign policy is "oriented toward the peaceful and supportive cooperation of mankind,"⁸ and their defense policy rests on passive resistance, which the Greens see as a way to attain security through political rather than military means. Consequently they call for unilateral disarmament, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Federal Republic, and the retooling of the military-industrial complex for peaceful industries. The social aspects of their program center on eradicating inequality based on education, class, gender and race, improving the status of women, and strengthening the family. They also advocate respect for "alternative lifestyles," and especially the protection of homosexuals from discrimination.

Since the 1983 program was the first attempt the Greens had ever made to formulate their principles, it did not include a number of points on which the party had not yet reached a consensus. The program's silence on those questions reflects the faith the Greens profess to have in the wisdom of the "Basis" (*Basis*) — their term for constituency — which is one of the canons of their party. The party program defines the Basis as the coalition of all *Alternativer*, a term that encompasses environmentalists, feminists, pacifists, aging revolutionaries, and every other group comprising the party's constituency.

The Greens who are in government must represent the Basis, particularly its opposition to the existing political structure, which "is leading us to the dead-end decision between atomic state or atomic war, Harrisburg [referring to the site of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant] or Hiroshima."⁹ The Basis formulates its demands for reform at local meetings, and then makes them known to the appropriate government representatives. The aim is "constant control of all officials, representatives and institutions."¹⁰ Since attendance at meetings is erratic at best and organization is anathema to the Greens, however, they cannot hope to channel the flow of opinion into any particular direction. They also do not have enough active members to cope with their recent successes at the polls. As a result, promotion through the ranks into local and regional parliaments is rapid, and turnover at all the lower levels is high. This

8. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

10. *Ibid.*

leaves the party structure without a sound foundation, a particularly ironic situation when one considers the emphasis they place on the grass-roots level as harboring the spirit of the resistance to centralized control.

Mundane political tasks do not appeal to most Greens. As a result their parliamentarians do not have the staff they need to formulate effective policy. On the other hand, if they misinterpret the nebulous mandate, the Basis is quick to make its displeasure known. When the Greens in Hessen, for example, considered acquiescing to the licensing of a new atomic power plant to preserve their official cooperation with the SPD, the hue and cry was immediate and unambiguous.

The party program never addresses the problem of turning the party vision of society into reality. Because it is far too radical to appeal to a broad spectrum of West German society, the Greens must either accept defeat or abandon the dictatorship of the Basis. It emphasizes government regulation of industry and protection of the environment, while at the same time demanding an end to the state's interference in the lives of its citizens on the grounds that only massive decentralization can preserve democracy. Hopes of purging West Germany of cable television, cigarettes and alcohol, and other products of the consumer society immediately comes into conflict with the Green's emphasis on the primacy of personal freedom.

All these theoretical weaknesses in the party program are matched by the practical impossibility of implementing it. The effect their program would have on the West German economy would be disastrous, shutting off all sources of government income, while at the same time placing a huge financial burden of subsidies on the government. Withdrawal from NATO and the abolition of the Bundeswehr would upset the military balance in Europe. Egon Bahr, a senior statesman in the SPD, summed up their contribution with the remark that "the Greens ask interesting questions, but do not give interesting answers."¹¹

III. PRINCIPLE VERSUS PRAGMATISM: THE SPD

The Greens' rivals, the SPD, once faced many of the problems that the Greens must deal with now. Their existence as a recognized political party began in 1890 when the German parliament failed to renew Bismarck's anti-socialist laws which meant that the socialist could serve in government. The SPD adapted a radical Marxist program in 1891 to defy the system that had hitherto suppressed it. But only twenty-five years later the party betrayed those ideals by agreeing with the other

11. Quoted in *The Greens of West Germany*, p. 60.

parties to approve funds needed to wage World War I. In the intervening period the SPD too had to deal with internal disagreement over whether or not to operate within the existing government structure, how to balance ideological integrity against political pragmatism, and how to turn a utopian ideal of society into a realistic plan of action. Although drawing firm conclusions from historical precedent has its pitfalls, when one looks at the SPD's history in this period, the parallels are striking enough at least to suggest a possible path the Green party might take to survive — assuming its members decide that political viability is more important than ideological purity.

The Erfurt program which the SPD promulgated in 1891 was as radical for the nineteenth century as the Greens' was for the twentieth. Its basic premise was that large capitalist enterprises would inevitably swallow up small industry and agriculture, thereby displacing craftsmen and farmers, who would then form an army of unemployed laborers. The capitalists would exploit the industrial workers mercilessly, secure in the knowledge that replacement labor was plentiful. Periodic economic crises would further exacerbate the plight of the worker and the hostility between the classes.

The only way to improve this unhappy state was to transform "capitalistic private ownership of the means of production . . . into social ownership and the . . . production of goods for sale into socialist production managed for and through society."¹² This shift would result in "all-around harmonious perfection."¹³ The program also recognized the solidarity of workers around the world and demanded an end to all oppression, whether of class, race or gender. Suffrage for everyone over the age of twenty, truly proportional representation and the adoption of methods of direct legislation such as referenda, freedom of speech, assembly, separation of church and state, due process and state-funded education were also included in the program. The party called for an "armed nation instead of a standing army," national health care, graduated income tax, an eight-hour workday, abolition of child labor and the night shift, and "investigation and regulation of labor relations . . . by an imperial department of labor" to protect the working man from further exploitation.¹⁴

The Erfurt program's fiery preamble is oddly matched with its subsequent "bourgeois" demands for social reform and regulation by the state. The same inconsistencies turn up in *Class Struggle*, Karl Kautsky's gloss

12. Gary Steenson, *Not One Man, Not One Penny* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), p. 248.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, p. 249.

on the program designed to introduce the average socialist to the theoretical underpinnings of the cause. Kautsky was the editor of *Die Neue Zeit*, and one of the foremost theoreticians of the Socialist movement, and would be called upon to defend orthodoxy against revisionist heresy at the end of the decade. Resting his argument on the separation of the worker from the means of production, Kautsky concluded that only a socialist society geared to production for use rather than production for sale could alleviate the ills of the modern world. Overproduction, Kautsky maintained, was inevitable because modern markets were too complicated to gauge accurately. Because modern industries were so interdependent, one bankruptcy would lead to another until, theoretically, all wealth would be concentrated in one institution. Well before that happened, Kautsky assured his reader, the revolution of the masses would have come.

Kautsky's silence on what ought to be done in the meantime provided the crack in which the weed of revisionism was to grow. In *Class Struggle* he dismissed social reform as "the name they give to their perpetual tinkering with the industrial mechanism for the sake of removing this or that ill effect of private property . . . without touching private property itself."¹⁵ Two pages later, however, he noted that "we by no means imply that all struggles on the part of the exploited against their present sufferings are useless within the framework of the existing social order."¹⁶ Seen in this light, demanding the eight-hour workday and other reforms was justified. Kautsky then went on to declare that "nine-tenths" of all social reform was injurious to the movement, and ended his discussion with the assertion that reform strengthened the "suicidal tendencies"¹⁷ of capitalism. He came to no conclusions as to whether the amelioration of the plight of the working class before the revolution was acceptable or not. Since it was politically impossible to reject reform, Kautsky ignored the inconsistency, thus allowing the revisionists a decade later to advocate reform within the existing social structure and still claim that they were not betraying the cause.

Although Kautsky claimed that socialism would inevitably triumph, he was deliberately vague about the contours of its society. According to him, history was molded by economic development, not by the plans of men: "sketching plans for the future socialist state is about as rational as writing in advance the history of the next war."¹⁸ His description of class warfare emphasized the growing solidarity of the working class in op-

15. Karl Kautsky, *Class Struggle* (Chicago: C. H. Kerr, 1910), p. 89.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

position to the capitalists.¹⁹ Nevertheless, because the movement had to have freedom to organize and publish, if it were to survive, "the working class must strive to influence the state authorities, to bend them to its purposes."²⁰ Through parliamentary activity, according to Kautsky, the workers would gain control of the government and thus make the final preparations for the transformation to socialism. In order properly to use the "bourgeois tool"²¹ of parliamentary representation, the working class had to lobby for universal suffrage. Yet Kautsky went to great lengths to stress that socialism had evolved from a type of upper-class philanthropy to a "violent revolutionary socialism . . . depend[ing] for its support upon proletarian fists."²² Again Kautsky did not synthesize the revolutionary and reformist strains in socialist theory, leaving ample room for arguments among adherents on both sides in later controversies.

Ninety years separate the two party programs, but the Greens' program resembles that of the Social Democrats in a number of ways. Both are inconsistent in their attitude toward the role of the state. They demand the dismantling of the government, and then require it to regulate industry and protect their supporters while the party gathers the political strength to restructure the state. The Greens challenge economic growth; the SPD questioned the benefits of endlessly higher production. Both attack prevailing economic wisdom. Like the early SPD, the Greens are adept at defining social problems, but weak in coming up with viable solutions. The SPD advocated short-term reform because it could not wait for a socialist state to appear and maintain its popular support. They ensured their political survival but at the cost of ideological purity.

The SPD rationalized its shift from total opposition to compromise by adopting a modified version of Marxism, which was centered around the practice of parliamentary reform, although the party did not officially give up its radical rhetoric. Eduard Bernstein, an intellectual leader of the nineteenth-century SPD, played a role comparable to that which Otto Schily is playing for the Greens today when he introduced revisionism. This doctrine called on the SPD to abandon its revolutionary stand openly and cooperate with the other parties to implement reform, causing a great deal of consternation within socialist ranks.

Bernstein was the editor of the *Social Democrat*, the official paper of the SPD which had to be published in Zurich when the party was outlawed. Although he had considerable stature in the SPD, Bernstein could not return to Germany after 1890 because of charges of sedition

19. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

still pending against him. Freed from the mundane duties of party politics, Bernstein had the time to undertake a serious study of socialist theory. He published the results in a series of articles entitled "Problems of Socialism" in the *Neue Zeit* beginning in 1896. In them, he challenged Marx's theories of surplus value and historical materialism, claiming that the trends in European history and economics since Marx's death revealed grave flaws in the theoretical basis of socialism. Drawing on the results of his research, Bernstein advocated that the SPD abandon its revolutionary position and devote itself to the gradual amelioration of society's ills through parliamentary change.

Such heresy from one of the party's leading intellectuals caused such an uproar that the SPD had to take time in its 1898 party congress to argue the merits of Bernstein's articles. Bernstein, unable to defend his ideas in person, drafted *Die Voraussetzung des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* (*The Assumptions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy*, usually translated as *Evolutionary Socialism*) to avoid condemnation by his party should his conclusions be misconstrued.²³ Although he used quotations from Marx and Engels to prove his orthodoxy wherever possible, his arguments nevertheless rested on the assumption that every new theory must break free of "absolutist interpretation"²⁴ if it was to survive: "The justification for this essay is not that it discloses something not known before, but that it acknowledges what has been disclosed already."²⁵

Bernstein then described the actions the SPD should take based on the conclusions to be drawn from his reassessment. His own statistical work proved that big business was not in fact crowding out small businesses and industry; on the contrary, they were flourishing together, and real wages for workers had increased throughout the 1890s. These two "unfortunate" trends undermined the doctrine of historical materialism, which prophesied the inevitable consolidation of capital and the worsening of living conditions for the working class. Bernstein showed that reality did not support this theory and challenged those who clung to it to explain how they could claim that Marxism was "scientific," on the one hand, while refusing to submit it to scientific scrutiny, on the other. The dogmatic Materialist, as far as Bernstein was concerned, was merely "a Calvinist without God."²⁶

23. Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, trans. Edith C. Harvey (New York: Schocken books, 1970), p. xxiii.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Bernstein then insisted that the socialists revise their economic theory to account for the undeniable prosperity of the 1890s. He began his revision by rejecting the theory of surplus value, which Marx had defined as the difference between the worth of the labor needed to produce an item and its final market price. Surplus value measures exploitation in the capitalist system by measuring the profit the capitalist appropriates from the workers. Bernstein labeled surplus value "a formula which rests on hypothesis"²⁷ because it was impossible, given the complexities of modern industry, accurately to measure the amount of labor needed to produce a given item. Bernstein recognized the contribution of distributors, managers, and retailers to the smooth functioning of the market system — components that Marx had not considered in his analysis — and concluded that "a scientific basis for socialism or communism cannot be supported solely on the grounds that the wage worker does not receive the full value of the product of his work."²⁸

According to Bernstein, the ever-increasing complexity of society not only undermined the validity of Marxism, but also provided the stability of the capitalist system. He felt that the direct correlations which Marx drew between wages, labor, supply, and demand were "abstract concepts"²⁹ and not a useful basis for reaching policy decisions. Theories about the inevitable consolidation of industry through cycles of over-production and ensuing economic collapse did not take into account the increasing number of small businessmen who were also shareholders in various companies. The growth of medium-sized business and investment, well documented in *Evolutionary Socialism*, meant that "the prospects of socialism depend, not on the decrease, but on the increase of social wealth."³⁰ The task of socialism was to secure the just distribution of the increasing wealth in society, not the abolition of its source. Bernstein concluded that the collapse of the bourgeois economy was not imminent, and therefore the socialists should cease to gear their strategy to that unlikely possibility. Instead they should turn their attention to organizing defenses against fluctuations in the system.

The most effective way of controlling fluctuations in the economy, Bernstein felt, was to gain control of the government, but he did not have Marx's violent overthrow, which he thought would be disastrous, in mind. He did not share the illusions about the inherent intelligence and nobility of the proletariat which appear in *Class Struggle*; he thought that the struggle against capitalism produced mutual sympathy but not

27. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

much else. Industrial, skilled and agricultural workers had very different aspirations and demands; an immediate takeover of the government by such a diverse group would be catastrophic. Furthermore, it would be impossible to preserve equality either in a government or in a cooperative society as a whole. As soon as any organization became large enough to require a division of labor to function properly, fundamental equality would be lost because some roles have more prestige or authority than others.

Bernstein's vision of socialist society was quite different from Kautsky's. Kautsky thought that the individual found satisfaction in having a stake in the functioning of the system; Bernstein found the basis of social morality to lie in freedom, but "without responsibility there is no freedom,"³¹ and therefore the individual has a duty to work for the state. That sense of duty, however, was to come from within; a citizen should not work just because the state guarantees him a job. Bernstein maintained that state subsidies encourage laziness: "The eternal heaping of duties on the state is too much of a good thing."³² The core of Bernstein's socialist society is self-regulation, both individual and municipal self-discipline, to avoid the necessity for bureaucracy and protectionism. Bernstein advocated the structuring of democracy from the bottom up, but recognized the need to strike a balance between the principle of independence and the pragmatism required to hold a nation together.

Marxism relies on historical inevitability to move societies from capitalism to socialism; Bernstein's revisionism does not. "The conquest of the democracy, the formulation of political and social organs of the democracy," Bernstein wrote, "is the indispensable preliminary condition to the realization of socialism."³³ He also recognized the reality of the nation state when he commented that socialism must adapt to the special conditions of each country. No formula for securing the establishment of a socialist state was universally applicable. Socialism would be achieved through parliamentary participation, first on the local level and then on the national. It was not dependent solely on parliament — "a great and rich field exists for it outside parliaments"³⁴ — but consistent government participation would insure the cohesion of the movement.

Parliamentary participation would also ensure the gradual change from within which could secure all the goals of the movement without resort to violence. Clinging to the old rhetoric, on the other hand, prevented an alliance with the bourgeoisie. Socialist influence "would be much

31. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

greater than it is today if social democracy could find the courage to emancipate itself from outworn phrases, and if it would make up its mind to appear to be what in reality it is today: a democratic, social party of reform."³⁵ The treatise ends with a plea that his fellow socialists not let the theoretical scaffolding shape the contours of the new social structure they were trying to build. The struggle for democracy was not linked to the veracity of Marxist theory; on the contrary, the theory had to be revised before democracy could be achieved.

The course the SPD chose to take for establishing itself as a political party appeared to be smoother than the one the Greens have so far followed. Although the SPD officially condemned Bernstein's revisionism, unofficially they followed its principles and modernization guided the actual policy of the party. Representative government was in a very fragile state in the Germany of the 1890s — Kaiser Wilhelm had boasted that at his command the army would storm the parliament, thereby betraying his lack of enthusiasm for democracy.³⁶ Remembering their repression under Bismarck's anti-socialist laws, the SPD representatives proceeded with caution. As long as their power was minimal, they had in fact to rely on the good graces precisely of those people who were hostile to the workers' cause. Seats in parliament were assigned on the basis of geography rather than population, and because SPD support was centered in the cities, the number of votes it received never translated into an equivalent amount of political power. This injustice added to the resentment in the socialist ranks against the imperial government, a hostility Bernstein had not counted on when he advocated cooperation within the system.

The trade unions in Germany also encouraged SPD caution. Their leaders were wary of open collaboration with the SPD because they thought that espousal of Marxist doctrine might dissuade many workers from joining their ranks. But they did cooperate. The SPD leaders regarded union activism as good training for furthering socialist goals and the unions as an important electoral asset, since in practice union members were loyal socialist voters. When the SPD was first recognized as a legal party it had asserted its theoretical supremacy over the unions, but as the decade progressed, the unions joined forces, and that new organization enabled them to deal with the party on an equal basis. In the fifteen years before World War I, union membership grew ninefold. While the SPD leaders debated theory and chafed under the restraints of

35. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

36. Gary Steenson, *Karl Kautsky 1854-1938: Marxism in the Classical Years* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), p. 119.

the system, the unions consolidated their membership, and by 1905 union membership was four times greater than that of the SPD itself.

SPD organizers noted that their ranks grew when times were prosperous and suffered when times were bad, and that reinforced their inclination to cooperate, rather than to confront, the owners of industry. By the first decade of the twentieth century union leaders had allied with the conservative forces in the SPD and had become more involved in formulating policy. This cooperation culminated in a pact between the party and union leaders prohibiting a general strike without union approval. With this agreement, the SPD gave up its most potent weapon for forcing social change. It was also action which directly contradicted Kautsky's assertion that change was only possible when forced by "proletarian fists."

In keeping with its pretense of outward challenge and opposition, the SPD condemned revisionism twice; first at its 1899 party congress, when it rejected Bernstein's theoretical analysis and again in 1903, when the controversy centered on whether the SPD should offer a candidate for the vice presidency of the Reichstag. The revisionist belief that reform from within was not only possible, but desirable, made Bernstein the natural leader of those supporting the motion. Kautsky, convinced that the system was irredeemable, led the opposition. Bernstein hoped that a socialist vice president would be able to further the cause of the workingman; Kautsky felt that Bernstein's hope was naive and that involvement with the system would merely undermine the party's revolutionary resolve and commitment to total opposition. In the end the socialists could not come to terms with collaboration. To Bernstein's disgust, most socialists balked at the idea of one of their comrades paying the courtesy visit to the Kaiser required of all leaders of the Reichstag. They rejected the idea of an SPD vice president and the revisionist ideas which had spawned that notion.

This episode has its modern parallel in Joschka Fischer's candidacy for a ministry in the Hessen government. The Greens in Bonn opposed Fischer's joining the coalition because his willingness to cooperate showed a suspicious "fascination with power,"³⁷ which inevitably must corrupt the party itself, and lack of consideration for fundamental Green principles. Counter-accusations by others such as Schily that refusal to participate constituted little more than "cowardice"³⁸ eventually won, but resistance to cooperation in making policy has not disappeared. Like their socialist predecessors, the Greens put great importance on the form, as

37. "Faszination der Macht," *Der Spiegel*, 1 October 1984, p. 21.

38. *Ibid.*

opposed to the substance, of their opposition — their theatrics in the Bundestag, refusal to abide by the dress code, and profane language are used to great dramatic effect. But in spite of their studied disrespect for parliamentary ritual, the Greens, like their socialist predecessors, behave with relative moderation in the Bundestag and local parliaments. They have not fulfilled their promise to make state secrets public, but rather have chosen to make their opinions known through the usual speeches, resolutions, and legislative proposals. Even some of their critics acknowledge that on occasion they have represented the conscience of the nation. They are the only major party not implicated in the Flick Affair and, most recently, the only party to call on Chancellor Kohl to withdraw his invitation to President Reagan to honor the war dead — including members of the Waffen-SS — buried in the Birburg cemetery.

This moderation has allowed the Greens to help guide policy on the local level. Nevertheless the party shows the same reluctance to give up their radical rhetoric as the SPD did nearly a century ago. They seem to derive strength from defining themselves in terms of opposition to the system, as did their socialist predecessors. Although the *Alternativer* who reject “bourgeois values” are not split off from the rest of West German society on economic and class grounds, as the socialists were from their fellow subjects during the last years of the empire, they do segregate themselves socially. Most are students, work in cooperative ventures with people sharing their views, or are dropouts from established society. It is people like this who make up what little electoral foundation the party has. If the Greens should give up their constant railing against the “establishment,” they would not only alienate their most loyal supporters but would lose one of the distinctive features separating them from the established Left.

Because many Greens began their careers in the left wing of the SPD, they are particularly careful to maintain distance from their ex-colleagues, even if doing so entails adopting gratuitously radical policies. Anyone who calls for moderation will run into the same resistance as Bernstein did in the SPD, because many feel that abandoning the “them versus us” mentality would undermine the cohesion of the Greens and weaken their identity. For the same reasons SPD leaders once carefully fostered a sense of class oppression among the workers to strengthen their loyalty and resolve.

Although the SPD did not officially abandon its Marxist rhetoric until its party Congress at Godesberg in 1958, political reality shaped its policy. The chances of the Greens submitting to the system in a fashion equivalent to the SPD’s dramatic granting of credit for waging World War I are slim, if only because the modern political system in West Germany

allows them more freedom than their socialist predecessors had under the Kaiser. It is more likely that if they fail to adhere to the rules of the modern political system, they will lose their electoral support. To survive, the Greens must rely on a self-regulation similar to that which Bernstein advocated for the SPD, rather than imposed moderation. Irresponsible actions have ramifications which no amount of reasoned debate or cooperation can completely counteract. As a first step the Greens must successfully segregate their radical rhetoric from their actions and eliminate the sporadic, but damaging, attempts to translate their more extreme views into reality.

IV. IDEOLOGY VERSUS PRACTICE: THE GREENS

Establishing a firm identity in contrast, but not in opposition, to the modern SPD is the key to Green survival, but the existence of an active leftist element in German politics does not depend on it. The Greens can commit political suicide for the sake of their principles, and SPD leaders such as Erhard Eppler, Oskar Lafontaine, and Willy Brandt will continue to espouse their causes. The SPD at the turn of the century had to be more circumspect. The imperial government barely tolerated their existence, and the German liberals were not in a position to carry on the fight for the workingman alone. Because the Greens do not have the discipline the SPD had at the turn of the century, they will also not be able to function as well as the SPD did under the burden of inconsistencies between practice and rhetoric. For the SPD external consistency was important; internal struggles were never allowed to affect its solidarity against challenges from outside. In contrast, the Greens play out their internal struggles in the public arena. Given the frequent elections in West Germany and the intense publicity they attract, the Greens will have to mesh their rhetoric more closely to policy than did their Socialist predecessors, if they are to survive.

The Greens are aware that their support is tenuous. Despite Petra Kelly's declaration that "we under no circumstances see our political responsibility as Greens in the securing of a place in the sun because of a crisis in the established parties,"³⁹ the Greens know that their position of prominence has resulted from defection in SPD ranks rather than a popular mandate. The most recent election results in Saarland bear this out: Oskar Lafontaine, who ran on an anti-nuclear and environmental protection program, won an absolute majority in the state government, leaving the Greens a mere 2.5 percent of the electoral vote, which

39. *Um Hoffnung Kämpfen*, p. 179.

prevented them from serving again in the legislature.⁴⁰ The March 1985 election results confirm that the Greens must come to terms with the political power thrust upon them and consolidate their position, if their influence is not to ebb as the reaction against the corruption of the traditional parties recedes.

As the Greens have developed from a protest movement into a political party, the diverse groups within the movement have coalesced into two opposing factions. The "Realos" (from *Realpolitiker*) want to play by the rules and reform the system from within; the "Fundis" (from *Fundamentalisten*) are determined not to betray "the historic attempt to remain a movement, but at the same time be a party for those who in the ruling system are forgotten or oppressed."⁴¹ Ironically the relative solidarity of the various groups that constituted the party when it first appeared has allowed the remaining fissures to prevent the Greens from clearly changing from a movement into a party. As they approach the threshold of political viability, the weaknesses in the party structure take on increased significance in determining whether the Greens will survive the 1987 national elections and so establish themselves as a political force, or whether they will fail to acquire the requisite 5 percent of the popular vote and fade away into the footnotes of West German history.

The Fundis, the more radical of the two factions, have dwindled to a strident minority led by the East German exile Rudolf Bahro. They insist that the preservation of the Green utopian dream depends on remaining quarantined from the existing political system. Their vision is apocalyptic and heavily laced with Marxism: "We must welcome the inner collapse of the old . . . power structure . . . [and not] hurry to assist it [by parliamentary participation] when its legitimacy is melting away like the snow in the spring sun."⁴² The Fundis demand a halt to all research and development, and call for a general strike to begin it. Echoing Marx's rejection of bourgeois reform, Bahro advocates abandoning a piecemeal program to preserve the environment. Planting new trees in an isolated attempt to rescue the German forests, he thinks, will merely put off their inevitable destruction. The Fundis are allied with the "environmental socialists," (*Öko-Sozialisten*) who are also dedicated to a "change in the foundation" of society, including consumption and production patterns, by blazing a "third way between capitalism and communism."⁴³

40. James M. Markham, "NATO Critic Wins West German Vote," *New York Times*, 11 March 1985, p. 3.

41. *Um Hoffnung Kämpfen*, p. 179.

42. *SPD und Grüne*, pp. 47-49.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Bahro is scathing in his criticism of the Realos, predicting that if they continue their current course they will "become a greater evil than the SPD, because one does not think it possible that they would do the same things [as the SPD] in Green."⁴⁴ According to him a parliamentary mandate is merely an excuse to play political games; the strength of the Greens lies in their commitment to the total opposition which will allow them to weather the political and economic storms ahead. Any contact with the existing system will condemn the Greens "in the ultimate historical sense [to be] fruitless and more to mirror than cause the true transformation."⁴⁵

Bahro himself strained the patience of even the most ardent Greens at the December 1984 party congress when he maintained that "from a formal and structural point of view, the movement, state and society are aligned much as they were in the Weimar Republic, and the Greens are rising following the same pattern as the Nazi Party."⁴⁶ His call for a "time of belief, a pentacost of the spirit" prompted Antje Vollmer, a member of the party's steering committee (*Vorstand*) and herself a staunch Fundi, to comment that "one doesn't make oneself a prophet, one is made into one."⁴⁷ The fact that Bahro's impassioned pleas fell on deaf ears and that the environmental socialists are less obsessed with the impending collapse of democratic society and more receptive to implementing its program to forestall catastrophe, suggest that the commitment to total opposition is waning.

On the other side of the debate over cooperation or total opposition are the "environmental-liberals" (*Öko-Liberalen*) and the Realos. The former believe they can save Germany by working within the system. Accordingly they appreciate the value of parliamentary reform, which the other two groups reject, but still maintain the romantic notion that the Basis should be the guiding spirit of government reform. The Realos are pragmatists and believe that the key to lasting political success lies in accepting responsibility and seizing power, which, given the current lack of compelling leadership in Germany, would be easy to do.

According to Joschka Fischer, one of the leading Realos and a former member of the Bundestag, "the identity of the Greens has thinned out more and more into phrases," and the result has been that nothing has been improved while the Greens have "turned off reality." "The head of the party seems to be stuck in a . . . compost pile and unwilling to take

44. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

46. Gerhard Spörl, "Ein Prophet ohne Jünger," *Die Zeit*, 21 December 1984, p. 4.

47. *Ibid.*

the changed world into consideration."⁴⁸ This means not only that the energy of the party is draining away, but that no one is actively opposing the abuses of modern West Germany. Fischer does not want the Greens to give up protesting or try to integrate themselves into the system, but only to realize that "the basic tendency runs toward parliamentarization, coalition and compromise. Whoever wants to prevent this," he says, "can only ruin the party . . . as a disruptive factor alone we will not survive, if we are not successful in becoming a power factor as well."⁴⁹ Another leading realist, Otto Schily, challenges the doctrine of total opposition on the grounds that it will keep the Greens outside the general political consensus, condemning them to impotence. Only by taking on the risks of government participation, he says will the party be able to bring about change.

Although the Realos exert a fair amount of control within the party, their pleas for moderation are often undermined by the gaffes of their more extreme colleagues. For instance Christa Nichols and Antje Vollmer, both fundamentalist members of the party *Vorstand*, wrote a letter to members of the Red Army Faction, a West German terrorist group, who are currently serving long prison terms, expressing interest in "political discussion" and offering to visit them in prison.⁵⁰ West German newspapers and television gave wide coverage to these overtures, which alienated many of the Greens' moderate supporters. Most recently, the Greens in the Rhineland included a demand in their election platform to rescind laws prohibiting statutory rape. The party *Vorstand* quickly moved to have that plank removed, but the SPD did not miss the opportunity to broadcast the incident to the voters.

Highly publicized incidents such as these undermine the progress which other sectors of the party have made in accepting the constraints inherent in effective parliamentary participation. The Greens' recent electoral successes have caused many to recognize the inherent selfishness of total opposition and have injected an element of sobriety into the execution of party business. The most recent party congress observed the rules of parliamentary procedure (more or less), and its 706 delegates appeared to be more circumspect in their behavior. As one member of the Hamburg parliament put it, "I rejoice at every vote for . . . the Greens, and at the same time I am a little bit afraid of the hope of the voters that the Greens will fix everything."⁵¹ The growing awareness that

48. The above quotations were taken from an article written by Fischer: "Wir müssen Machtfaktor sein," *Der Spiegel*, 27 February 1984, p. 81.

49. *Ibid.*

50. "Ein harter Staat — oder eine andere Republik?" *Der Spiegel*, 25 March 1985, p. 66.

51. Horst Bieber, "Wir werden's schon richten!" *Die Zeit*, 21 December 1984, p. 4.

they will owe the voters something for their vote, if they are to stay in power, is pushing some of the Greens toward the established left. The struggle between the factions of the Green Party essentially centers on two questions of political tactics. The first is whether coalition with the SPD is desirable. The need for an answer is especially pressing because the SPD has shifted to the left on many questions, particularly those concerning the environment and defense, since the Schmidt government fell and Willy Brandt proclaimed a "majority on [the left] side of the [Christian Democratic] Union."⁵² But the SPD and Greens have not for the most part been able to turn their similarities in doctrine into a political advantage, and SPD victories at the polls in the spring of 1985 have decreased their motivation to try. The majority of the SPD membership doubts that the new party will be a reliable partner, while many Greens feel that cooperation with the SPD requires compromises which would blur the distinctions between the two parties and lead ultimately to the loss of a separate Green identity.

As a result the Greens are now living on borrowed time. Their radical notions appeal consistently only to a limited number of people, and even they would probably abandon the party if it is not able to enact actual reforms or implement tangible changes. In Saarland, for example, the Greens ran on a total opposition program and failed even to retain the seats they had in the legislature. Although the voters had a left wing alternative in the person of Oskar Lafontaine, the polls also showed that 97 percent of the Green voters favored a coalition with the SPD.⁵³ If the Greens are to establish a constituency upon which they can rely for more than a protest vote, they must exhibit more political flexibility than they have so far shown. The quickest way to improve their reputation for responsible politics would be to cooperate with the SPD, but it would not be an easy matter to do so and still remain faithful to party ideals. The SPD leaders insist that if the Greens want to be accepted into the political system, they must abandon their policy of total opposition and join in the search for realistic, if imperfect, answers to the problems facing West Germany. As Oskar Lafontaine pointed out to them, only the Christian Democrats will benefit from their insistence on full implementation of their radical program. Citing Minister of the Interior Zimmermann's sarcastic remark that "they demonstrate, we govern,"⁵⁴ Lafontaine called on the Greens to induce the SPD to use its power to enact reform. If the Greens do not resign themselves to some sort of

52. *SPD und Grüne*, p. 11.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

54. "Der andere Fortschritt," *Der Spiegel*, 4 February 1985, p. 87.

advisory role, he said, the party will "bargain itself into political impotence."⁵⁵

The Fundis oppose all cooperation, particularly with the SPD, because they place so much importance on maintaining the "innocence" of the party; they see politics as corrupting both in itself and in the necessity of associating with corrupting influences. The Green program pledges that it "will not participate in a government that follows the destructive path [of the Bonn leadership],"⁵⁶ and the Fundis continue to maintain that the established parties should be made to "clean up the mess they themselves caused."⁵⁷ Maintaining a lack of complicity in West Germany's troubles, the Fundis point out, is in fact one of their appeals to the voters. Solving problems would not only end up in compromising party principles, but would implicate the Greens and saddle them with part of the responsibility if the remedy failed. If they remain aloof, on the other hand, when the existing power structure finally crumbles the Greens will stand as the only innocent alternative to the chaos of revolution. Bahro and his faction will therefore accept cooperation only "if it is a question in reality of paralyzing the state through coalition."⁵⁸

The Realos in contrast admit that power and responsibility are linked and that if the Greens want to have an effect on the course of West German development, they must submit to the constraints imposed by the system they are trying to reform. Accordingly, they have made overtures to the SPD on the local level. The first test case for cooperation began in January 1984 when Holger Börner, the Minister-President of the state government in Hessen "gritted his teeth"⁵⁹ and formed an unofficial coalition with the Greens. The *Alternativer* were reacting to a clear message from the voters: in September 1982 they received 8 percent of the popular vote, a year later only 5.6 percent.⁶⁰ Suspecting that their prospective partner was unstable, the SPD was reluctant to accept the offer of cooperation, but the political configuration in Hessen and the fear that refusal would strengthen the radical elements in the Greens left Börner little choice.

Although both partners were skeptical about the arrangement, they managed to come up with some legislation which remedied abuses in a nuclear waste disposal, lengthened bicycle paths, and provided for other environmental improvements. But the relationship fell apart when the

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Das Bundesprogramm*, p. 4.

57. *SPD und Grüne*, p. 276.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

59. "Zähne zusammen," *Der Spiegel*, 23 January 1984, p. 94.

60. *SPD und Grüne*, p. 110.

SPD licensed a new atomic power plant in conjunction with the CDU, thereby outraging the Greens, who felt that one of their basic tenets had been betrayed. Cooperation had obliged them either to accept the SPD position, and thereby violate the essence of the ideology, or to vote against the Hessen budget they had helped to develop and which until then had been the showpiece of SPD-Green cooperation. The Greens opted for the latter course, but the decision was not unanimous.

The question of coalition continues to be a source of bitter strife within the party. The Greens intended to resolve it once and for all at the December 1984 party congress, but they failed to come up with a clear-cut answer. Instead the delegates decided "Solomon-like between the Realos and the Fundis":⁶¹ they would not take action on coalition with the SPD on the national level until forced to do so, but the Greens in local and regional governments could decide on an *ad hoc* basis whether or not to cooperate with the Social Democrats.

This solution soon faced its first crucial test. In October 1985 the Greens in Hessen decided to form an official coalition with the SPD, in which they would share fully in the responsibilities of government. To symbolize their complete participation, Joschka Fischer would join the cabinet as minister of the environment. This move caused an outcry from all quarters. The CDU accused Börner of cooperating with "fanatical opponents of our free economy and social constitution,"⁶² and leading industrialists threatened to freeze their assets in the state and possibly move their operations elsewhere. The coalition upset the SPD leadership's strategy for achieving a majority in the 1987 election by attacking Helmut Kohl's government from the safe ground of the moderate left.

Finally, the Greens in Bonn and the Fundis expressed horror at Fischer's collaboration. The national leaders appealed to the Hessen Greens to repudiate the agreement, but their appeal went unheeded at the party congress; it approved the arrangement. Although we do not yet know what success the Börner/Fischer government will have, predictions of economic chaos seem exaggerated. In practice, the Greens' track record in parliament is fairly good, consisting mainly of reasonable action disguised by occasionally outrageous rhetoric. In any case the Hessen coalition will force all four West German parties to define their position more clearly. If the Greens can force their fellow politicians to take a stand, their latest move will not have been without benefit.

The second major bone of contention between the Realos and the Fundis is the rotation principle, the Green political tenet that mandates

61. James M. Markham, "Greens Vote to Join a Coalition in Hesse," *New York Times*, 28 October 1985, p. 3.

62. *SPD und Grüne*, p. 25.

the switching of legislative members after two years, as a way of strengthening both their ties with the voters and their opposition to the parliamentary system. The system requires that the Green representatives pledge to serve only half of the four-year legislative term, giving up their seats to reinforcements fresh from the Basis for the other half. The short period of service ensures that no Green succumbs to the siren call of political wheeling and dealing, thereby sacrificing party principles for short-term gain; and constant rotation ensures that the wishes of the people are truly represented.

The problems with the system are many. First of all, maneuvering in a highly structured political system is a skill that cannot be learned overnight. In the established parties a new representative must wait as long as a year before he is permitted even to speak in a parliamentary session; his first years are devoted to learning parliamentary procedure, serving on committees, and establishing a position in the party hierarchy. In the Greens' case, in contrast, even though they oppose bureaucracy on general principles, all members have immediately to plunge into speech-making and drafting laws. The lack of experience does not guarantee impressive results. To keep from having to start from scratch every two years, the "successors" (*Nachrücker*) observe the representatives at work, and the latter will stay on as advisers after their stint is up. But far from ensuring a smooth transition, the presence of the politically impotent alter-egos only adds to the tension and confusion. As *Der Spiegel* reported in April 1984, "instead of 27 politicians, there are now 54 in Bonn, who plague each other with merciless competition."⁶³

Practically from the outset of their term in office, the first group in parliament repudiated the rotation principle, claiming that it was damaging the party's cohesion and effectiveness. The argument failed to impress either the *Nachrücker* or the Basis, however. The members may have been able to work out a suitable compromise, had it not been for the attention lavished on the new party and its first set of leaders: Petra Kelly, Gert Bastian, and Otto Schily. The press coverage, completely out of proportion to the size of the party, centering on these three political stars, made their colleagues jealous, and they complained that Kelly and her colleagues "in practice didn't do any work."⁶⁴ The three responded bitterly in kind and offended their constituency. Their commitment to "cooperation and collegiality"⁶⁵ and their determination not to allow political reality to separate them from the people ended in bitter infighting.

63. "Wir sind irgendwie in Vakuum," *Der Spiegel*, 2 April 1984, p. 53.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

65. "Spitze entmannt," *Der Spiegel*, 9 April 1984, p. 19.

Although it was Petra Kelly who accused Helmut Kohl of following a course "that has led to a stable crisis,"⁶⁶ this is in fact a description that well fits the tenure of her own party in the Bundestag. The Greens kept their promise not to hide anything from the public, and the press was filled with reports of their internal trials and tribulations. In January 1984 Gert Bastian announced that cooperation with his colleagues was impossible and became an independent representative. A former Bundeswehr general who had resigned in protest against the modernization of theatre nuclear weapons, Bastian had lent some stability to the party. His defection meant that the Greens had only one member in parliament more than the minimum needed to achieve *Fraktion* (organized party) status. If they lost that, they would be completely powerless, unable to draft laws or vote, and would be severely curtailed in their opportunities to address the Bundestag as a whole.

Bastian's departure exacerbated an already desperate situation, and those who looked to the April 1984 party congress to put things back on course were disappointed. It avoided confrontation by not addressing the divisive issues of rotation and coalition with the SPD, and gained the attention of the public by appointing an all-female *Vorstand*. Although women are active in German politics, leadership in the established parties is still exclusively male. By placing their party under female direction, the Greens once again turned the eyes of the nation upon themselves and caused minor tremors within the Bundestag itself. Approval or disapproval of their move had split along gender — rather than party — lines.

Most of the original twenty-seven members of the Bundestag applied to the Basis to renew their mandates, but only Otto Schily, the in-house expert on the Flick Affair, received the 70 percent of the vote needed to return for the second half of the legislative period, and the *Nachrücker* began their two-year stint in March 1985. Although this signaled a victory for the Fundis, the consensus was that after the next general election the Green representatives would serve the standard four years in parliament. The all-female *Vorstand* had supported the rotation principle, partly because they were the radicals of the group and partly because many were juggling family and political responsibilities, and could only sustain the strain for a short period of time. The rotation principle helped keep them in power without having to abandon their responsibilities at home, and at the cost of political efficiency and party cohesion, the Greens were able to fulfill their goals of the full integration of women into the party hierarchy.

66. "Vielleicht ziehe ich nach Ost-Berlin," *Der Spiegel*, 11 March 1985, p. 63.

V. CONCLUSION

The Greens have little time left to solve their internal problems. The SPD has regrouped and, inspired by its success at the polls in the spring of 1985, has seized the initiative in opposing the CDU. The Greens have not responded to the challenge. As a party congress in June 1985 they again could not work out a compromise between the Realos and the Fundis, but instead announced that "the entire spectrum . . . from opposition to absolute majority rule" can be used to implement party goals in parliament.⁶⁷ Some do not even want to resolve their dilemma: Jo Müller, a member of parliament, claimed that "only this mixture [of fundamentalism and realism] makes us really attractive! Only this guarantees our credibility."⁶⁸ Although their flexibility does enable the Greens to function on a local level (because each faction can react appropriately and independently of the rest), their lack of political strategy forces them into defensive positions. They are not allowed to bargain because they have a reputation for political irresponsibility, and therefore are not trusted by potential partners.

However untrustworthy the Greens might be, the established parties still have some interest in seeing them settle down and become a responsible force, because the *Alternativer* serve two useful functions. First, they inject a bit of life into West German politics. Even Hans Apel, who was defense minister under Helmut Schmidt and who is firmly opposed to coalition with the Greens, admits that "I also find imagination and ideas in the Green [party]. I no longer have the courage to be young in parliament [but] the Greens do."⁶⁹ Second, their presence guarantees the loyalty of many radicals who might otherwise reject the democratic system: in particular, terrorist groups have been less active than they were in the late 1970s. Just as Bismarck discovered that the price of suppressing the social democrats was too high, so today the established parties have come to recognize that absorbing the radical elements of society into the system is much more effective than direct confrontation for defusing the threat that they pose. The Greens' presence in the Bundestag has institutionalized the "generation gap," which is particularly acute in West Germany today. As the Social Democrat Renate Schmidt put it, "Some recognize their own children in the Greens."⁷⁰ Many young Germans harbor vague resentments against the system which

67. "Mangelnde Reife," *Der Spiegel*, 8 July 1985, p. 26.

68. Bernd Guggenberger, "Zwischen Feldküche und Familientreffen," *Die Zeit*, 28 June 1985, p. 3.

69. "Wir müssen vorbereitet sein," *Der Spiegel*, 11 February 1985, p. 32.

70. "Arbeit für die Schmuttelkinder," *Der Spiegel*, 10 December 1984, p. 28.

no longer provides the advantages that the "economic miracle" offered their older brothers and sisters. The Greens channel their animosity into the framework of highly structured government procedure and so prevent it from growing out of control.

Not until the Greens set up a clear method of operation will their diligence and idealism produce concrete results, however. Already frustration is sapping Green enthusiasm: "It is no longer fun to be a Green" was the general feeling after their defeat in the Rhineland elections in May 1985.⁷¹ The question is whether the Greens, who burst into parliament with so much energy, will now fade away or whether they will find a way to balance principle and pragmatism. The decision to form a coalition in Hessen with a Green minister in the cabinet suggest a first step in the direction of survival. That the Greens in Hessen ignored the call from Bonn to block Fischer's coalition shows that at least some of them are learning how to compromise and still not betray their central tenet — that the will of the Basis should reign supreme.

71. Margrit Gerste, "Der Spaß am Grün-Sein is 'raus," *Die Zeit*, 10 May 1985, p. 5.

