

**ROLE OF THE GREEN PARTY IN GERMAN POLITICS  
1990 – 2002**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the award of the degree*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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*Dedicated to . . . . .*

*Apu and Apui*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Rajendra K. Jain for his careful guidance and unfailing support throughout the course of my work. It would not have been possible for me to write this dissertation without his supervision.*

*The journey to this stage has been long, arduous and a personal revelation at the same time. I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues Maku, Mohandas, sunil, Kris and Karei for helping me every possible way.*

*Special thanks to all the JNU, BCL and CSE library staffs for their active cooperation and support.*

*My indebtedness is also to the University Grant commission (UGC) for granting me Junior Research Fellowship (JRF).*

*New Delhi, 21 July, 2004*

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## **PREFACE**

The Green Party was established in the Federal Republic of Germany on 13 January 1980. The Green emerged in the midst of the social change sweeping through West Germany in the 1960s and the 1970s as a protest movement of various organizations concerned about environmental issues and the rise of "new politics" which sought to create a new type of society. In due course of time, the Green Party went beyond campaigning merely for ecological issues. In due course of time, the green Party began to argue not just for some new policies but a whole new approach to politics. The Greens took up the issues which were not considered important by the established parties and became significantly popular among the people of West German.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in working from outside the political system, the Greens moved beyond the loose structure of citizen action groups into a new adaptable political organisation and in due course of time participated in the Federal election for the first time in 1980. Within a short span of its formation as a political party, the Greens became the coalition partner of the Federal Coalition the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1998 at the federal level.

In spite of being small in terms of national representation, the Green Party plays a crucial role in German politics since its inception. Notwithstanding internal differences, the party's

organisational structure safeguards the equilibrium in German politics. The party has become more prominent in face of other parties intensely looking into the policies and objectives of the Greens Party in their agenda.

Chapter one discusses and analyses the evolution of social changes sweeping the west Germany and the role of various organisations in initiating a cluster of issues of “New Politics”. Chapter Two deals with the Green Party response to unification and its implications on the German as well as German politics. It also examines, analysis the performances of the Greens in the first all-German election in 1990.

Chapter Three focuses on the Green Party after unification and the internal changes within the party as a consequence of their poor performance in the previous election. It discusses the issues, and performance of the Greens in the elections. Chapter four deals with the changing political and internal dynamics of the Green Party and it performance in coalition. Chapter Five summarises main finding of the study.

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## CHAPTER – I

### FORMATION OF THE GREEN PARTY IN THE WEST-GERMANY

*Die Gruenen* or the Greens were initially set up in West Germany as a grassroots organization, made up of an amalgamation of frustrated peoples of differing strategies and assumptions with a common concern for the environment, who were ready to fight for changes in ecological policy.

The origin of the Green Party is inextricably linked to the socio- economic transformation of West German society during the post-war period. The Greens were the first new party to enter the West German Parliament since the early post-war elections.<sup>1</sup> In the immediate post-war period, the Germans were primarily concerned with the reconstruction of the economy and issues related to their home, town or village as well as their family life and culture.<sup>2</sup>

However, once the Federal Republic became prosperous through the 'economic miracle', and the social welfare system had been consolidated, an enviable health scheme was in place and educational provision more than adequate, a novel set of issues started to acquire importance, viz. environmental protection, equal opportunities for women, development aid for Third World countries,

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm P. Burklin, "The Greens: Ecology and the New Left", in H.G. Peter Wallach and George K Romoser, (ed.) *West German politics in the mid- eighties: crisis and continuity*, (New York; Praeger Publisher, 1985,) p.187.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey K. Robert, *German politics Today*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press,) 2000, p.192.

disarmament etc. These issues were also classified as 'new politics'.<sup>3</sup> The new middle classes proved to be especially interested in these issues, and were ready to participate in organisations or movements whose political activity focussed on such issues. In West Germany, critics detected a bias in the political process towards the representation of broad, powerfully organized interests of economic producers and bureaucratic agencies to the detriment of consumers, clients of social services, and advocates of intangible collective goods. Environmental protection, different economic, social, and cultural relations between the sexes, disarmament initiatives, and the rise of social movements seeking a revision policies that allocated benefits and costs in these and other areas became a key feature in the West German political life in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the established parties were sluggish in taking up these new issues.

On the other hand, the capitalist world order has been in crisis since the end of the 1960s.<sup>4</sup> The driving forces of the long postwar boom subsequently declined in the Federal republic of Germany.

### **1.1 Factors leading to the rise of Green Politics.**

The antiauthoritarian protest culminated with the students movement of 1967-1968-chiefly supported by those who had no

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.192.

<sup>4</sup> Werner Hulsberg, *The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile*, (translate from the German by Gus Fagan) (London; Verso, 1988,) p.1.

direct experience of war and who had grown up during the era of the “economic miracle.”<sup>5</sup> The post-economic recession of 1966-67 and “emergency legislation” signaled a turn toward authoritarianism. Subsequently, international developments redirected the focus of the protest to the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War shattered the image and model of democracy.

The 1970s and the early 1980s was a period of intense academic and popular interest in process of environmental degradation: global, regional and local. Many think tanks, such as the Club of Rome, published accounts dramatizing the potential depletion of the earth’s resources.

Moreover, international agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme, began holding international conferences and promoting detailed studies of issues as part of an effort to get more co-ordinate and effective responses to global environment problems.

Protest movements related to the student radicalism of the late 1960s and with various anti-war mobilizations took to the streets and to get a political response.

In 1966, the formation of the Grand Coalition, a political partnership between the Christian Democrats and Social Democratic Party (SPD) ignited the first German student protests.<sup>6</sup> Student leaders of the Socialist Student’s Federation (SDS) felt

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<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm P. Burklin, n.1, p.187.

<sup>6</sup> Robert J. Wegs, and Robert Ladrech, *Europe since 1945: A concise history*, (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1996,) p.230.

betrayed by the Social Democrats. They now considered the SPD an integral part of the establishment and therefore not interested in reform. The existence of a coalition that governed from 1966 to 1969 without any major opposition served to radicalize left-learning students, who were suddenly bereft of their traditional leftist opposition role in parliament.<sup>7</sup>

Students criticised conservative newspapers and magazines, which supported to the establishment and were critical of the student's movement. Although German students were unable to mount a serious challenge to the policies of the government, they achieved important changes in the universities. Their protest against the so-called establishment led to the development of a political ideology influenced primarily by German born Stanford University professor, Herbert Marcus.<sup>8</sup>

The antiauthority revolt of the SDS influenced large segments of the student community, resulting not only in a revolt against "outdated" university structures but also against what they viewed as the narrow- minded moral and value system of the German middle class. The protest movement found its central theme in its protests against the US military involvement in Vietnam.

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<sup>7</sup> Gerd Langguth, *The Green factor in German Politics: From protest movement to Political Party*, (translated by Richard Straus), (Boulder; west view press, 1984), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

## **1.2 Ecology and Alternative Movement**

On the other hand, the ecology movement emerged at the end of the 1960s in reaction to the problems of industrial societies. There was a strong urban force, which sought to preserve relatively untouched 'natural' areas. By the mid-1970s, environmental organizations usually controlled their operations and intensified their commitment to these issues. Apart from close ties with other new social movements, it developed a new environmental paradigm, which differed from the traditional political thinking.

Apart from ecological concerns and economic growth, these movements became a critique of science and technology they became a critique of science and technology and fostered participatory politics.

The West German ecological commitment represents a pacific, commitment represents a pacific, internationalist outlook, which contradicts prevailing negative stereotypes. This ecology-oriented movement attracted many political figures also. Herbert Gruel' book, *The Plundering of the Planet*, 1975 became best seller and influenced many readers. At this juncture, the numerous citizen initiatives on environment issues reflect the great importance of environment and ecology. The Greens originated in a political climate in which preference for new issues and new participatory styles of political action reduced the integrative potential of the major political parties. Now voters were more willing than in the

past to choose between parties and also choose a new party in sufficient numbers to make it politically viable.<sup>9</sup>

The search for an alternative life-style led in the second half of the 1970s to the so-called “new social movement” that attempted to construct a model of a quiet harmonious, ecologically balanced and democratic civilization. The new social movement’s primary emphasis was to change the every-day life of the individual and to develop a life-style critical of consumerism. Supported by a network of peace research institutes and academic established in the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of left wing intellectuals provided the ammunition for a re-invigorated peace movement that opposed the neutron boom and INF missile deployments.

### **1.3 Economic and oil crisis of the 1970s**

The rise of Green politics in the 1980s occurred during a period of significant changes in the cultural and political climate of the Federal Republic in the 1970s. The first oil crisis (1973), which resulted in grave economic problems and rising unemployment, which worsened after the second oil shock.

The government response to the oil crisis of 1970s was to build more nuclear power plants in order to decrease dramatically the dependence on oil. However, this led to protests around the proposed nuclear site in Wyhl in 1975. The critical criticism by citizen initiatives paved the way for the broader ecological movement

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<sup>9</sup> Derek Lewis and John R. P. Mackenzie, *The new Germany: Social, Political and Cultural Challenge of unification*, (Excter: University of Excter Press,) 1995, p.2.

and the increasing acceptance of the broader ecological movement and the increasing acceptance of citizen initiatives as accepted part of the west-German society.

By 1977, there were nearly 1000 citizen initiative groups with over 300,000 members affiliated the Federal Association of Citizen Initiatives for the Protection of the Environment (BBU). Many were limited to local issues such as the prevention of highway construction.

Nevertheless, the increased awareness of the need for environmental protection enabled these groups to reach a broad spectrum of the population. The ecology question was, therefore, a symbol for mass movement, the ultimate basis of which was the recognition that civilization, if it continued on its path, can last at most two or three generation more.<sup>10</sup> Thus the new social movements are comprehensive movements which developed a critique of the system as a whole and which proposed new social utopia.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1977, clear trends developed toward the consolidation of citizen initiatives into parties or voter initiatives in several Laender.

The citizen initiatives functioned as a permanent united front, bringing together many different currents and organizations opposed to the nuclear policies of the coalition of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP). This

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<sup>10</sup> Werner Hulsberg, n. 4, p.77

<sup>11</sup> Eva Kolinsky, (ed.), *The Greens in West Germany: Organisation and Policy Making*, (Oxford/New York, Berg Publisher, 1989), p.77

included concerned citizens, left wing ecologists, and right wing ecologists, the radical left, autonomous groups, critical SPD members, and trade unions. They were extremely heterogeneous, depending on which particular current was dominant.

The anti-nuclear movement thus became an ecological movement in the broadest sense of the term. In due course or time, a strategic debate was begun which ranged over the whole spectrum of social and political issue. So, in the late 1970s, the protest movements moved beyond the loose structure of citizen-action groups into a new organizational phase.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in working from outside the political system, a variety of local and regional ecological parties formed to work for change from inside the system.<sup>12</sup> Protest has inspired the Green parties as much as the intent to compete in elections and become a voice for new issues in parliament.<sup>13</sup> Because of this realization and experience, all protest parties wanted a forum in which they could come together and to bring a fundamental change politically, socially and economically.

In the 1980s, the nascent party held two founding congresses-the first to decide on the party structure and the second to establish a common party program. These congresses led to the establishment of a new political party-the Greens that united the various environmental groups under a single banner. Even in the

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<sup>12</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Politics in Germany*, (New York, Harper Collins College Publisher, 1993), p.298

<sup>13</sup> Derek Lewis and John R.P. McKenzie, (ed.), n.9, p.2.



1979, election to the European Parliament, they coordinated and campaign together winning 3.2 percent vote.

In 1979, the Greens, highly heterogeneous in member composition but with the same ideologies, came together to form a programme that called for a worldwide ban on nuclear energy and chemical and biological weapons. This informal proposal called for an end to the deployment of nuclear weapons in Europe, agreement to the unilateral disarmament of West Germany and the creation of a demilitarized zone in Europe.

It also called for the dismantling of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. The Greens also called for a 35-hour workweek, the dismantling of large economic companies into smaller, equal units, and supported the right of worker unions to withdraw labour. Thus, for the first time, ecological concerns were being formed into political action. These trends encouraged them to create a national organisation.

In 1980 a number of ecological groups, Alternative Action movements, Citizen Initiative movements and various women rights organisation banded together on the national level to form the political party that came to be called the Greens or Die Gruenen. The Green Party was formally set up at a convention called at Karlsruhe on 12-13, January 1980.

Thus, the Greens in West Germany were founded as an electoral and organizational alliance of several political groupings, which found themselves to be to be alienated from established party

and interest structures. So the Greens party emerged in the midst of the social change sweeping through West Germany.

The Green movement in Germany was always more than just an ecological protest movement. From the outset it had strong elements of the type of apocalyptic anti-modernism that has been an on-going contrapuntal subtheme to Germany's turbulent process of modernization.<sup>14</sup> The Greens initially started, as a protest movement against the prevailing social, political and economic structure was able to transform into a political party. The official programme of the Greens does not oppose parliamentary democracy outright but ranks it in second place after participatory actives.

#### **1.4 Pacifist Movement**

A common belief held by people involved was that besides the environmental dangers, a nuclearised state would mean increased security for Germans and decreased individual freedoms, thus forming a police state. The Greens are against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the arms race.

Their long-term objective is to bring normalcy to Europe without military blocs, without the presence of troops on European soil. The Greens seek not merely to stop the nuclear arms race, but to bring about a new situation between the East and West and North and South. The Peace Movement demonstrated strongly

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<sup>14</sup> David Kramer, "The Graying of the German Greens," *Dissent*, Spring-1994, p.231.

against the 7000 nuclear weapons stored by the western powers on West German soil.

By 1977, there were over 1,500 anti-nuclear groups in West Germany, which organised the occupation of proposed nuclear sites by thousands of people. In 1982, 300,000 people demonstrated against the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) submit in Bonn and advocated the end of Cold war and Disarmament.

The Greens Party opposed the stationing of United States intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe.<sup>15</sup> Young men and women burnt paper missiles outside the Parliament chanting the slogan 'Greens in, Missiles Out'. They pointed out that the flight time for missiles launched from Czechoslovakia at Pershing( ) missile installations in west Germany was just three minutes. Thus the Greens Campaign demanded the withdrawal of all the nuclear missiles from West Germany along with chemical weapons. With its youthful exuberance, the Greens Party was instrumental in bringing necessary attention to previously overlooked political viewpoints.<sup>16</sup> The Greens also livened up the Bundestag, appearing in jeans and sweaters rather than business suits and bringing plants into proceedings.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "The Greens in Germany," [http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/facts/bl\\_greens.htm](http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/facts/bl_greens.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Russell J. Dalton, n.12, p.299.

<sup>17</sup> "The Greens in Germany," [http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/facts/bl\\_greens.htm](http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/facts/bl_greens.htm)

## **1.5 Phases of the protest movement**

The formation of the Green Party can be divided into four phases.<sup>18</sup> First, local citizen initiatives on the environment were formed, primarily in opposition to atomic power. The first phase ended in 1973. During this phase, citizen initiatives agitated quite independently of each other.

In the second phase, the organisational consolidation of the various initiatives as well as developing awareness of the structural causes and the inter-relationships that existed among the different problems in the field of energy, transport, urban planning and technology begins by late 1977.

Third, the first nation-wide consolidation was the group "Other political association-the Greens," which was formed prior to the elections to the European Parliament in 1979. It also led to the establishment of an extra parliamentary and a parliamentary wing of the movement, and the unifying elements of which was a general ecological concern.

Fourth, a federal party was founded in January 1980, and it first participated in the federal elections in October 1980. This was founded as the representative of environment and anti-nuclear interest groups. Individuals who rejected many established values supported it. The Green Party has tried to forge new means of governance but has faced a variety of internal difficulties.

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<sup>18</sup> Gerd, Langguth, *The Green Factor in German Politics: From Protest Movement to Political Party*, (translated by Richard Straus), (Boulder, Westview Press), 1986.

Even though the Greens failed to win seat in the 1980 Bundestag election, with only 1.5 percent of vote. German electoral law required a party to get at least 5 percent of the votes. Since Germany Electoral Law required a party to get at least 5 percent of the vote for its members to be seated in parliament. Subsequently, the party's strength grew in a series of state elections.

By the end of 1982, the Greens had won representation in six state legislatures, and more than 1000 Greens officeholders served at the local levels of government. Thus, electoral life of the Greens took shape during 1980-1982 as a result of their winning seats in local and state elections. By early 1983, considerable speculation was made on what the role of the Greens would be if the party was admitted to the national parliament and if it had the votes to make or break a coalition.

Thus, in West Germany the most significant political event of this period was the emergence of the Green Party, which in 1983 entered into the Bundestag with 5.2 percent of the votes, with a total of 28 seats. Fiercely opposed to North Atlantic treaty Organisation (NATO) and the nuclear deterrence strategy, the Greens were now the politically organized expression of universal pacifism.

Despite the internal difference between the Fundis and the Realos, about their orientation, issues, policies, there was a general support for giving passive backing to the SPD government. But there were those who looked forward to actually playing a role in the various ministries.

In the early 1980s, the party also developed a more extensive political programme, which included support for women's liberation, minority rights, and the further democratization of society and economy.<sup>19</sup>

The Greens attracted a mixed bunch of protest voters with highly varying motives, in particular those first-timer and young voters who wish to cast a non-ideological vote for ecology and disarmament, and who are far removed from the left alternative, post-materialist milieu in their value orientations.<sup>20</sup>

The 1983 Election Manifesto of the Greens highlighted about environmental problems such as fears of the German's forest cover depleting under a cloud of acid rain. The greens vigorously campaigned for an alternative political viewpoint on matters of environment, defense policy, citizen participation, and minority rights.

The success of the Greens Party witnessed some changes in the characteristics of the West German political culture: Firstly, changes in social structure and trends toward a postindustrial society and the declining importance of older class cleavage structures. Secondly, changes in basic value orientations: the long-term rise of the "participatory citizen" role, which can be clearly observed in West Germany. Thirdly, change in behavior of the

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<sup>19</sup> Russell, J. Dalton, n.12, p.298.

<sup>20</sup> Hans Veen Joachim, 'The Green as a Milieu Party,' in Lewis Derek and John R.P. Mackenzie (ed.), *The New Germany: Social, Political and Cultural Challenges of Unification*, (Excter, University of Excter Press, 1995), p.35.

political elites: particularly the altered political stance of Social Democratic politicians no longer representing groups on the left of their party.

Four factors, according to Hulsberg Werner, contributed to the rise of the Greens, viz. the peace movement, the spate of environmental scandal, the Flick scandal and the government's austerity policy, which had adversely affected the weaker sections of the society.

The real driving forces for the Greens, was now coming from the peace movement, and the Greens benefited from the fact that they regarded themselves as an integral part of the peace movement while, at the same time, being able to present themselves as a political party. In fact, the Green party conference in Offenbach (1981) produced a Peace Manifesto in which the party rejected North Atlantic treaty Organisation (NATO) re-armament. The Greens took an active part in the campaign for signatures to the Krefeld appeal, which demanded that the government withdraw its support for the stationing of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Central Europe.

The Flick scandal and other scandals added to the alienation of the masses from the state. Taking advantage of this, Joschka Fischer of the Greens, poured scorn on the coalition's pledge of a spiritual and moral renewal, in the country, which contrasted sadly with the behind the scenes history of corruption, bribery and 'Baroque opulence'.

An environment scandal was also a major issue in which people became increasingly ecologically conscious. The depleting forest cover became major issue for the German people. Based on this performance, the Greens increased their share of the popular vote to 8.3 percent with 42 seats in the 1987 Bundestag elections.

### **1.6 Organization of the Structure of the Greens Party**

The seat of the Green Party is in Bonn and its highest policy making body is the Federal assembly, which meets at least once in a year. Meetings of all bodies in the party are open to all party members. Elected members of parliament, city councils, etc. are accountable to their appropriate membership bodies. Members can hold political office from two to six years and may be re-elected only once. One person cannot hold a political office and at the same time, to be a full time functionary in the party.

Material privileges are limited. For instance, a Member of Parliament will receive the average salary of a factory worker and any additional income has to be given to the party. Minorities are protected. Decisions have to be arrived at by consensus rather than by majority vote. Sexual equality: parliamentary seats are drawn up on the basis of equal representation for men and women.

The Greens are highly varied party, which includes left-wing liberals, large protest elements and conservative if not extremely right wing elements. They now have the problem of working together and convincing the electorate that they are a cohesive



party. The youngster saw the greens as their only chance of demanding self-determination, sexual freedom and respect for children who do not want their lives to be governed by their parents.

Since the Greens were composed of heterogeneous groups, difference and division emerges. As long as they were united in their hostility towards the coalition and to the established parties, their relationship ran smoothly. But when the Green Party entered parliament in 1983, the battle was now inevitable over the 'strategic project' of the Green Party.<sup>21</sup>

### **1.7 Voter Demographics**

The Voters who votes for the Green Party belong to various social groups and comprised of between 25-40 years of age who were increasingly disillusioned with mainstream politics and parties. A higher percentage of voters were women and voters tend to live in cities rather than rural areas. Voters were found to have a high level of education and classified as having 'post-materialistic values.'

In the national sector, the 'Alliance' 90/The Greens has 50,000 members. They have strong membership in 16 federal states, including 500 counties and 25,000 communities in the regional sector. All levels of the party have Executive Committees with 5-12 official members. Two of these members are elected as

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<sup>21</sup> Hulsberg Werner, n.4, p.141.

speakers for their riding. In all executive committees, there is a minimum quota of half for women and the quota applies as well for those elected to run in parliamentary elections.

The Green Youth for age (14-28) currently has 5,000 members. The party itself is a member of the European Federation of Green Parties and German Greens are the largest component of the International Green Group. Many of the early leaders of the Green Party were former socialists and left activists on a rightward trajectory into parliamentary politics.

In a number of electoral studies conducted between 1980 and 1984, it was found that supporting the Green Party in relation to society as a whole, underrepresented among blue-collar workers, lower and middle-income white collar workers, and in rural areas. But over represented among professionals, younger age groups, and those with higher education.

### **1.8 Internal faction between the Fundamentalists (Fundis) and the Realists (Realos).**

The Green party has managed to carve out a reasonably secure electoral niche for them in the Federal Republic of West Germany. Despite tremendous success, serious differences regarding its aims, orientation and policies between the Realists and Fundamentalists is a matter of serious concern to the future development of the party.

Therefore, there were fears of a likely split between the *Realos* (Realists) and the *Fundis* (Fundamentalists) that plagued the Greens. The *Realos* are pragmatists who want to serve as a constructive opposition and ultimately exercise power. The more radical *Fundis*, on the other hand, were committed to a fundamental restructuring of society and politics. In fact, they do not want to share power with the Social Democrats—their obvious allies—or in any way legitimate the existing political system. The Fundamentalists are the most enigmatic sector of the Green Party. What unites them is their attempt to prolong artificially the condition gave rise to the radicalization of the 1970s.

The *Fundis* believe that the party should maintain an uncompromising commitment to a radical restructuring of society and politics. They fear that the participation in parliamentary politics, and the inevitable compromises that result, will sap the vitality of the movement.<sup>22</sup> Purity of thought and action and eventually radical social change is more important than short-term results.

The idea which lie behind the opposition of the Green Party to nuclear power, NATO, pollution and sexism must remain unsullied by dealing with the bourgeoisie, the *Fundis* argue. Their main support came from the Frankfurt groups around Jutta Ditfurth, Milan Horacek and Manfred Zieran. The Fundamentalists accuse the realists on the point that the latter accept both the form

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<sup>22</sup> Russell J. Dalton, n.12, p. 300.

and substance of Parliamentarism, which can only lead to some slightly better variant of social democracy.

The Fundamentalists or *Fundis*, epitomised by Rudolph Bahro wanted a qualitative change in society via a widespread “opting out” of present society. The *Fundis* attempt to prolong artificially the conditions which gave rise to the radicalisation of the 1960s and 1970s and prone to infantile disorders. They rejected any alliance with the bourgeois parties.

Also on the radical side of the internal line-up were the Eco-socialists like Thomas Ebermann and Rainer Trampert. The Eco-socialists opposed the capitalist system, a critique of reformism and objective of gathering of political forces to break with the system. They place their emphasis on extra-parliamentary activity in the social movements and trade unions, and advocate a policy of “toleration” rather than coalition with the SPD as a means to “get rid of the illusions among the Green voters.” However, the dilemma of the fundamentalists is that they dream of revolution but, at the same time, they are unwilling to come to terms with the necessary revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice.<sup>23</sup>

The *Realos* are more pragmatic about politics. They like to work within the established channels for incremental social reform, even accepting positions in local and state governments. The political realists are based in Hessen. Their best-known representatives are Joschka Fischer, Otto Schily and Waltrand

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<sup>23</sup> Hulsberg Werner, n.4, p.148.

Schoppe. They argue that the Green policies will have an affect only if the party seeks government responsibility.<sup>24</sup> The *Realos* urge a Green radical reformism and the ecological transformation of capitalism. The old movements and a large number of former SPD members and the old *Spontaneist* majority of the extra-parliamentary opposition support them.

The *Realos* argue that the basic development of politics is towards parliament, alliance and compromise. Their task is to mediate at the level of parliament on behalf of the new minority social movement to defend their interests and security institutionally by means of political compromise.

On the other hand a sub-group of *Realos*, viz the Eco-libertarians, are the most right wing ideologically of the German Greens. This group promotes ecological change through market mechanisms with the guiding principle being *laissez faire* or greater freedom of choice. The Eco-libertarians advocate the parliamentary road because, to quote their Manifesto. "It is only by means of reformist trial and error that the contours of another society can be developed." They point out that the links between Green parties and the new social movements are considered irrelevant since "only the reformists can achieve anything for the anarchists." The *Realist* wing of the Green Party favoured a possible co-operation with the Social Democratic Party and the fundamentalists did not.

<sup>24</sup> *Times* (London), 1may, 1987.



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In 1985, the '*Realos*', then known as the 'Greens of Hesse' split from the original party and formed a coalition with the SPD and joined the opposition in the government. This coalition, however, collapsed in 1987 when Joschka Fischer, the leader of the Greens of Hesse, boldly demanded that the government call a halt to the processing of plutonium in a plant near Frankfurt. At the annual congress, this failure of the '*Realos*' wing generated favour for the fundamentalists.

The Realist in the first place shelve any question of a fundamental transformation of society and proclaim themselves to be essentially pragmatists. But, this is not meant that the realists intend to break links with mass movement.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the Greens began to suffer, in part because of this feud. The *Realos* problems are not only that state coalition politics have proved difficult, or even that the Greens dislike of centralization militates against a coherent strategy, but also that the main parties, including the ruling Christian Democrats, urge the same policies. Ecology, nuclear disarmament, and nuclear safety are no longer the preserve of the Greens. They are redefining their profiles for a new role and the trend is towards the left.

The Greens, whatever their internal divisions, benefit from widespread public concern over health and the environment-the first Chernobyl underlines-this and they benefit from anger over industrial pollution and unemployment. The anti-authoritarianism

of the Greens appeals to Germans of all ages for obvious historical reasons. The Greens boycott of National Census on the ground that it was tantamount to state influence in the lives of individuals.

The *Realos* are apprehensive that extra-parliamentary activities can degenerated into violent protest, whether against nuclear installation on North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) bases, or at least that the Greens enemies can make capital from this danger. The factional battles between the *Fundis* and the *Realos* amongst the Greens created an on-going identity crisis for the Greens. With the defeat and decline of the social movements and the growing electoral success in the later 1980s and early 1990s, the policy and practice of the Greens moved rapidly to the right under the ever-strengthening leadership of the *Realos* and their parliamentarist perspective. The strength of the *Realos* in the German Greens was therefore not only a result of the electoral success, the decline of the movements and the confusion of the Marxist left inside the Greens, but also a direct reflection of the average political level of the Greens electoral constituency.

In the election programme of 1987, the Greens gave special emphasise to democracy and Democratic rights, discrimination against women, relations with developing countries, military disarmament and, the links between the environment, the economy and social issues. It is striking that environmental issues were placed at the end of the program. These trends so that despite the Green entered the parliamentary fray on the basis of an

environmentalist campaign seek to broaden their social bases and ideological appeal. Using their new political forum, the Greens vigorously campaigned for an alternative political view on matters of the environment, defence policy, citizen participation, and minority rights. At the same time, the Greens added a bit of colour and spontaneity to the normally staid procedures of the political system.

In the 1987 federal election the SPD lost about 650,000 voters to the Greens and the conservative parties, the CDU/CSU lost two million voters to the Greens. The elections have swept two of the most prominent Greens Otto Schily and Petra Kelly back into the Bundestag. Out of 42 seats that the Greens won in the 1987 elections, 25 were women. The Greens opposed hierarchies and did not have president or chairpersons and did not allow members to hang on to jobs or gather much power.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps importantly, the Greens prepared to break with conventions of consensual politics and to confront the policies of other established parties. Previously the Greens were excluded from the parliamentary committees dealing with secret services. They sought to be represented on these committees as well.

The Green Party rejects exploitative forms of economy and the unscrupulous plundering of natural resources and raw materials and the destructive interventions into nature's ability to renew itself. The Greens point out that both the capitalist and state socialist form of economic growth contaminated and destroyed the

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<sup>25</sup> Hindu (Madras) 28, January 1987.



very basis of human and natural life. The Greens favour self-determination and free development of every human being and support the idea that people should be able to creatively determine their own needs and wishes free from outside pressure and in harmony with the natural environment.

One of the original demands of the Greens was the demand for better protection of nature better and purer air and water. This includes limiting the traffic on highways and to reduced emission in vehicles. The emphasis of the Greens on environmental and immaterial values was unprecedented in West German politics. But the questions are will the Green party be able to come up with the changing political scenario and how far their internal conflict damage their electoral chances particularly at the backdrop of German unification and its implication on Green politics. This is discussed in Chapter two.

## CHAPTER – II

### THE GREEN PARTY AND GERMAN UNIFICATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR GERMAN POLITICS

The reunification of Germany was one of the greatest events in history. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany symbolized the end of the cold War in Europe. The revolution of 1989 and subsequent unification in 1990 has transformed the Federal Republic of Germany both qualitatively and quantitatively.<sup>1</sup>

United Germany now lies in the heart of Europe. Prior to unification, the Christian Democrat Union (CDU), the Social Democrats Party (SPD) and the Free Democrats Party (FDP) of the German Democrats Republic (GDR) had merged with their respective counterparts in the Federal Republic Germany (FRG) to form three single parties. Unexpectedly, the West German Greens lost the 42 seats that they had previously held in the legislature after having failed to cross the five percent threshold in the 1990 Bundestag elections in the area formerly constituting the Federal republic of Germany (FRG).

However, as a result of a special clause in the Electoral Law adopted in October 1990 which permitted representation in the Bundestag for parties of the former German Democrats Republic

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Kitchelt, "The 1990 German Federal Election and the National Unification: A Watershed in German Electoral History?" *West European Politics*, Vol. No. 4 (Oct. 1991), pp. 123.

(GDR) that received at least five percent of the total votes cast in former German Democratic Republic (GDR) territory. Thus, the Eastern Greens in coalition with Bündnis 90 (Alliance 90) manage to secure eight seats in the legislature.

## **2.1 The Unification of Germany**

There is no single factor that led to German unification, which was a long drawn process both consciously and unconsciously. Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik of the 1970s contributed considerably to the normalisation of the relationship and diplomatic relationship with Eastern counterpart. However, the main thrust to the process of unification began with the change in political and social circumstance in both west and East Germany.

So by the end of the 1980s, the eastern bloc's flagship economy was on the verge of collapse, its reputation as "a world ranking industrial country"<sup>2</sup> notwithstanding. After four decades of Socialist rule, economic ills plagued the regions long after the political regime had been forced out of office. The outdated capital stock and production techniques; over staffing in industry and administrative sectors; deficient public infrastructure, particular in transportation and telecommunications.

Dysfunctional incentives for managers of state-owned enterprises and workers; a severely degraded environment; and a

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Jeffries, "The GDR in Historical and International Perspective," in Ian Jeffries and Manfred Meizer, (ed.), *The East German Economy*. (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 1.

mountain of foreign debt were the high point of GDR regime in the 1980s.

Besides, the East German elites were lulled into a false sense of security, in part by their own success in demoralizing and demobilizing citizens with a highly effective internal security apparatus, the Staatssicherheitsdiensts (Stasi), and official policy of exporting dissidents to the Federal Republic. Thus the rapid calls for reform from below through the late 1980s was inaudible to the Socialist Unity Party (SED) leadership. Finally their comfort and complacency were shattered by the swelling ranks of peaceful protests, which took to the streets in earnest in the fall of 1989<sup>3</sup>.

The ever increasing East German refugee influx entering the Federal Republic swelled into hundred of thousand which put pressure on the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In November 1989, Chancellor Helmut Kohl issued an extra ordinary appeal to East Germany to remain in their country and work for change.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had a tough time because on the one hand they could ill afford to do anything that might provoke a lethal crackdown by the German Democratic republic (GDR) regime similar to the crack down of the Chinese student movement only five month back. Nor could it openly raise the prospect of unification, even indirectly, since this would have

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<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey, Anderson, *German Unification and the Union of Europe: The Domestic Politics of Integration Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press), 1999, p.25.

certainly undermined Mikhail Gorbachev's already precarious political position in Moscow.

On 8 November, 1989, in a State-of-the-Nation Address to the German parliament, Chancellor Kohl called for an all-German dialogue, and pledged a comprehensive assistance package if the (SED) relinquished its monopoly on power, allowed the formation of independent political parties and groups, and provided for free and fair elections. Born politician on both the left and right consistently framed any possible road to unification in terms of the self-determination of the East German people.

Unification of the two Germanies was not an easy process. The history of its division has to be counted and considered. After 9 November 1989, unification was firmly on the agenda, but the time frame and ways and approach was still unsure. The East German people wanted a quick unification and for West Germany, a gradualist approach to unification seemed especially wise in light of the prevailing uncertainty about Moscow's reaction. But within two weeks of the wall collapse, demonstrations in the GDR registered a marked change chanting and proclaiming: "*Wir sind ein Volk!*" (We are one people).

The GDR search for a "third way" in which an attempt to chart a path between Western capitalism and Eastern communism grossly overestimated the stamina and patience of average citizens, who were interested not in abstract critiques of capitalism but in tangible, rapid improvements in their standard of living. At this

juncture, Chancellor Helmut Kohl seized the political initiative on 28 November with his

“Ten-point Plan for German unity,” which outlined the short-term objective of a “treaty community” between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and German Democratic Republic (GDR).

However, the Ten Points also elicited worried statements from abroad, skepticism from important figures in the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and outright opposition from the Greens, who were especially enamored with post-Stalinist, social experimentation in the GDR.<sup>4</sup> However, Chancellor Kohl’s statement struck a chord with East German citizens, whetting their appetite for rapid change. Also Moscow’s firm and positive indications to Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) that it would not necessarily insist upon neutrality as the price for German unification, as it was the case during the Cold War era had a positive impact on unification. Thus, immediately initiated consultations with the Bundesbank over the technical requirements of a currency union and complete economic integration.

## **2.2 The Basic Law and Unification**

The West German constitution (*Grundgesetz*) or Basic Law offered two routes to unity, viz. Article 23 and Article 146. In fact, Article 23 talks about accession to Federal Republic of Germany

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<sup>4</sup> Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Greens, and beyond*, (Oxford: Oxford, University press), 1993.

(FRG) and Article 146 by contrast provided for a fresh start by forming a new united German constitution. So as a matter of fact and with the prevailing time and situation, Article 23 was applied, as neither country would afford a time consuming, contentious, and politically best indeterminate political outcome. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl preferred fast track to unification, outlined in Article 23 of the Basic Law, because he feared that international circumstances might change and the chance for unification might be missed. He was also apprehensive that it might have a negative impact on his party. Moreover, Article 23 was consistent with the outcome of the 18 March elections in the GDR, which was interpreted as a mandate for the rapid importation of the West German model to Eastern Germany.

On the other hand, Article 146 appealed to the Social Democrats and trade union leaders in both sides of the border, as well as to GDR reformers. However, their assertion that East German citizens were interested in a new constitutional arrangement that took the best from both systems were undercut by the public opinion polls circulating in early 1990 and ultimately by the March 1990 election results.<sup>5</sup>

The new coalition government formed in East Berlin after the election issued on 12<sup>th</sup> April endorsed unification based on Article 23. So the first text of the unification treaty was signed on 31<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Manfred Gortemaker, *Unifying Germany 1989-1990*, (New York: St. Martin's press, 1994), p.200.

August 1990 and with very few exceptions effected a wholesale replacement of the GDR system by west German political institutions, with some provision for brief transition periods. Thus, on 2 October 1990, the GDR was dissolved, and the five new Laender, viz-Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia-plus East German acceded to the FRG on the following day 3 Oct 1990.

With unification, the national parliament expanded to include individuals and land representatives from the East. Also the number of seats to the Lower House (Bundestag) increased from 518 to 656, and the upper house (Bundesrat) expanded from 45 to 69. In fact, the eastward extension of the West German governmental arrangement, was completed with or no change to the basic federal principles underpinning the system.<sup>6</sup> The parliaments of both German states ratified the treaty, and the territory of East Germany joined the Federal Republic under Article 23 on 3 October 1990.

According to the unification Agreement, the Federal Republic of Germany formally merged with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) at midnight 2-3 October 1990. This date marked the conclusion of the *Wende*, the "turning point" or period during which the East German displaced the Communist regime that had ruled them for 40 years. But the unification process was highly

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<sup>6</sup> Klaus Goetz and Peter Cullen, "The Basic Law after Unification: Continued Centrality or Declining Forces", German Politics, Vol.3, No.2, December 1994, p.33.



asymmetric and an inevitable source of grievance and conflicts that were initially unanticipated. The Germans had two illusions in 1989.

The West was under the illusion that nothing would change. The East was under the illusion that everything would improve immediately. Both are wrong. For the East Germans, progress and prosperity were not quick to arrive. By 1991, West Germans realized that stiff tax increases and large deficits would be the price for real unity, and many wondered why they should sacrifice".<sup>7</sup> This apprehension now seems true.

Even though the GDR population received extremely favourable gratification in terms of currency revaluation and income growth, they were subjected to a shock, both in terms of institutional change and economic decline, with substantial economic, social, and "moral" costs.<sup>8</sup> With unification, the German electorate has become even more heterogeneous. Unification led to the edition of sixteen million extra citizens, twelve million more voters, and a third territory of five new states.

Unification has brought together two different electorates with very different political experiences, needs, and expectations. Now they are determined less and less by the old traditions, ideologies, religion or social origin, and gave more preference to the

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<sup>7</sup> Rajendra K. Jain, "German Polity in Transition", *International Studies*, Vol.36, No. 3, 1999, pp.253-254.

<sup>8</sup> Helmut Wiesenthal, "East German as a Unique Case of Social Transformation: Main Characteristics and Emergent Misconceptions", *German politics*, vol.4, no.3, December 1995, p.58.

parties who could achieved their goals and solve their problems. Moreover, traditional social cleavages will further lose their influence on voters' party preferences; economic, security, and immigration issues will gain in salience, at least over the medium term; and post-materials issues will become temporarily less important than material issues.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.3 The Green Party and German Unification**

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s opinion surveys demonstrated that an increasing proportion of primarily younger Germans identified West Germany as the 'German nation today', rather than the combined territory of the Federal Republic and the German republic.<sup>10</sup> The Greens promoted the view that democratization of the GDR more important than unification. In the 1980s, the Greens emerged as the most consequential advocates of this position and were the only party that openly called for abandoning the obligation laid down in the preamble of the West German Basic Law that the Federal Republic must strive for the reunification of Germany.<sup>11</sup>

When 'real existing' socialism collapsed in 1989, neither the Christian Democrat nor the Liberals nor the Social Democrats and Green opposition parties were prepared to call for a quick

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<sup>9</sup> Dieter Fuchs and Robert Rohrschneider, "Postmaterialism and electoral Choice before and after German Unification", *West European Politics* (London), Vol.21, No.1, 1998, p.113.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, The 1990 German Federal Election and the National Unification: A Watershed in German Electoral History?, *West European Politics*, Vol.14, No.4, October, 1991, p.130.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p.130.

unification. Instead, they initially sought to promote a confederation of the collapse of the Communist regime, when faced with a crescendo of calls for unification in the GDR, began to promote rapid unification.<sup>12</sup>

As the 1990 campaign progressed, the West German opposition parties became less and less able to frame the national issue in ways that could expand their electorate, where as the Christian-Liberal coalition gradually won the upper hand. The electoral appeals of the Greens also deterred those voters who were decidedly unenthusiastic about the prospect of a rapid German Unification, but nevertheless accepted the process as inevitability. In the eyes of these voters, the often contradictory and wavering declarations of Greens on the national question appeared unrealistic, and their failure to offer credible alternatives to the Christian Democratic government's policy.

Thus, there was the evidenced lack of competence on the part of opposition parties to handle the new situation after the 1990 election victory. The Greens employed a language derived from allocation and procedural choice politics in the electoral campaign to recast the national question. Moreover, of the Green Party invoked the spectre of historical precedents to warn against the potentially fatal consequences for democracy of a new, irrational German nationalism.<sup>13</sup> Demand of the Greens to accept refugees

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. , p.130.

<sup>13</sup> Gunther Grass, 'Don't Reunify Germany', *New York Times*, 8 January 1990, p.25.

and asylum seekers from all less fortunate regions of the globe to West Germany. Regardless of their particularistic ethnic, religious, or territorial identities and without granting any extra privileges to those who claimed 'German' national ancestry based on the idiosyncrasies of language, family bonds, or territoriality. Because of this reason, the Greens fought restrictions on immigration to Germany and call for the emergence of a 'multicultural' society that shares its wealth with all comers. Thus the Greens appeared to be utopian and dangerous to the German social fabric by encouraging a rapid influx of refugees that would strain social order.

With most new organizations, the Greens lack of a stable organization structure and conflicts over party philosophy led to open disputes amongst party members. The primary division occurred between Fundamentalists and Eco-socialists, subscribing to the uncompromising universal view of citizenship, and a more realist wing willing to accept German unification. The Green Party lacked the intellectual resources and concepts to put a distinctive stamp the German unification that would accept the East Germans' eagerness for the unification with an attractive independent political perspective that would motivate voters to support the Greens.

Moreover, the Greens were hurt most by the interpretation of the national question by some Green activists brought up in the electoral campaign to further damage electoral prospects. The radical wing view that denounced the unification as an event that would signify a return to an anti-democratic nationalism and

chauvinism known from the pre-1945 period and greeted it as the advent of a new German empire.<sup>14</sup> The basic perception was that Unification would put at risk West Germany's civic culture, a democratic openness and tolerance for disagreement that was accepted for the first time in German history by the Federal Republic, and displace it by a new anti-democratic intransigence.<sup>15</sup> Green competitiveness in the 1990 election further deteriorated because the party did not accept the results of the East German *Volkskammer* election of March 1990 as a verdict in favour of rapid unification.

The West German left intellectuals, and the Greens view that the collapse of East German Socialism as having opened a unique opportunity to shape a new social order from scratch that would explore a "third way" between capitalism and socialism and rely on democratic participation in an unprecedented way. But when the East German enthusiastically acceded to the Federal Republic and overwhelmingly supported the established West German parties in the March 1990 election, the Greens accused the East German voters of economic greed and as wanting a share in the economic prosperity of West Germany.

Moreover, many Greens depicted the East German vote as the result of West German parties' heavy-handed intervention in the

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<sup>14</sup> Carl Lankowski, 'One-step Backward, Two Steps Forward? Between Antifa and Machtpolitik: Die Grunen and the German Question,' *German Politics and Society*, Vol.4, No.20, summer 1990, pp.57-70.

<sup>15</sup> Klaus Von Beyme, 'The Legitimization of German Unification between National and Democratic principles' *German politics and Society*, Vol.6, No.20, spring 1991, pp.1-17.

first free election in the GDR and the wholesale manipulation of the vast majority of the population.

Many Greens described the process of unification as a Nazi-like annexation and the absorption of small defenceless country. Thus, the Greens framed the issue of unification within the realm of a politics of democratic procedural choice as an act of aggression and imperial annexation by an emergent superpower. It took the Greens several months of bitter dispute before a majority begrudgingly came to terms with the *Volkskammer* election results and made the concession that a gradual unification of the two countries would be acceptable. This position was perceived as the intellectual's arrogance of the self-proclaimed standard bearers of participatory politics, contributed to the defeat of the Greens in the December 1990 elections.

The Greens did not embrace the unification of Germany and opposed any automatic extension of West German economic and political principles to the East. The West German Greens chose not to form an electoral alliance with their eastern counterparts, Alliance90 (Buendnis 90), prior to the 1990 elections because of their opposition to unification.<sup>16</sup> The Greens were opposed to unification because they were concerned about the costs of the unification that could lead to cuts in the social and environment protection sector. The Greens entered the 1990 general election

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<sup>16</sup> The Greens in German, [http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/fact/bl\\_greens.htm](http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/fact/bl_greens.htm)

campaign without the degree of East-West cooperation achieved by the other parties.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the Greens were not fully prepared for unification. The Greens balking over the prospect that national unity may have to buy at the cost of higher taxes and interest rates cost them very dearly.<sup>18</sup> The East Germans wanted absorption into the FRG on the fastest possible terms. The Greens were not really prepared for the quick absorption of the GDR. In fact, the left wing West German intelligentsia greatly resented the kind of 'DM Nationalism'. Juergen Habermas, the famous German philosopher and socialist pleaded against "DM Nationalism" and argued in favour of taking the time to unifying Germany according to Article 146 by means of negotiations between the two German states which would reach a fair democratic compromise.<sup>19</sup>

The Greens considered unification by means of Article 23 of the Basic Law as having given the people in West Germany no say in the process of unification, once the Bonn government had concluded a preliminary agreement with the GDR government. However, it was difficult to reject the East German enthusiasm for the re-unification without any delay. In May 1990, 82% in West Germany and 91.3% in the East Germany favoured reunification.

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<sup>17</sup> R.E.M. Irving and N.E. Paterson, *The 1990 German General Election*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol.44, No.3, July 1991, pp.353-72.

<sup>18</sup> A. James AcAdam, *Toward a New Germany? Problems of Unification*, *Government and opposition*, vol.25, No.3, 1990, p.304.

<sup>19</sup> Klaus Von Beyme, *Electoral unification: The First German Elections in Dec-1990*, *Government and opposition*, vol.26, No.2, p.169.

The GDR election of March 1990 already reflected a fairly complete colonization of the East German party system by the West German political forces. The Greens were "reluctant colonizers". The Green Party was anxious to embark on the organizational invasion of the east. In fact, it respects the autonomy of the eastern Greens and their partners in the independent groups, which had been the backbone of the peace 'revolution of the candles' in November 1989.

The Greens in West Germany also experienced a disaster, especially in West Berlin where they had broken the coalition with the SPD before the election, in order to feel free to indulge in electoral polemics.<sup>20</sup> Even in Berlin, the home of the most radical Greens, many voters did not accept the permanent quarrels within the party and the coalition. The Greens lost 5.4% in a landslide election, which brought the CDU back to power in Berlin. In fact, the Free city of Berlin was an exception during these elections because the federal elections were combined with the first elections for a parliament of the unified city of Berlin, which constituted a re-unification within the re-unification.

Before two years of unification, the Christian Democratic Party CDU was in deep crisis and Chancellor Helmut Kohl was under tremendous pressure to perform and was not very popular with the voters. The ever-increasing economic burden and rise of unemployment put the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) in flux. So the unification to some extent bears out the CDU from the other

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.177.



problems and Chancellor Helmut Kohl took advantage of it and made use of it properly.

On the other hand, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens stressed the costs of the unification and it criticized the speed of the Chancellor policies left the impression that they were not interested in unification and tend to confused the people. Many West Germans were not interested either, but they knew that there was no alternative. Thus, Kohl's unification policy was destined to succeed. Naively he pretended that there were no problems to unification and assured the people that not even new taxes were needed, and it was only after the election that raising the taxes on petrol would be at least discussed.

The Greens and Social Democrats were further handicapped in the 1990 election because of competition between them rather than the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Liberal government parties in which the Greens became the greatest losers.

Like the Greens the Social Democratic Party (SPD) was also split on the unification issue. In fact, it was the SPD that should perhaps have taken advantage of the situation of unification, as they were the one, which had initiated and urged a better relationship with the eastern counterpart and propagated the *Ostpolitik* of the 1970s. By nominating Oscar Lafontaine for the office of the Chancellor, the Socialist Democratic republic (SPD) had decided in 1989 to fight the next election on the genuinely Green issues of environmental protection, qualitative economic growth,

and participatory politics themes which were highlighted in the party's New Berlin Programme.<sup>21</sup> Even though the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) was successful in winning back 600,000 votes from the Greens, just exactly the number that had been lost to the Greens in 1987 election.<sup>22</sup> Yet at the same time the SPD suffered heavy losses from voter abstentions among the blue and white-collar core constituencies of the party.

On the other hand, older statesmen such as Willy Brandt and Vogel on the one hand and a more socially oriented Oscar Lafontaine on the other had divergent opinions. Also the divergence was not only regarding re-unification. In fact, the issue was whether the party should remain a worker's party in close cooperation with trade unions, or whether it should develop into a services-oriented party launching "New Politics". Lafontaine was in favour of the second approach. He even dared to alienate the trade unions. As a result, a large portion of SPD voters abstained from voting. But the SPD gained from the young Greens voters who saw in Lafontaine a symbol of charismatic hope for a new ecological socialist policy.

Another problem for the Greens was that they were accused of diluting their dominant issues such as peace and disarmament. Meanwhile, all the other political parties had accepted the Green's original issues of ecological policies in their programme.

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<sup>21</sup> Herbert Hirschelt, n 1, p.136.

<sup>22</sup> Karl H. Cerny, *Germany at the Polls: The Bundestage Elections of the 1980s*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), p.250.

Another major contribution to the defeat lay in the quarrels within the party and especially the experience of the Red-Green coalition in Berlin-West, which was defeated by the Fundamentalists. Also Green leader such as Antje Vollmer admitted that the old Green party was dead. Thus, it had lost its credit ability with a greater part of the younger generation that is the strong base of the party. Also it have to get rid of many deficiencies in its organizational structure such as short-term rotation in office or the freezing of the income of the Greens deputies. But the Greens learnt their lesson and they are hoping that as soon as the economic problems of unification have been solved the ecological issue will re-entered the political arena again.

#### **2.4 The 1990 united German Elections**

The December 1990 election in the newly unified Germany has changed the electoral landscape of German politics considerably. Prior to unification, the CDU, the SPD and the FDP of the GDR had merged with their respective counterparts FRG to form three single parties.

The election of 1990 was held separately in former East and West Germany. The result was the dramatic weakening of the opposition parties such as the Social Democrats and the Greens, a moderate strengthening of the ruling coalition, and an unprecedented low voter turnout. The opposition suffered a setback more severe than that experienced by any opposition party in the

history of the Federal Republic. The government parties improved their performance marginally to just under 55% in West and East Germany, while the opposition parties were reduced to 40.3% in the West, a net loss of over 5%, and barely reached 30% in the East.<sup>23</sup>

**Table-1**

**Results of the all-Germany Elections**

Political Parties	WEST	EAST	ALL
	Bundestag	Bundestag	Bundestag
	12/1990	12/1990	12/1990
CDU/CSU	44.3	41.8	43.8
SPD	35.5	24.3	33.5
FDP	10.6	12.9	11
GREENS	4.8	0.1	3.9
GREENS/ ALLIANCE 90	-	6	1.2
PDS	0.3	11.1	2.4
THE GREYS	0.8	-	0.8
REPUBLICANS	2.3	1.6	2.1
ALL OTHERS	1.2	1.4	1.3

**Sources:** Herbert Kitschelt, *The 1990 German Federal Election and the National Unification: A Watershed in German Electoral History?*, *West European Politics*, vol. 14, no. 4, October 1991, p.122.

It was the Social democratic Party worse performance since 1980. More importantly, because the Greens decided to postpone formal unification with the East German Greens/Alliance 1990 until after the election, they fell short of the 55 votes required for parliamentary representation in western Germany, thereby casting serious doubts on the party's future viability.

The poor performance of the Green Party in the first all-German elections of 1990 proved to be a watershed in the development of the German Greens. The west German Green party

<sup>23</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, n. p.121.

did not manage to gain enough votes to enter parliament scoring only 4.8 percent instead of the 5 percent requirement. But, in the eastern German, the Greens gain a 6.1% share of votes and 8 seats in the Bundestag. Thus, had the two parties merged before the election, the Greens would have received 5.1% of votes.

There was widespread agreement that the electoral disaster had been the result of unfortunate circumstances, tactical errors, and strategic blunders. Perhaps the most fundamental tactical error had been the refusal of Greens in western Germany to fuse with their eastern counterparts until immediately after the election<sup>24</sup>. The most strategic blunder of the Greens, failure was their failure “to see the national implications of the East German revolution, as indicated in their futile commitment to a reformed socialist GDR,”<sup>25</sup> This lack of enthusiasm for unification alienated the Greens from much of their constituency. Their chances of success were further undermined by the SPD choice of Oscar Lafontain as chancellor candidate. In fact Oscar Lafontain moved the SPD to the left, successfully co-opting “Green” issues.

## **2.5 Impact of German Unification on the Green Party**

The devastating defeat of the 1990s when the Greens campaigned on Global Warming and lost their parliamentary representation taught them the lesson that had they ignored the

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<sup>24</sup> Betz Georg Hans, Alliance 90/ Greens, in Conradt David and Others (ed.), *Germany, s in New Politics: parties and issues in the 1990s*. (Oxford, Berghahn, Providence- 1995), p.205.

<sup>25</sup> Christian Joppke and Andrei S. Markovits, “Green Politics in the New Germany,” *Dissent*, Spring 1994, p.235.

political preferences of the population at their peril<sup>26</sup>. The most important issue at this time was the unemployment issue and not the environment issue and they realized this after the election. Thus, when every one was talking about unification and unemployment issues, the Greens were talking about the environment and the Greenhouse Effect ignoring the popular sentiment.

Unification also radically diminished the prospect for an “ecological transformation” of the German model, which had dominated the political debate until the early 1990s, leaving little space for the Greens. The Greens feared that unification might lead to the revival of traditional German nationalism and great power chauvinism, or because they feared it might entail the loss of democratic openness, freedom, and tolerance once a unified Germany started to search for a new “global role”.<sup>27</sup>

The devastating loss for the West German Greens in the 1990 elections brought the conflict between the *Realos* and the *Fundis* to a head. The pragmatic wing seized the opportunity and blamed the diminishing left in the party for the loss and moved quickly on a project of reform. The procedure of collective structures or responsibility and the rotation policies were dismantled and abolished. The party was to have only one President and the rule

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<sup>26</sup> Rudig Wolfgang, “Germany” in Rommel Muller Ferdinand and Poguntke Thomas, (ed.), *Green Politics in National Governments*. (London, Frank Cass Publisher, 2002), p.167.

<sup>27</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, Alliance 90/Greens: From Fundamentalism Opposition to Black-Green in David Conradt and others (eds), *Germany's New Politics: Parties and Issues in the 1990s*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books), 1995, p.205.

prevent Green MPs from being on the party executive was abolished. "The Greens must accept the structures of a normal party," Joschka Fischer told a media conference two days after the 1990 elections. "If the Greens do not become a professional party and renounce all forms of fundamentalism it will perish," he said, adding that one of the things Greens must accept is that "politics is impossible without prominent personalities." So with the most Fundamentalist wing that had a major effect on Green programs and policies in the 1980s left the party.

The deep divisions, which had so long existed amongst the West German Greens, seemed to have been overcome in the aftermath of the 1990 electoral defeat.<sup>28</sup>

The Greens had to refocus their whole policy to make it relevant to effective campaigns against any issues to remain politically relevant. The party conference in April 1991 ratified a set of *Realos* reforms. This enabled it to become more integrated, and to accept participation in Lander coalition governments more easily.<sup>29</sup> In the series of land elections that followed, (Hesse, Rhineland-palatinate, Hamburg, and Bremen) the Greens did well.

Externally, unification has catapulted Germany to the helm of Europe in more ways than one, and domestically presented it with

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<sup>28</sup> Roberts K. Geoffrey, "The German Party System in Crisis", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.48, no. 1, January 1995, p.136.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.136.

numerous challenges at the economic, social, and political levels.<sup>30</sup> “We never thought that unification would be like this”, wrote former Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt some three years after the unification of the east and the western Germany.

However, the poor performance of the Greens in the 1990 elections was not only the result of the external developments and circumstances. It was also the result of the internal weaknesses and deficits, which had characterized Green politics since its earliest days and 1990 proved fatal. The unresolved conflict between the party’s *Realo* faction, the undogmatic advocates of a pragmatic approach to politics, and the *Fundis*, the intransigent representatives of ideological purity, of internal battles heated up once again between 1989 and 1990. The exodus of *Realos*, Otto Schily and Thea Bock, who both joined the Socialist Democratic republic (SPD) was followed by that of prominent members of the staunchly anti-capitalist “Eco-socialist” wing around Thmas Ebermann and Raine Trampert, who sympathizer with the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). The internal battles and defections only reinforced the impression of a party plagued by organized irresponsibility, self-absorption, and slow dissolution.

Unification had really resulted in the unification of two societies in one state. Now, within one Germany there exist two societies divided by 45 years of separate histories, by disparate

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<sup>30</sup> Ummu, Salma Bava, “Political Parties and Political Change In Germany”, in Rajendra K. Jain, (ed.), *Germany in the Nineties*, (New Delhi:Radiant Publishers, 1998), p.19.



levels of economic development, and by mentalities shaped by the distinct social systems in which their people have grown up, lived, and worked. Germans are re-united by law, but not yet in their hearts and minds.<sup>31</sup>

At the level of social cohesion and integration, the new Germany had to learn how to overcome the economic and cultural rift caused by forty years of enforced separation under different political, social, and economic systems. Forty years of division has implanted differing attitudes to politics, to work, to social relationships, and expectations, in ways which now produce serious frictions between the easterners and westerners.

The dismantling of the Berlin Wall may have removed the physical barriers, but other social, cultural, and psychological barriers still remain which cannot be so easily demolished.<sup>32</sup> So with unification the division of Germany ended and political barriers disappeared, but not the mental, psychological blocks, characterized by wide economic disparities. In Bonn, Frankfurt and Berlin, "We" and "they" or East or west or even former GDR are often used whenever discussion turns to the aftermath of Unification. The euphoria of German unification is long over and the nation has had to contend with the massive and complex task

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<sup>31</sup> Rajendra K. Jain, "An East German Perspective", *World Focus* (New Delhi) July 1991, pp.7-9.

<sup>32</sup> Rajendra K. Jain, "German Polity in Transition", *International Studies*, Vol.36, No.3, 1999. P.275

of total integration of the different social system, and the reconstruction of the Easter part of Germany.

Another trend of the 1990s is the revival of the right wing parties in United Germany. A new radical right-wing party, the Republicans came to the limelight in 1989 with victories at state elections in Berlin, a local election in Frankfurt, and the election of deputies to the European Parliament. However, the Greens must hope that, over the medium term, the national question will fade away and the extension of political participation and environment hazards will regain prominence on the German political agenda. Given the East German environmental situation, there are good prospects to revive the agenda of the green party. Beyond a change of overall political climate, the party altered its internal organizational structures and leadership composition, a process that has already begun in the first half of 1991. The all-German general election of 2 December 1990 marked the culmination of one of the most extraordinary years in German history.

## CHAPTER – III

### THE GREEN PARTY AFTER UNIFICATION; PERFORMANCE IN THE 1994 AND 1998 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS

The German Greens displayed a distinct distaste for the process of unification. This had led to the unexpected defeat of the Greens in the Bundestag elections in December 1990. In fact, the west German Greens and their leaders, activists and many of their voters failed to understand the political impact of unification and were consequently not returned to the Bundestag.

It was only after due to a contemporary modification of the Electoral Law and the relative success of Alliance90 that the Alliance of Green and citizen's movement of east was represented in the 12<sup>th</sup> Bundestag. The eight East German Bundestag representatives of the electoral alliance of the Alliance '90 and the Greens found themselves in a dual dilemma following the failure of the western Greens. They alone had to represent the young tradition of the ecology movement in parliament but without having any share of its experience in the old Federal Republic.<sup>1</sup> In fact, other established political parties had already merged into a single political party and faced the 1990 election. The Greens halted their merger and fought the election separately and the west German

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<sup>1</sup> Gert-Joachim Glaebner (ed.), *Germany after Unification: Coming to terms with the Recent past*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), p.116.

Greens failed to cross the five percent threshold and did not enter the Bundestag.

The failure of the 1990 elections was a shock to the Green Party and it was here that they learnt a big lesson and set and resolved to regain their lost electorates. However, the period from 1990 to 1994 in western and eastern Germany have been rich in issues and problems. The euphoria of unification strikes with immense political, social and economic configuration and appeared to be out of control. It was at this juncture that the 1994 Bundestag elections were held.

In 1993 the Green Party joined forces with their east German counterparts, Alliance 90, in preparation for the spate of federal and Land elections scheduled for 1994. The party was listed officially as Buendnis90/Die Gruenen (Alliance90/The Greens), but members formally called it the Greens.<sup>2</sup>

As far as the voter participation in the second all German election was concerned, 79.1 percent of eligible voters went to the polls, up from 1.3 points from 1990. Despite this increase, voter turnout has been lower only twice before in the history of the Federal Republic (1949 and 1990).<sup>3</sup>

On a popularity scale, the Greens received the third best rating nationwide, after the mainstream parties CDU/CSU and

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<sup>2</sup> "An Introduction to the German Green Party", <http://greennature.com/articles421.html>

<sup>3</sup> "Federal Election in German October 16 1994," <http://www.aicgs.org/wahlen/btag94.shtml>

SPD. The classic strong point of the Green agenda - ecological issues - was not considered politically relevant in the *neue Bundesländer*. While environment was ranked highly in western Germany (11%), in eastern Germany only 4 percent rated the protection of the environment as one of the major issues.

Despite the discrepancies in the vote between west and east, the demographic profile of Green supporters was very similar in both parts of the country. The party's core supporters were under 24 and lived in major urban centres. In western cities with 100,000 citizens, the Greens won 9 percent of the vote. In East and West young people in job training supported the Greens (West: 22%, East: 12%).<sup>4</sup>

Like the FDP and the PDS, the Green Party faced a clear East-West gap in term of support. While the Greens defended their position in the West, their position in the east was declining, as the outcome of the state elections in Saarland, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and Thuringia demonstrated.

### **3.1 The Political Background to the Election of 1994**

After unification, Germany became Europe most populous country with 80 million people and the third largest economic power in the world. The problems were becoming bigger everyday. Ever since unification, many problems surfaced and led to an inflation situation on account of money supply to aid

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

reconstruction.<sup>5</sup> Euphoria over unification was distant at least for the East German who book to streets again, but now the target was capitalist 'vices' as they discovered some harsh realities of life in the promised land.<sup>6</sup>

Following unification, Germany's economy became seriously imbalanced. There were budgetary and financial strains as the west of the country propped up the East.<sup>7</sup> Transfers from West Germany to East Germany have amounted to a sum twelve times higher than what the West Germans received per capita from the Marshal Plan funds after 1945.<sup>8</sup> For the west Germans, reunification remained mostly an event on the media. Only a minority has direct contacts with east Germany. But 37% percent of the west Germans stated that their personal life had been affected by the reunification process mostly in a negative way.

The incorporation of eastern Germany in 1990 made it difficult for west German parties to promote a unified all- German winning electoral formula for all voters.<sup>9</sup> Socio-cultural libertarian politics were unpopular in eastern Germany and anti-immigrant feelings ran higher than in Western Germany, even though the resident population of foreigners was very small.

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<sup>5</sup> *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 8 February, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> *Indian Express* (New- Delhi), 14 April 1991.

<sup>7</sup> David Marsh, "Germany strains under unbalanced economy," *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), 15 Feb., 1991

<sup>8</sup> Klaus Von Beyme, "A United Germany Preparing for the 1994 Elections", *Government and Opposition*, Vol.29, No.4, p.445.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, "Political-Economic Context and Partisan Strategies in the German Federal Elections, 1990-2002", *West European Politics*, Vol.26, No.4, October 2003, p.132.

On the other hand, the CDU/CSU government promised that things would be better for everyone and the basics of the West German system could be easily expanded and maintained in a unified Germany were proven to be overly optimistic. Germany experienced economic malaise in the 1990s, raising the question of whether or not the political system was capable of reform.<sup>10</sup> With budget deficits growing, something needed to be done to keep spending in check. More fundamentally, the Helmut Kohl government was determined that stability had to be the mainstay of the CDU after unification and radical reform would simply be too risky for a state in transition.

After the exceptional unification election of 1990, the Green Party and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) lost most of their voters in eastern Germany because east German voters are highly averse to market liberalism. As the problems of German political economy become more pressing, politicians were not likely to win elections by simply playing down economic reform issues, embracing bland middle-of-the-road status quo-oriented economic policy appeals and focusing on socio-cultural appeals and non-issue attributes.

The evolution of party strategies since the unification election in 1990 highlighted the logic of party competition under conditions of centripetal multipartyism.<sup>11</sup> However, the new political economic

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<sup>10</sup> Scott Erb, "Party Politics and Economic Policy in the New Germany", *German Politics*, Vol.10, No.3 (December 2001), p.191.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, "Political-Economic Context and Partisan Strategies in the German Federal Elections, 1990-2002," *West European Politics*, Vol.26, No.4, October 2003, p.136.

challenges began to create voter alignments that undercut the parties' strategic capacities to maintain established patterns of competition.

German reunification had in two short years turned from a gloriously happy dream into a nightmare of racist attacks, an economy in increasingly dire straits, and two societies filled with envy and rage towards each other and a government and opposition in disarray. German civil society and, potentially even more dangerously, the state have so far proved themselves unable to meet the awesome challenge of combining two peoples who had gone their separate ways for more than 40 years. Germany, the perceived salvation of a post-Cold War Europe was simply being asked to perform too much.<sup>12</sup> Taking advantage of popular frustration and sentiment many new parties, particularly extremist parties like the Republican Party, forced their entry into city halls and state assemblies.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.2 Major Issues and Problems in Election Year 1994**

In the case of the 1994 general election the two coalition alternatives were the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the FDP, on the other hand, and the SPD and the Greens, on the other. Voters who identified with one of these two coalition alternatives

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<sup>12</sup> *Guardian* (Rangoon), 20 September, 1992

<sup>13</sup> *The Pioneer*, (New- Delhi), 30 March, 1994



could vote for either of the parties in the respective coalition camps with a view to optimizing the effect of their votes.<sup>14</sup>

By 1994 with the euphoria of unification long gone their eastern German equivalent the Alliance 90/ the Green Party the Greens were positioned to reverse the 1990 defeat. With the Realist wing of the party, led by Joschka Fischer, now in control, the party since 1990 was able to demonstrate in several state-level coalitions Lower Saxony, Hesse, and until 1994 Brandenburg that it was able to govern.

Moreover, environmental issues continue to trouble enough voters to put the party over the 5% mark. An added plus for the Greens in 1994 was that the SPD left wing, which had been alienated by Rudolf Scharping's ultrapragmatic course.<sup>15</sup> At the European and local elections on 12 June the Greens both in west and east did very well with 10.1% of the national vote. The strong showing in the west came largely at the expense of the SPD. Throughout the campaign, the Greens urged the SPD to commit to a coalition with them, arguing that the young, postmaterialist service class now held the real centre of the electorate.

During the campaign, it became evident that there was a growing division within the Green Party between the western and

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<sup>14</sup> Wolfgang G. Gibowski, "Election Trends in Germany: An Analysis of the Second General Election in reunited Germany," *West German Politics*, Vol.4, No.2, 1995, p.27.

<sup>15</sup> David P. Conradt, "The 1994 Campaign and Election," in David Conradt, Gerald R. Kleinfeld, George K. Romoser, Christian Soe, (eds.), *Germany's New politics: Parties and issues in the 1990s*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, Providence), 1995, p.13.

eastern wings. The postmaterialist, middle class, affluent west German Greens have little understanding for their eastern counterparts. The widest gulf between the two groups, however, occurs over the question of how to deal with the resurgent former communist party the Party for Democratic Socialism.

Unemployment and the influx of asylum seekers and foreigners were the two important issues of particular importance in the west, a matter that for some time appeared to be out of control. In surveys, unemployment (66%), asylum and immigration (17%), law and order (11%), the environment (10%) and housing (10%) dominated the political agenda. Again, there were notable differences in the way east and west Germans ranked these issues.<sup>16</sup>

The issues had strongly preoccupied German politics for many years and generated far-reaching political and social debates. As a result of the constant influx of asylum seekers and foreigners, this issue moved to the top of the list of important political issues in September 1991, where it remained until July 1993. The issue only began to lose importance in the eyes of the public when the governing parties and the SPD opposition reached an agreement on amending Germany's Asylum Laws. This led very rapidly to a decline in the number of asylum-seekers. As a consequence, the issue lost importance in the eyes of the western German public. The

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.aicgs.org/wahlen/btag94.shtml>

right-wing Republicans profited from the public debates conducted on the strong influx of asylum-seekers and foreigners.

Since unification, the agenda of major issues in the eastern German Lender had been dominated exclusively by worries relating to the high level of unemployment. The asylum-seeker issue, which was so important in western Germany for a long period of time, became prominent in the new Lender only for a short period of time in the summer of 1993. The prospects of the Bonn government, made up of the CDU-CSU and the FDP, winning the general elections last autumn were still being assessed very pessimistically in the spring of 1994. Nearly all the polls reflected a rather critical public mood concerning the federal government and its leading representatives. Economic deterioration and the burdens of the unification neither helped the west nor the east. It was at this political social and economic situation that the election of 1994 was held.

### **3.3 The Performance of the Greens in the Second all German Election of 1994**

In 1994 Germany entered a "super election year" because elections took place on four levels in one year (municipal, Land, national and European), which had never occurred in the history of the Federal Republic. It happened partly as a consequence of German unification as all the eastern territories held Land elections

at the same time in the 1990 were due to go to the polls in 1994.<sup>17</sup> The Green Party has been integrated remarkably well within eleven years of party formation and is no longer considered a party founded on the basis of “a different republic” than the regime of the Basic Law.

The parties with an emphasis on civic libertarian positions, the Greens and the FDP, saw most of their eastern voters defect to other parties. As the eastern voters were more concerned about their well being and the improvement of living standards. However, in the West, the Social Democrats and the Greens engaged in a strategy of moderate left-libertarian appeals that almost deprived the Kohl government of an overall legislative majority. What saved the Kohl government was a vigorous economic upturn in the election year. Overall, the Greens performed well in the series of Land elections in held 1994. Unlike in 1990, the Green Party collected in the second federal election enough votes to break the 5 percent threshold and re-entered parliament. With 7.3 percent of the vote, the Greens established themselves again as a viable third party. Their ouster from parliament in 1990 came as a surprise and did not reflect their strength in the German political party system. Moreover, due to their unexpected demise in 1990, the party was able to better mobilize its supporters in this election.

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<sup>17</sup> Klaus Von Beyme, “A United Germany preparing for the 1994 Elections,” *Government and Opposition*, vol. 29, No.4, p.455.

The obvious coalition partner for the Greens was the SPD, though one increasingly heard talk of a possible CDU/Green coalition. Indeed, the Greens had moderated many of their positions. This reflected the domination of the Realos within the party. The best known figure in the party was Joschka Fischer, a prominent Realo and a former environment minister in the Land of Hesse. A comparison of the election results of 1990 and 1994 provides a totally different picture. There was a significant evidence of deep cleavages within the society of the former GDR and between eastern and western Germany. It was only after the various Landtag and the Bundestag elections in 1994 that public opinion in the old Federal Republic became aware of the different orientations in eastern and western Germany and the consequences for the political system which were brought by east German voting. The most remarkable result of the 1994 electoral marathon in West Germany was the relative stability of voter alignment towards the two traditional "mass membership parties", viz. the CDU/CSU and SPD.<sup>18</sup>

The ruling Christian Democrats lost 2.2% of their votes and remained the strongest party in the Bundestag with 41.6%. The Social Democrats, for the last 12 years the main opposition party in west Germany gained 36.9%, i.e. 3.4% more than in 1990, but it was their worst results in Bundestag elections since 1961.

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<sup>18</sup> Gert Joachim Glaebner (ed.), n.1, p.119.

The "super election year" of 1994 saw the reemergence of the German Greens as a politically significant actor at the national level. After having been exiled for four years from Bonn as a result of its disastrous showing in the first all German election in 1990. However this time the Green Party crossed the five percent hurdle with relative ease. With 7.3% of the votes, Alliance 90/the Greens entered the parliament with 48 seats in the new Bundestag. The 1994 election assured Alliance90/Greens its position as the third largest party in post-unification Germany.

The result of the 1994 election confirmed that the once motley collection of protesters and anti-politicians, whose appearance in parliament had once met with hardly concealed hostility from the established parties, had become a "normal" part of the political establishment.<sup>19</sup> The party's strong showing was a clear sign that the electoral debacle of 1990 had been a singular case, brought about by an unfortunate confluence of adverse circumstances, tactical errors, and strategic blunders and miscalculation and confusion in the mind of the voters.

But with the question of unification largely settled, the party appeared to have regained much of its lost appeal among its constituency of new middle class voters with left-libertarian, post-materialist value preferences in the western part of the country. However in eastern Germany, the results of the federal elections

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<sup>19</sup> Hans- Georg Betz , "Alliance 90/Greens: From Fundamentalism Opposition to Black- Green", in David Conradt and others (eds.), *Germany's New Politics: Parties and Issues in the 1990s*, (Berghahn Books: Providence, 1995), p.203.

largely confirmed the negative trend of gradual electoral decline already visible in the Landtag elections in Brandenburg and Saxony earlier in the year. The widening gap in the electoral performance between the eastern and western Greens was further accentuated by the results of the landtage election in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Thuringia, and the Saar held simultaneously with the Federal election.

The performance of the Alliance 90/Greens in the 1994 federal election saw two dimensions in the west and the east. The rapid improvement of the position of the Greens was largely due to an internal process of "deradicalization" set in motion in response to the defeat of 1990.<sup>20</sup> This process was accelerated by the exposure to the considerably less leftist Alliance90 changed the internal makeup and organizational structures and dampened the tendency towards programmatic excesses. They failed to transform the nature and identity of the new party. Given the overwhelming predominance of the Western Greens among the members of Alliance 90/ Greens, it was perhaps not surprising that the new party retained much of its old identity as the most authentic representative of the experiences and values of the old Federal Republic.

The structural and organizational reform of the western party paved the way for the second important transformation of the Greens, viz. their merger with the eastern civil rights movements.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.204

Initially, the civil rights movements like Democracy Now, New Forum, or initiative for Peace and Human rights were skeptical about joining the western Greens and reluctant to give up their independence. Deeply suspicious of parliamentary politics, they were largely opposed to transforming themselves into a political party. Yet they realized that with political transformation and prevalent circumstance, they recognized that there was little chance for survival as a significant political voice if they refused to join the Greens.

After unification, two issues were of particular importance in western Germany. The ever-increasing worries about unemployment and the concern about the influx of asylum-seekers and foreigners appeared to be out of control. As a result of the constant influx of asylum seekers and foreigners this issue moved to the top of the list of important political issues in September 1991, where it remained until July 1993.

The issue only began to lose importance in the eyes of the public when the ruling coalition and the SPD opposition reached an agreement on amending Germany's Asylum Law. As a consequence, the issue lost importance in the eyes of the western German public. Thus, the dominant issues in both western and eastern Germany related to everyday concerns. Bread-and-butter issues dominated while post-material issues were of peripheral importance in the west



and without any importance at all in the east.<sup>21</sup> In the east, the high level unemployment became a major issue leaving behind environmental protection as insignificant for the time being.

Reunification had resulted in two major religious groups being approximately the same size throughout Germany, while the group of those without a religion or of a different religious denomination now amounted to nearly 30 percent of the population.

**Table 1: Religious affiliation**

Religion	Protestants	Catholics	Others/none
Germany	35.7	34.7	29.6

Source: Statistical yearbook of Germany, May 1994

Also reunification had reduced the number of self-employed persons and increased the number of blue-collar workers.

**Table 2: Employed Persons**

Germany	Self employed	Civil servants	White collar workers	Blue collar workers
	8.4	6.7	45.6	37.8

Percentage of employed persons, May 1994

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of Germany 1994.

The out-come of the 1994 general elections was that the same parties remained in the German Bundestag which were there after the last general election. Both in western and eastern Germany the Greens had replaced the FDP as the third strongest party in the

<sup>21</sup> Wolfgang G. Gibowski, "Election Trends in Germany: An Analysis of the Second General Election in Reunited Germany," *West German Politics*, Vol.4, No.2, 1995, p.31.

General elections, but would seem to stabilize in this sense only in western Germany. Although there were no separate five percent hurdles for western and eastern Germany, the Greens were unsuccessful in the new Lender. The future of the Alliance 90/the Greens in the new Lender was likely to depend on the speed with which the situation in eastern Germany became more similar to that in western Germany.<sup>22</sup>

The second all-German election results had been universally interpreted as yet another personal victory for Helmut Kohl, enabling him to be the longest serving chancellor of the FRG (16 years).<sup>23</sup> The Social Democrats needed a quarter of a century to reach about 10% of the votes. The Green Party during a short period of time came to the Bundestag breaching the 5% threshold. The acceleration of the process of integration for parties of protest was remarkable. The exclusion of the party was withering away, and co-optation was the final result of the increasing responsiveness of the established parties to the Green agenda. The party changed from a predominantly leftist protest party of amateurs to a "professionalized framework party" abandoning former fundamentalist and holistic visions.

This change was facilitated by an internal generational conflict. The leftist ex-revolutionaries in the leadership of the party came under the attack of the more pragmatic new generations. Only

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.50.

<sup>23</sup> *The Pioneer*, (New- Delhi), 22 October, 1994.

a few of the older generation, such as Joschka Fischer or Daniel Cohn Bendit, were able to abandon former dogmatic positions and to transform themselves into the torchbearers of 'pragmatic realism'. Many leaders of the fundamentalists, such as Jutta Ditfurth, left the party.

In the policy arena, the Green Party developed from fundamental opposition to parliamentary opposition from fundamental opposition to parliamentary opposition, to tolerating a coalition and finally to entering it. It recruited new leaders capable of accepting leading cabinet posts on the Land level.<sup>24</sup> Realistic perspectives for future coalition bargaining were now envisaged.

The Green Party had tried to get out of the ghetto of the department for environmental protection. Former single-issue parties increasingly aimed at competence and responsibility in fields such as energy, transport, economics, law and social affairs.<sup>25</sup> With the 1994 Bundestag election, the Greens became the first party ever to return to the Bundestag following a failure to clear the 5% hurdle. But the party, having overcome its Realist vs. Fundamentalist cleavage, had now to deal with a potentially more divisive issue viz. the relationship between its western and eastern wings. Unlike 1990, the eastern Greens owed their re-election to their western counterparts, as the Alliance 90/Greens failed to surmount the 5% barrier in five Eastern Lender.

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<sup>24</sup> Klaus Von Beyme, "A United Germany Preparing for the 1994 Elections," *Government and Opposition*, Vol.29, No.4, p.451.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.451.

### **3.4 Political Background to the 1998 Elections**

The 1998 election results justified the parties' identification of the east state as the key battleground. The significant differences between the parties' results in east and west underlined the difficulties of party competition in Germany. Much of this problem can be attributed to the gloomy economic situation in the east. With unemployment at record levels and little hope for alleviation, many East Germans had scant regard for the promises of western politicians. Such disillusion was probably further fuelled by a fairly thinly disguised policy of tokenism towards East Germans.

With high unemployment persisting, new initiatives to promote jobs became the top priority both the SPD and the Greens. The coalition quickly reversed some of the modest supply-side labour market reforms that the previous government was able to pass. Further areas where there was agreement including the gradual phasing out of the use of nuclear power and the introduction of an ecological tax.

The change of government epitomized led to a new generation in German politics. Just as the 1998 election symbolized the end of one generation's involvement in German politics, so it also embodied the coming-of-age of the student activists of the late 1960s.

The 1998 change of government by the electorate is unique in the Federal Republic's history. It was created by the long-term

dealignment of the West German electorate and by the almost capricious approach to elections of the voters in the new Lander. The change in government and the passing of the baton to a new political generation symbolized the end of an era in German politics. With a new government, a new Chancellor, a new seat of government and a Green coalition partner, this new era promised to be as fascinating as the old one.

In the election of 1998, the SPD-Buendnis90/Die Gruenen coalition held a 21-seat majority in the Bundestag. In early November 1998, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder delivered his first major policy statement, placing high priority on reducing the rising level of unemployment. Various steps and measures were also planned to expedite the economic reconstruction of the eastern Lender, to reform the pension system, to impose an 'ecological' tax on energy consumption and gradually to curtail the country's nuclear energy programme. It soon became apparent, that the two coalition partners envisaged very different time-scales for the abandonment of atomic power.

While the SPD favoured the phasing out of the 19 national nuclear power plants over a minimum period of 25years, the ecological parties aimed to act far more swiftly. In mid-December, Schroeder overruled his Buendnis90/Die Gruenen Minister of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Juergen Trittin, when he unilaterally attempted both to cancel contracts with British and French companies for the reprocessing of German

nuclear waste and to dismiss the chiefs of the National Atomic Power Safety Commission.

The invitation from Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schroeder to negotiate a coalition government was a decisive victory for one of Germany's most popular politicians Joschka Fischer. And the charismatic parliamentary leader of the German Green party considered the invitation as the most important result of the election. "I think this is very decisive and it will change the party system, it will change the political system very positively," he said.<sup>26</sup>

Earlier in 1998, he said he was opposed to resolutions by party colleagues calling for a ban on the military and the withdrawal of Germany from NATO ideas which Fischer feared would cost his party the 5% of the vote necessary to win a seat in parliament. During the campaigning, Fischer shouted himself hoarse, trying to reassure voters that the "loony fringe" days of the Greens were long since gone. Fischer was able to put across the Green Party line in terms of unassailable common sense. It had been a remarkable comeback for the Greens, who had failed to get into parliament at all after 1990.

That the Greens were able to claim a position as the third most powerful political force in Germany was also due to the above-average support from civil servants and white-collar workers, from whom they received 10 percent. In addition, the Greens were

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<sup>26</sup> "Green Party," [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special\\_report/1998/09/98/german\\_elections/182849.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/09/98/german_elections/182849.stm)

successful among 18- to 24-year-olds (also 10%) as well as among 25- to 44-year-olds. The party proved its traditional urban base by receiving 9 percent in larger cities. Like the 1994 last elections, the Greens were unable to make up their deficiencies in the eastern Germany, where they barely garnered more than 5 percent.

It is practically a given that the Greens were much more successful among younger voters than among older ones. This trend was apparent in the election as well: 18- to 24-year-olds, 25- to 34-year-olds, and 35- to 44-year-olds all gave the Greens over 10 percent of their valid votes.

Ever since the 1994 elections, the single dominant issue in German politics had been unemployment. The number of people seeking work broke the politically sensitive 4 million barrier in early 1996, and public policy has been dominated by the parties' attempts to achieve a turn-around on the labour market.<sup>27</sup> The high rates of unemployment, especially in the eastern Lander, placed sustained pressure on public finances in the form of high social welfare payments. Constitutional restraints on borrowing, combined with the political imperative of qualifying for European monetary union, prevented the federal government from financing tax reform by increasing its budget deficit, already perilously close to the 3% limit laid down by the Maastricht Treaty.

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<sup>27</sup> Simon Green, "The 1998 German Bundestage Election: The End of an Era," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol.52, No.2, April 1999, p.308

Germany's unemployment rate spiked up to a postwar high of 10.8% and the economy weakened substantially in the closing months of 1996.<sup>28</sup> Germany's problem reached to a postwar record high. The German Greens have now adopted an almost in principal position for coalition with the SPD at various levels of government. This can be explained with their recent policy decisions. Commenting on the December 1995 Congress, *Financial Times* described the positions being taken by the Green MPs with the usual clarity of the ruling class's business media as "an effort to update the party's policies in preparation for a possible coalition Federal government with the SPD in 1998." In 1998, the Red-Green opposition renewed its centrist appeals under Gerhard Schroeder's leadership.

The closing stages of the campaign were tense. Polls put the CDU/CSU and the FDP head-to-head with the SPD and GREENS, raising the spectre of the PDS holding the balance of power in the new Bundestag.

### **3.5 Alliance 90/Greens Manifesto of 1998 Federal Election**

The Greens, on whose credibility as a potential coalition partner the SPD depended, chose to reopen some old wounds in the run-up to the election. Ever since its formation in 1980, the party struggled to reconcile its two dominant wings, the Fundamentalists and the Pragmatists, party activists retained a radical streak. This

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<sup>28</sup> *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 10 January, 1997



was laid bare at the March 1998 election congress in Magdeburg, when delegates voted to treble the price of a litre of petrol by 2008 within the framework of a wider ecological tax reform.

In addition, the Greens periodically restated their pacifist credentials, the same congress voting against the German army's participation in Bosnia and for the eventual abolition of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Even within the Bundestag group of Green MPs, which was dominated by the pragmatists, the majority either voted against or abstained in a vote on NATO enlargement at the end of March. The situation was further exacerbated when one Green MP suggested on the day that the local election were held in Schleswig-Holstein that Germans should restrict themselves to one journey by air every five years to cut pollution. Such attacks on two of Germany's most cherished pastimes, viz. cars and holidays, cost the Greens dearly.

In the run-up to the 1998 elections, the general political constellation appeared particularly promising for the Greens. The government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl was looking tired. Thus, the prevalent mood of the Germany electorate in 1998 was one of change after 16 years of the Helmut Kohl government. Government in German generally means coalition government, and to replace the governing coalition, a new coalition of parties had to come together to provide a credible challenge. Never before had one coalition of parties previously in opposition formed the government.

Instead, government change had meant that one government coalition partner dropped out to be replaced by another.

In the past, the liberal FDP had effectively been able to form the government. However, the rise of the Greens had potentially threatened the FDP monopoly of playing coalition-maker. But before the 1998 elections, the Greens faced several dilemmas. The Green election programme had to appeal to their voters to vote for the SPD also had to be taken into account. Also, the only hope to enter the government with the help of the Social democratic Party (SPD), thus developments within the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was of crucial importance.

Oskar Lafontaine, the leader of the SPD, was a man of the left who had championed Green causes and was a known favourite on a Red-Green Coalition. But the Social Democratic Party (SPD) disastrous electoral defeat in 1990 with Lafontaine as Chancellor Candidate was electorally not very promising, because the Red-Green model only appealed to the left of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and thus only a fraction of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) voting potential. So the Red-Green coalition was not a good prospect especially for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) because it feared that it would alienate the Social Democratic Party (SPD) because it feared that it would alienate the traditional Social Democratic support basis of the skilled working class.

It was apprehended that Red-Green alliance would fail to attract the uncommitted 'middle-of-the-road' voter who had voted

for Kohl govt. 1994 as the safer choice. So, if the SPD was to win enough votes to topple Kohl, the party had to appeal to a much wider electorate. Thus, the chances of the Greens being able to form the government as part of a Red-Green coalition would depend on the Social Democratic Party (SPD) electoral performance.

By 1 March 1998, Gerhard Schroeder was eventually confirmed as the chancellor candidate and not Oskar Lafontaine the leader of the SPD. The Greens could not therefore now a radical Green agenda as it would have alienated the Social Democratic Party (SPD) completely. The Green opposition to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) had made them 'incapable' of joining a federal governmental coalition in the eyes of many senior Social Democratic Party (SPD) politicians.

It was the *Realos* wing of the party that was struggling to limit the party's radical edge, but this time it was not just opposition to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) but radical environmental demands that appeared to sink Green hopes for the government. However, the Green Party pre-election Congress held at Magdeburg in March 1998 was a big disappointment for the party leadership seeking a red-green coalition. The party congress passed a motion demanding Germany's withdrawal from the peace mission in Bosnia, by one vote.

The Green Election Manifesto passed by the conference also demanded a gradual rise of petrol price from around DM1.60 to DM5 German marks per litre within a decade. In fact, one Green

MP, Halo Saibold, suggested that aircraft fuel should be taxed in the same way as petrol, increasing the cost of flights substantially. Saibold's opinion that it was enough for people to fly abroad on holiday once every five years. The Greens were thus cast in the role of 'spoil sport' who wanted to take away what most ordinary German saw as the embodiment of social progress. The impact of this is was that, the Greens lost the local elections in Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt. Local party activist blamed the 5DM per litre policy, which could not be effectively communicated, to the electorate.

National opinion polls also show a sharp downturn in the appeal of the Green Party. The Green Party realised their mistake and hastily drafted a second manifesto, suggesting programme intending to do if they came to power during a four-year term. The new Manifesto did not mention the 5DM-petrol price and concentrated on social and economic issues, like fighting unemployment. In fact, the Green Land Council also voted against the withdrawn of German troops from Bosnia, another reversal of the Magdeburg decision. Even then the Greens never recovered their pre-Magdeburg opinion poll rating and put to the defensive for the rest of the campaign.

On the contrary, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) campaign ran smoothly. But the Greens on the other hand were struggling and their opinion poll rating remained close to the five percent margin, and the Greens feared for their political survival. In the

end, the Greens got a reasonably comfortable 6.7% of second votes compared to the 1994 election. Over all, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens received enough seats to produce a majority for a SPD-Green coalition government, and thus the Greens were catapulted rather abruptly from the despair of fighting for survival to the election of becoming part of the Federal Government.

In the 1998 campaign, the Greens offered economic policies similar to those of the PDS, but took a different track on the issue of taxation.<sup>29</sup> The Greens proposed financing welfare programs with taxes based on protecting the environment. They called for Germans to rethink the very structure of the German and even European economy, improving the environment and enhancing, high tech sectors. Also the Greens put together a series of possible initiatives, including taxes based on the impact of products or processes on the environment, with incentives for sound environmental investments. In that sense the Greens have matured greatly from being an anti-growth party in the early 1980s to being in favour of sustainable and ecologically friendly growth. In the 1998 campaign, the Greens proposed to tax all income.

The Green Party keen to make labour cheap and energy use more expensive. They also called for ecological tax reform and a gradual shift of taxation from 'goods', such as employment to 'bad',

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<sup>29</sup> Scott Erb, "Party Politics and Economic Policy in the New Germany," *German politics*, Vol.10, No.3, December 2001, p.202.

It also installed an unprecedented coalition involving a party, the Greens that never before played a rôle in the government of the country at the Federal level. The Greens were facing a double challenge: their supporters had high expectations about finally realising their cherished aims, such as phasing out nuclear energy and ecological tax reform. The experience of the German Greens in government will be looking to Germany to see how the world's most famous green party is faring.

By joining a government that also a coalition was government is not an easy. The most important issue was of negotiating a coalition agreement and managing coalition conflicts. Now after being a part of the government, the heavy burden of governmental responsibility landed on the shoulder of the Green Party. One of the main thrusts was to bring the party quite close together and to show responsibility. The Greens did not want to dispel any notion that it would bring instability and unpredictability into the government. Thus, the Greens were particularly eager to declare that they stood for policy continuity in most areas, particularly in foreign and European Union policy.

In the coalition agreement the Greens got three cabinet posts, although they demanded four posts. The coalition agreement also contained quite a lot that was not to the liking of the Green grass roots. Also, the most obvious shortcoming was the failure of the Green negotiating committee to make sure that the gender balance was respected. Thus Joschka Fischer became the Foreign Minister

and Vice Chancellor. Juergen Trittli became the Environment Minister and Andrea Fischer a woman who made her name in the development of Green social policy. The coalition agreement also included decisions in the post of federal president and the nomination of EU commissioner.

During 1998 the key issues that challenged the coalition in a fundamental way were the Kosovo crisis and nuclear energy issues. So within a few months of entering government, the Greens were asked to sanction the first military engagement of the German Army since the end of the Second World War. This was a big Challenge for the Greens as it was against their pacifist's ideology. In fact, the failure of the western Powers to protect human rights in the Balkans led many Greens to reconsider their fundamental objection to German involvement in peacekeeping missions.

The second important elements were the strong Green desire not to set Germany apart from the rest of the democratic world. Even though the SPD and Greens before the election had argued that no military action was justified without the UN mandate, but once a consensus for military action within the key NATO partners had been formed, German did not want to stand-alone. The decision to take part in the NATO strike was a major departure for Green Party politics.

In fact, Joschka Fischer passionately defended the action, drawing on German history which had established a special responsibility to stand up to human rights violations and genocide.

So approving the NATO strike on Serbia was a major challenge to members of the left which had joined the government. Only lesser known MPs and party activists carried the anti-NATO campaign that sought to commit the Greens to oppose the action and leave the government. The Party Congress met in Bielefeld and debated on the issue.

Despite disrupting the debates by peace and opponents of NATO's Kosovo campaigns, the Green leadership managed to secure a majority for a motion which was critical of some aspects of the NATO campaign but which left the Greens with the possibility of remaining in government. Despite the party leadership won a decisive victory in Bielefeld, the debate having created deep wounds within the party. Some long-term activists decide to leave the Greens altogether.

The Greens could point to successes in a number of areas, a reform of German Nationality law of 1913, the introduction of dual citizenship as an option for long-standing foreign residents. The Greens fought to introduce the double passport policy together with a change in asylum regulation reversing some of the more draconian measures such as the detention of asylum seekers at German airports. While the Greens had achieved their policy goal, they had no direct role in the drafting of the legislature.

The introduction of ecological taxes was another Green success. Direct democracy such as referendum and legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships were accepted. An end



to nuclear power and the introduction of ecological taxation were the other two main aims. A fourth policy area became a crucial testing ground of German identity through 'events' outside the control of the Greens, the Kosovo War was seen by many as the defining movement of the Greens in government.<sup>33</sup>

When the Red-Green government took office in October 1998, one of the key news items that attracted attention around the world was its commitment to phasing out nuclear power. After many delays, an agreement with the power companies for an 'orderly' end to nuclear power was finally reached in June 2000, but the Greens had to make major concessions to the dismay of the anti-nuclear movements and environment organizations.<sup>34</sup> It was argued that the Greens faced a "no win" situation in their attempt to design a constitutionally and politically viable phasing out policy. In fact, the party caught in the middle between the radical anti-nuclear movement that continued its protest against all nuclear operations and an intransigent electricity industry fighting for its commercial self interest to keep nuclear stations running as long as possible.

The Greens Environment Minister, Juergen Trittin realized the difficulties it faced to put the anti-nuclear policies of his party into practice. Thus, the Red-Green government decision to phase out all nuclear power stations and stop the reprocessing of German

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<sup>33</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "Germany", in Rommel. M. Ferdinand and Poguntke Thomas, (eds.), *Green Politics in National governments*, (London: Frank-Cass Publishers. 2002), p.80

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "Phasing Out Nuclear Energy in Germany," *German Politics*, vol.9, No.3, December 2000, p 43.

nuclear fuel in Britain and France was a set-back. The coalition agreement between the Greens and SPD set out a well-defined timetable for the implementation of this policy, involving new legislation within the first 100 days and the negotiation of a consensus with the electricity utilities to be achieved within 12 months passed without political results.

The Greens approach to nuclear power starts well before the elections as the Greens realized that any coalition negotiation with the SPD were likely the nuclear energy issue. However to many Greens the nuclear conflict increasingly appeared to be a ghost of the past. Just as the established environmental groups have arguably lost their radical edge and been integrated into the regular lobbying work. So the Greens have progressively changed from a party that represented conflict that saw itself as the arm of a social movement, to an organization that foremost wanted to play in parliamentary business, in the party political mainstream.

In the coalition negotiations the Greens were able to push through important parts of the decided design of the ecological tax reform. But also the Alliance90/Greens had to abandon commitments such as the imposition of speed limits on Germany's motorways during the initial negotiations, and have been forced in government to accept repeated setbacks in relation to issue such as citizenship and nuclear energy.

Since the Greens arose from the anti-nuclear energy movement. The Greens made the end of nuclear power in Germany

a major demand in the coalition agreement. But the phasing out of the nuclear energy became one of the trickiest policy issues for the Red-Green coalition. The phasing out required two steps. Firstly, a revised nuclear energy law with much stronger safety criteria for nuclear installation and the banning of reprocessing of nuclear fuel was to pass within 100 days of the government but has no time bound.

In health care, the SPD/Green coalition has had a more difficult time trying to craft a workable reform package. However the failure of the coalition to pass the major reform bill in 1999 has led to a situation where the CDU/CSU criticised them for letting the health care system deteriorate. The resignation of Andrea Fischer over "the Mad Cow" disease scare brought Green Party member Ulla Schmidt to the office of health minister. At the core of the coalition stood the relationship between Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and foreign minister Joschka Fischer that appeared quite cordial and cautious and neither of them ever seriously criticised the other in public.

However, only on the question of opening of the way for export of German tanks to Turkey did news of a serious political rift between the Chancellor and his deputy reach the public domain. In fact, Fischer, a brilliant communicator and consummate politician was the star of the Red-Green government, with his popularity rising sharply after taking office.

While Fischer had become a great success with the German population, many party activists were suspicious of the party machinations allegedly engineered by him and his coterie, the mainly Frankfurt-based so called 'Fischer Gang'. In fact, it was Fischer who was a stronger supporter and convinced his party of entering the coalition with the SPD and became a defacto leader. The Greens also took up the task of introducing an Eco-tax on energy issue. For the Greens environmental taxation was their main policy instrument. They suggested the introduction of "Green taxes" in order to reduce the secondary employment costs. Also Green taxes on energy consumption would provide an incentive to use less energy, and pouring the money into the welfare state would allow pension and other contributions to be reduced, constituting an incentive for more jobs to be created. Also the devastating defeat of 1990 when the Green campaigned on global warming and lost their parliamentary representation taught them the lesson that if they ignored the political preference of the population, they will be sideline again.

Since unemployment was the most important issue in the 1990s, the Greens had to refocus their whole policy to make it relevant to effective campaigns against unemployment. This was exactly happen to the Green in 1998. So the Green after entering in the government realised their limited options and their ideals.

### **3.7 Failure of the Greens in government**

The phasing out of nuclear energy was agreed, but this was to be reached in a consensus with industry. However, the Greens in power failed for nuclear phasing policy and remain vague as there was no time bound. Also the Greens idea on transport policy was also ignored by coalition agreement. The only significant concession was applied to the 'Trans-rapid' magnetic railway project that the Greens had long opposed.

Another major defeat for the Green was related to the asylum policy. In case of conflict, there was specific procedure and a committee to discuss and deal between coalition partners to bring about a consensus in case of conflict. However, government practice was different and the Schroeder-style of consensus politics and the creation of many committees and bodies effectively removed key decision-making process from coalition politics and thus weakened the influence of the Greens.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, the new Nationality Law appeared to have failed to motivate substantial members of long-term foreign residents to apply for German citizenship, the public discourse of immigration and asylum still remain very tricky and potentially explosive.

Thus, having failed to change some of the more restrictive and inhuman practices of the asylum process, the Greens were generally on the defensive in public debates on asylum and

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<sup>35</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "Germany", in Rommel. M. Ferdinand and Poguntke Thomas, (eds.), *Green Politics in National governments*, (London: Frank Cass, Publishers, 2002), p.87.

immigration issues after the change of the nationality Law. Thus, immigration and asylum continued to be central issues in German political discourse. Conscious of the strong public hostility to the idea of Germany as a country of immigration, Chancellor Schroeder took the initiative and eager to settle the question with the legislative support of SPD and Green as well as CDU/CSU.

At the Federal level, the Greens appeared to be almost too overwhelmed by their success in September 1998. Only too conscious of the national and international media concerns about unstable and radical, wacky Greens, the main task they appeared to set themselves was to lay the role of a responsible and reliable coalition partner. They wanted to take the chance of involvement in Federal government very seriously. In their task of counteracting the negative media image that still attached to them mainly from the wild internal division of the 1980s, and the Greens succeeded beyond their own expectations. Very soon, national and internationally, any remaining concern about German 'instability' were successfully soothed and the Greens turn out to be a 'manageable' partner.<sup>36</sup>

However, perhaps, with hindsight, that understandable concern prevented the Greens from fully using their own conflict potential. Unlike the small FDP that had risked many government crises to get its policies accepted, the Greens seemed unwilling to

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<sup>36</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "Phasing Out Nuclear Energy in Germany," *German Politics*, vol.9, No.3, December 2000, p.76

take a principled stand and risk the success of the coalition talks. However, this political frame of mind handicapped the Greens through the first year of government.

There were many Green MPs who wanted to play a role in the main political discourse of the economy, the reform of the welfare state, pension policy and budget. Harking back to the days of anti-nuclear protest and risking the survival of the coalition over the nuclear issue was just nonsensical to the 'New' Green politician.<sup>37</sup>

Since the beginning of the Red-Green federal coalition, the Greens had been engaging in detailed discussions about their identity and future strategy. Now the debates seem to go in the direction of modernization and tuning the party into a force that is more at ease with the values and preferences of a contemporary electorate. But the increasing loss of young voters' experience by the Greens since the 1990s put the argument that the Green Party has matured. Of course, this was to be true to some extent but to call it as irrelevant and dysfunctional was not appropriate since all continuity and change was fundamental core of any political party and the Greens were not exceptional.

As a party operating in a competitive political environment, there was no in-built necessity that the Greens would maintain the same political identity that defined them in the early years because once they participate in electorates they were bound by it. Thus, with Gerhard Schröder as the Chancellor of the Federal Republic

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.77

of Germany the Red-Green coalition was a reality. A new phase of Green Party development in Germany had begun.

The 1998 election results saw the Christian-Liberal government of Helmut Kohl as the first postwar German government to be voted out in the Bundestag elections. A major reason was that Germany needed policy reforms and foreign investment, and most voters did not believe in the ability of Chancellor Kohl to provide for policy change after 16 years in office.<sup>38</sup> So the Greens in Germany for the first time came to power with the coalition of the SPD their natural coalition partner.

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas Konig, Till Blume, Bernd Luig, Policy Change without Government Change/ German Gridlock after the 2002 Election, *German Politics*, Vol.12, No.2, August 2003, pp.87-88.



## CHAPTER - IV

### THE GREEN PARTY AND THE 2002 FEDERAL ELECTION

In their first year in government, the Red-Green coalition complied with most of the 1998 election pledges, which were carried out under the leadership of Oscar Lafontaine, the former leftist SPD party leader.<sup>1</sup> Employers welcomed the Red-Green coalition position on general tax reform. However, in some cases, such as health care and labour regulation, the Red Green coalition only restored the status quo at the time of the Kohl government. Initially, the Red-Green programme for policy change remained unclear.

In due course of time as the political experience of the Greens increased, they slowly presented themselves as a 'new-liberal' political force, advocating more radical free market policies than their coalition partner. They urged a substantial reduction of the tax burden for business, in conjunction with pension payments and substantial cuts to other welfare state services. This change was made possible because most representatives of the neo-Marxist, fundamentalist wing, who had a major effect on Green programme and policies in the 1980s, had left the party.

As the political discourse turned towards globalization and Germany's position in international competition, the Greens had to

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Konig, Till Blume, Bernd Luid, "Policy Change without Government Change? German Gridlock after the 2002 Election," *German Politics*, Vol.12, No.2, August 2003, p.88

react in order to remain politically relevant.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) managed to exclude the Greens in many of the core areas of the economic decision-making. However, the 2001 ministerial reshuffle has potentially brought about a major change in Green policy fortunes. The Greens acquired new important portfolio that could exploit or built up a stronger Green identity in government.

#### **4.1 Impact of Government participation on the Greens Party**

During the first two years of government (1998-99), the Greens questioned their own identity because of two reasons. Firstly, because they are in a coalition government and therefore had to make compromises. Secondly, in view of the disastrous election results in many Land elections especially in eastern Germany, Green support had almost completely disappeared, with the party fighting for mere survival at the grass roots in western Germany.

The Greens staying well over ten percent in the opinion polls in the mid-1990s, electoral support has essentially halved, with their poll rating staying dangerously close to the five percent margin. Young voters had turned away from the Greens in droves. The media had started to write them off as a "one generation"

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<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang, Rudig, "Germany" in Rommel.M. Ferdinand and Poguntke Thomas (eds.), *Green Politics in National Governments*,(London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002, p.100

project, casting serious doubt on their survival as a significant force in their medium to long-term prospect.

During the first two years of the Greens in government, the most important reaction to the crisis of the party was to kick off a major discussion about party organization. It was agreed that nobody who held a position in parliament allowed to be elected to a party position. Thus the party reform proposal dominated party congresses between 1998 and 2002 with a series of complex compromises being enacted.

Moreover, as compared to other federal parties, the Green Party still lacked substantial resources and operated on shoestring budgets. There was also not enough money available for committing regular research in order to monitor the public perceptions of Green policies. Another challenge for the Green party was to formulate a new ideology since there was growing criticism of its performances in government and questions about its identity.

Perhaps the most acute crisis the Greens are facing was the continued loss of voters. Some left the Green Party because of the party's response toward the Kosovo war, the nuclear energy crisis. Others were not happy about the painful compromises made by the Greens have to be part of the government. In fact the voter who left were mostly young voters, first time voters and voters who were in their twenties and early thirties. The Programme Committee published a draft of the New Basic Programme in July 2001, and a series of special regional party conferences were held. In order to

attract the youth, the Greens started their own youth organization that promptly became a force protesting against many government policies, such as the nuclear consensus.

#### **4.2 The Greens and Coalition Politics**

During its years in power (1998-2002), the Red-Green coalition presides over years of mostly anemic economic performance, particularly in eastern Germany. As a result, the unemployment rate in 2002 was almost as high as in the months leading up to the 1998 election.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Red-Green government reversed the previous government's pension reform, but only in order to put its own unpopular pension reform in place, which cut back on the "pay-as-you-go" benefits scheme in favour of a supplementary contributions defined, funded pension component.<sup>4</sup> Together with a fairly tight fiscal policy, a corporate tax cut and an abolition of the capital gains and wealth taxes, these measures constituted the main liberal reform policies of the electoral term.

These policies were counterbalanced by concessions to the governing parties' labour wing, especially guarantees to back up pension shortfalls with general government revenue and a further extension of workers' participation in the governance of private

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<sup>3</sup> "Schroder Still has a Chance", *The Economist*, 17 August, 2002.p.43.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, "Political-Economic Context and Partisan Strategies in the German Federal Elections, 1990-2002," *West European Politics*, Vol.26, No.4, October 2003, p.137.

companies. Most importantly, the government stayed away from a liberalization of labour markets that was dreaded by the unions.

Interestingly, it was the formerly most leftist Greens who moved most unambiguously towards a market-liberalizing reform agenda in the 1998-2002 term and in their pre-2002 election rhetoric as evidenced by the party's stance on pension reform, fiscal policy and labour market liberalisation.<sup>5</sup> The labour market reform to enhance the well being of younger voters who are over-represented in the Green electorate. Moreover, new young highly educated voters with libertarian socio-cultural leanings often have a more liberal economic outlook and work in the private sector. Finally, the established Green left-libertarian works in non-profit and public social services vote primarily on socio-cultural issues.

During mid-1999, most organs of government moved from Bonn to Berlin. Both the Alliance90/The Green Alliance become increasingly polarized between idealist and more pragmatic elements. The SPD leaned towards social justice following the announcement in June of a package of economic growth rate and to appeased the alienated business sector perform poorly at several elections to land legislatures during the second half of 1999. By late 1999 the ruling coalition had control of less than two-fifths of votes in the Bundesrat (Federal Council).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.138

<sup>6</sup> "Germany", The Europa World Year Book (43<sup>rd</sup> edition), Vol.1, Europa Publication, 2002, p.1736.

In June 2000, following months of negotiations between the government and the nuclear industry, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder announced that an agreement had been concluded to decommission the country's 19 nuclear power plants (which accounted for almost one-third of power requirements) without compensation by 2021. Under the accord, the reprocessing of nuclear fuel would end by 2005(although the transportation of spent fuel for reprocessing elsewhere could continue under certain conditions).

Despite some reservations on the part of a significant number of members of Alliance 90/The Greens who had favoured an immediate cessation of nuclear waste being transported by train and lorry from France to storage site at a disused salt-mine in Gorleben in lower Saxony. Around 20,000 riot police and other security units were deployed to remove the activists, some of whom had chained and cemented themselves to the rail track. About 600 protesters were arrested the police action constituted the largest police deployment in Germany's post-war history.<sup>7</sup> In September the federal government approved a bill regulating the phasing out of nuclear power, under which the first plant would close in 2003.

In August 2000, in response to growing fears concerning the escalation of neo-Nazi violence against immigrants, the government announced a series of measures to combat racist attacks, including the establishment of a panel to investigate a potential ban on the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.1737

extremist right-wing party, the National Democratic Party (NPD). The application to ban the NPD on the grounds of anti-Semitic, racist and supported violence was approved by the Bundesrat in November and by the Bundestag in December 2000. Chancellor Schroder demanded stricter application of existing legislation and passing tougher sentences from the courts when dealing with right-wing extremists. The government also approved the expenditure of DM75million, over three years to support local youth initiatives committed to fight racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In January 2001, the Minister of Justice, Herta Daubler-Gmelin, announced to provide DM10million. to compensate the victims of far right violence, threats or insults.

In January 2001, Andrea Fischer, Minister of Health and Karl-Heinz Funke, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Forestry resigned amid growing national alarm at the spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy(BSE). In response to public fears about BSE, Schroeder created a new Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food, and Agriculture, to which he appointed Renate Kunast of the Greens. The health portfolio was allocated to Ulla Schmidt of the SPD.

The government also introduced new legislation intended to combat the spread of BSE. The legislation gave the Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture the right to issue rulings on matters such as cattle feed and culling procedures without requiring the approval of the Bundestag. The penalty for

using meat-based cattle feed, hitherto the imposition of fines was increased to a maximum of five years' imprisonment.

Following the terrorist attack on the United States of America, the plan to introduce more liberal immigration laws were abandoned and further new legislation was introduced to increase national security. In early September 2001 troops dispatched to participate in a NATO peacekeeping mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, despite opposition to the deployment by members of the Greens.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack in the USA on September 11, Schroeder pledged "unlimited solidarity" to the US administration, and announced plan to send 3,900 troops to take part in the US-led military action in Afghanistan. The plan was strongly opposed by the majority of members of the Greens, although Schroeder enjoy the support of the Greens Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer.

In 2001, the Green Party experienced a deep crisis as the Green members of parliament refused to back the government plan of sending soldiers to help the United States attack Afghanistan as a part of the global war against terrorism in 2001.

The opposition to the proposed deployment of German troops in Afghanistan increased to such an extent that by early November 2001 the ruling coalition appeared close to collapse. In fact, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called a vote of confidence but a few



of the Greens MPs voted against the government, but not enough to bring down the government.

The interplay of politics and economics in the elections of the 1990s taught all the German political parties that weak economic performance were detrimental to the governing parties' electoral fortunes, as well as market-liberal reform initiatives. In 2002, German politicians anticipated that the election would hinge on economic policy performance and issues such as the environment gender relations or immigration and multiculturalism.

While the ruling coalition parties had blamed the lingering burden of unification and the global economic crisis for the bulk of Germany's troubles in the 2002-election campaign.<sup>8</sup> But the calamity as a result of the floods in Eastern German led to greater attention being paid to Green issues again on the election agenda.

The Green Party unconditionally supported the US war against Afghanistan. On October 6, immediately before the military attacks on Afghanistan, the Greens Executive Council, the party's highest body between conferences, voted by an overwhelming majority to support the war policies of the American government. With 44 votes in favour, 13 abstentions and 8 against, the Council agreed to a resolution including backing for military support by the

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Konig, *Op.cit.*,no.1 p.87

German army. This difficult decision was supported by Alliance 90/The Greens in light of the terrorist attacks in the US.<sup>9</sup>

The party's joint chairpersons, Claudia Roth and Fritz Kuhn, justified this position by claiming that the military actions planned did not amount to a war. "The attacks in New York represent a new, privatised form of violence, which has nothing in common with the classical concept of war and is something to which we must find answers," claimed Kuhn. Roth added: "Once again, it is not about a war against a country, or a war against a religion but rather about the struggle against terrorist violence. As such I do not exclude the use of repressive police and military measures." All of these arguments were threadbare and unfounded, in equal measure. The fact that leading members of the Greens were prepared to swallow such arguments stated a great deal about the state of the organization.<sup>10</sup>

#### **4.3 Issues and problems before the election of 2002 election**

Unsurprisingly, the topic of policy reform dominated the first months of the Bundestag election campaign in 2002. The opposition headed successfully attacked the Red-Green coalition government for its inability to overcome German problems.

In early May 2002, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was trailing some ten-percentage points behind the conservative's

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<sup>9</sup> "German Green Party backs cuts in social program," <http://www.wsws.org/articles/200i/oct/gree-o19.shtml>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.wsws.org/articles/200/oct/gree-o19.shtml>

opposition in opinion polls. By June, they narrowed the gap to a couple of points. But by August 2002, again, a good 6 to 8 points adrift. With only three weeks to go for election, a large proportion of voters i.e. one in three had yet to decide what to do, as reported by opinion polls survey. Thus, the opinion polls had generally predicted a victory for conservative/liberal camps to some extent.

Again, the issues of continued mass unemployment, problems of about four million and large-scale economic crisis, and cuts in social services led to an evaporation of support for the Schroeder government. The statement that Germany economy had been transformed from Europe's "juggernaut to economic "laggard". Joblessness had hit a three-year high; Consumer scale already depressed and keeps slipping downwards. The public health system reported a gaping funding shortfall. Further bad news was that Federal budget deficit stood at 3.5%, well exceeding the limit allowed by the European Union.

When Schroeder campaigned for Chancellorship in 1998, he had declared that he did not deserve to be re-elected if he failed to improve German economic conditions. Stoiber, the Conservative chancellor- candidate, even remained Schroeder about his promised and accused him of messing up German economy at the election campaigned stop in Hamburg. But the Schroeder fortunes changed mid-way through the last election campaign, mainly because of two important events. Viz. the devastating floods of east German and the United State war plans against Iraq.

As far as the floods are concerned, the Red-Green Coalition reacted quickly with relief measures and successfully presented itself as acting in the interest of the victims. The floods in the eastern Germany were the worst for more than a century and had improved the political fortunes of both the Social Democrats and the Greens Alliance.<sup>11</sup> The opposition Chancellor-candidate Stoiber was on vacation and he reacted a rather slowly to crisis.

The political mileage provided by floods brought Chancellor Schroeder back into reckoning. However, many analysts felt that his handling of the flood disaster by itself would not have been able to propel him to second term in government. It was here that the Iraq issue came in handy. The politically astute Schroeder, sensing the anti-war mood in the country, surprised the international community by announcing publicly that Germany would not support the Bush Administration.

Schroeder and Fischer adopted an anti-war position and went into conflicts with the Bush Administration. Schroeder even threatened to withdraw German soldiers and tanks already stationed in Kuwait if the American attack or against United States of America unilateralism. Thus, real politik with a clear view to catch votes, Schroeder had categorically ruled out any German military participation or action on Iraq, even if a United Nations Security Council resolution authorized to do also.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "It's not over yet" *The Economist*, August 31, 2002, p.35.

<sup>12</sup> John cherian, "A Cliffhanger in Germany," *Frontline*, October 11, 2002, p.127

Most Germans vehemently opposes any American-led military intervention in Iraq. It was no mystery why Schroeder took such a tough stance. This was not because of the principle of anti-war position by the Schroeder government. After all, the same administration sent Germany troops abroad seventeen times in the last four years and participated in the military campaign against both Serbia and in Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> The Schroeder's anti-war policy was a tactical manoeuvre to mobilise support for the Social Democrats during the election. It also reflected the interests of the German ruling class that view the incalculable consequences of a war against Iraq and its unhappiness about the unilateralist approach of the Bush Administration. On the basis of these factors, the so-called "Red-Green" coalition bounce back strongly in the polls. Only when Schroeder began his anti-war and anti-America rhetoric did his opinion rating pick up, leading him gradually to oppose American policy even more vigorously.

The emphasis of both Schroeder and Fischer campaign trail that there were other important international issues to be solved before starting another war that could have unforeseen consequences for Germany and the international community. Because of this, President Bush did not even make the customary

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<sup>13</sup> "Election results herald time for a new Workers' Party," <http://www.worldsocialist-cwi.org/eng/2002/09/23germany.html>

congratulatory call to Schroeder congratulating him after his victory.<sup>14</sup>

Schroeder had used stringent opposition to a war with Iraq as a campaign tool to woo disgruntled, but pacifist-leanings among the German electorate centrists. Edmund Stoiber, the conservative candidate of the CDU/CSU was more circumspect but doubts remained especially about American policies. As far as the popularity of the two candidates was concerned, Schroeder remained far more popular than Stoiber. However, the Bavarian leader scored higher on jobs and the economy, the two main campaigns initially. But Schroeder was widely seen as the better leader especially in a time of crisis. Their election manifestos of the conservatives and the Social Democrats suggested that there was little to choose for voters between the two men. Both Schroeder and Stoiber said that they wanted to boost the economy, create jobs, secular pensions, improve education, help families reduction of taxes, welfare contribution, government spending etc. But neither really explained, how these problems would be trickle nor achieved.

However, Stoiber who sounded more economically progressive proposed to loosen some labour laws and promised to curb the unions, partially privatize health insurance if he come to power. But like Schroeder he was also afraid of radical change. Thus for the first time in Germany, election were run like an American-style

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<sup>14</sup> "Reviewing the German Election," [http://hcs.harvard.edu/~salient/issues/10042002/10042002\\_feature\\_winerman.html](http://hcs.harvard.edu/~salient/issues/10042002/10042002_feature_winerman.html)

campaign, with personalities dominating. Although the Greens are among the three smaller parties in German politics, Fischer had gained a huge personal following.

In terms of foreign policy, there was a genuine difference between the two leader's approaches and thinking. Schroeder's populist stand on Iraq has isolated Germany to some extent and criticized by American leaders. Stoiber position was quite confused and lacked clarity.

#### **4.4 The Performances of the Green Party in the 2002 Elections**

In the recent election for the Bundestag held on 22 September 2002, Gerhard led Schroeder led the SPD-Green coalition of SPD and Greens to an 11-seat victory over the conservative headed by Edmund Stoiber (CSU). The coalition agreement for the second Red-Green coalition was signed on 16 October 2002.

In fact, 2002 general election of Germany was one of the closely contested elections. Since, the end of the Second World War, wherein the ruling coalition managed to cling into power by a narrow margin. The SPD and the Greens won 306 in the Bundestag a majority of nine. However, Schroeder's slim majority would not only make it hard for his government to push through painful reforms but also put a question mark over its longevity. During the 2002 German elections a large section of voters were undecided or volatile very close to an election outcome.

No party was more thoroughly transformed between 1998 and 2002 than the Greens.<sup>15</sup> Even by the time they entered the government they had largely mutated from a protest movement to a conventional political party, though the process was incomplete: the Greens still maintain an incompatibility between holding party and parliamentary offices. Yet, though the 'Realos' wing had asserted itself over the Fundamentalists, joining a national government and submitting to coalition discipline presented challenges that were new to the party. Above all, the extent to which the grass roots would attempt to dictate ministerial policies had yet to be tested.

When the new coalition government of SPD and the Greens took over in 1998, its agreed foreign and security policy platform was remarkably lofty. However, when the Kosovo crisis broke out, Berlin joined NATO forces without a mandate by the UN, Security Council because the new coalition government felt it had no alternative. Nor was the new government's apparent U-turn on sending the Bundeswehr into a war seriously challenged from within the coalition or by public opinion.<sup>16</sup>

In the first two years of their first government in power, there were considerable tensions, in particular involving Juergen Trittin as Environment Minister, since he fought hard to secure the

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Pulzer, "The Devil They Know: The German Federal election of 2002," *West European politics*, Vol.26, No.2, April 2003, p.158

<sup>16</sup> Oliver Meier, "A Civilian Power Caught between the Lines: Germany and Nuclear Non-Proliferation," in Sabastian Harnishch and Hanns W. Maull (eds.), *Germany as a Civilian Power*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.110



phasing out of nuclear power. One of the defining items in the Green programme, and eventually agreed to a long-term compromise. Joschka Fischer, Foreign Minister and Vice-Chancellor, held the key to the relative cohesiveness of Green positions and, indeed, the very survival of the coalition.

He soon became a charismatic figure and consistently the most respected politician in Germany. He faced down a potentially hostile party conference over the Kosovo war, after which the party suffered surprisingly few defections, and repeated the performance again by supporting the Participation by the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan.

Fischer's aim had been to cement the Red-Green coalition as a long-term alignment and to wean the SPD from the temptation to seek other potential partners, whether the Free Democratic Party (FDP), or the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in a grand coalition.<sup>17</sup> Schroeder commit himself to a renewal of the Red-Green only at a later stage of the campaign. And by the time of election, it was evident that vote for either party was a vote for the other, especially after Schroeder and Fischer had appeared jointly at a rally a week before polling day.

It was the Greens who kept the ruling coalition afloat. They emerged as the election only real winner, with 8.6% of the votes, their highest score since they first won seats in the parliament in 1983. They are now clearly the country's third force. In fact, barely

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Pulzer, *Op.cit*, p.158.

a year ago, Schroeder had even begun eyeing the Free Democrats or the Liberals as an alternative coalition partner. But the combined effect of recent floods in the East revived many voters environmental concerns.

Again the Chancellor's strong stand against the war in Iraq and the strong campaign by Joschka Fischer helped them return to power. In the aftermath of the 2002 elections, the Greens were expected to wield more influence, and were expected to press Chancellor Schroeder to raise the tempo of reforms. However, the Liberals were the real Loser of the 2002 election. Their expectations had been high. They began to assume that no government could be formed without them. But they ended up with modest 7.4% a point behind the Greens and a far cry from the 18% target they had themselves.

Another big loser in this election was the left wing Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) They lost 600,000 votes and failed to won the five-percent hurdle that is the minimum to get into parliament. This is a setback for the left but it is not based on a rejection of socialist politics.

**Table-1: German General Election Results 2002 (change from 1998)**

SPD	38.5%	(-2.4)
CDU/CSU	38.5%	(+3.3)
Greens	8.6%	(+1.9)
FDP	7.4%	(+1.1)
PDS	4.0%	(-1.1)

Sources:- "Election results herald time for a new workers' party"  
<http://www.worldsocialist-cwi.org/eng/2002/09/23germany.html>

### **Conclusion**

The German election of 2002 was an election in which the incumbent Chancellor Schroeder won a cliff-hanging election but with no real mandate for special reforms. Two events really change the course of the election, viz. the floods in eastern Germany and the war in Iraq. The Red-Green coalition was elected into office with a large transfer of white-collar votes from the conservatives camp accounting for over 1.6 million votes in an SPD vote total of 20.2 million.

How much has the Greens in government been able to change the course of national politics and how much has governmental incumbency changed the Greens? Since the Greens joined the coalition government in 1998 with the SPD, the party certainly did not have a smooth start. It felt the need to reform its party structure twice shortly after joining Federal Government in order to create a more efficient leadership structure that might provide the necessary institutional framework for co-ordinating party,

parliamentary party and Greens member of government.<sup>18</sup> Another indication of the unpreparedness of Green were upon entering government was the debates as to whether or not Green members of government should be allowed to retain their parliamentary seat.

The German Greens also realized that being in the national government was an entirely different ballgame. Increased media exposure, the frequent need for quick decisions, the constraints of coalition politics and the increase resources that come with holding ministerial posts enhanced the power of party elites at the expense of the party. With the participation of the Greens in coalition government with the SPD as (Red-Green) and not (Green-Red).

However, the role of the Greens in coalition government seems to have been limited as compared to the FDP role in the CDU/CSU coalitions. This is because of the capacity of the Greens to blackmail its coalition partner is limited. While the German Greens were imperative for the survival of the first Red-Green federal government, the SPD could turn to the FDP to form the government.

Thus, the credibility of the Greens to leave the government depended on the range of its own available options. The Greens were in an uncomfortable strategic position as their coalition choice is limited to SPD. So the Greens needed the SPD more than the SPD

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<sup>18</sup> Poguntke, Thomas, "Green Parties in National Governments: From Protest to Acquiescence?", In Rommel Muller, Ferdinand and Poguthe, Thomas (eds.), *Green Parties in National Governments*. (London: Frank Cass Publisher, 2002), p.135.

needed the Greens. The German Red-Green coalition agreed on phasing out nuclear energy over two or three decades without providing definite data as to when the last nuclear power station would have to be shut down. This was in sharp contrast to the original Green slogan of the early 1980s, which called for an immediate halt to all nuclear generation in Germany.

Even the harshest critic had to admit those Green ideas and Green politics were able to convince a larger percentage of the population than they expected. Greens also received praise from unusual quarters, namely the Conservatives press. The daily *Bild* called Foreign Minister Fischer a 'superstar'.<sup>19</sup> *Die Welt* commended on the party's unified and professional profile, of course not without reminding once more of Fischer's "revolutionary roots" of the 1970s. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) even recognised the fact that the Red-Green coalition would be continued, not despite the Greens, but despite the SPD and because of the Greens. The Alliance 90/ the Greens received more votes from former SPD supporters. Depending on the pollster, between 500,000 and almost one million former SPD voters placed their vote with the Greens.

According to infratesdimap, behind economic and employment policies the issues of social justice played an important role deciding the vote. After all 40% of Alliance 90/ the Greens

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<sup>19</sup> "Superstars": German Green Party and the Election 2002," [http://www.gruene-partei.de/rsugn/rs\\_dok/o,,16567,00.htm](http://www.gruene-partei.de/rsugn/rs_dok/o,,16567,00.htm).

voters declared that this was the deciding factor for their vote.<sup>20</sup> In fourth place were foreign affairs and security and here to the Greens were able to score well with Joschka Fischer. The issues leading to the Red-Green coalition's success were to a considerable extent shaped by the Greens.

The Greens had earned their reputation as a responsible partner in government. This was in large part due to the 'top personnel', first and foremost Joschka Fischer, with an 83 percent approval rate among the population. Renate Künast, the Green Minister for Consumer Protection also enjoyed broad support.

According to the Infratest dimap analysis it was particularly women who voted for Alliance 90/The Greens with 9.6 percent. The electorate can fittingly be described as "female and young". With 5.2 percent of the women's vote, the Greens even managed to pass the five percent hurdle in the Laender of eastern Germany. Social justice was an issue especially important to female voters and they viewed this issue as best represented by the Green Party.

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder urged a "new understanding of German foreign policy," in which "military action" also played a role. Fischer has also been concerned about strengthening the role of Germany as a Great Power. "The issue is to create a world order that no longer permits zones of disorder or specifically... the complete loss of political order", he declared following Schroeder's speech. Fischer made clear that Germany intended to play an

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,

important role in this New World order as force for order. He warned, "the Europeans would be marginalised in the New World order" if the process of European integration did not proceed rapidly enough.

The most remarkable feature of the Green Party Congress held in Stuttgart 2002 was that almost no discussion took place. All disagreements and conflicts had been settled in advance. What remained were clichés. Following the innumerable political twists and turns this party has carried out, it has become a master at churning out meaningless phrases and formula compromises. What was agreed, as "unanimity" was the absence of any political debate. This Congress transformed the Green party, conducted with the same media antics as the other parties, to try and sell policies that signified ever-deeper social cuts and more audacious attacks on democratic rights. The Greens' conference was thus indistinguishable from those of any of the other parties represented in the *Bundestag*.

Over the past two years, during which the Greens have governed Germany together with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), their political transformation has continued to accelerate. In quick succession, they have bid farewell to all the programmatic points and positions with which they attracted their supporters for 20 years. Whether the issue be "social justice", opposition to nuclear energy or "peace and security", the Greens have not only

abandoned their former positions, they have adopted diametrically opposed policies.

The widespread political alienation that all the parties confront in the general population is clearly visible in the Greens as well. Press reports pointed out that Joschka Fischer played only a background role at the Stuttgart Party Congress. However, psychological speculations about the Greens coming out of the "shadow of the overlord" are very wide off the mark.

The Green Party of today is a result of the fact that the Fischer wing has asserted itself against all rivals. The Greens are the Fischer Party. Because this process is complete, Fischer can limit himself to pulling the strings in the background, and to some degree has even become dispensable.

After all, the Schroeder Red-Green coalition government could not solve key problems in Germany during its first legislative term from 1998 to 2002.<sup>21</sup> But still they manage to come back to power for the second term in German politics. It would be interesting how the coalition folded their government especially in the fast changing domestic and international scenario.

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<sup>21</sup> Christine M. Harlen, 'Schroeder's Economic Reforms: The End of Reformstau?', *German Politics*, Vol.11, No.1, pp.61-80.



## CHAPTER - V

### CONCLUSION

The German Green Party emerged on the political scene in Germany in the 1970s and the early 1980s. They presented a radical new vision of society. Going beyond the single campaign issue of environmentalism, Green Parties argue not just for some new policies but a whole new approach to politics. The Green wanted to create a new society based on the principles of non-violence, social justice and grassroots democracy.<sup>1</sup> Within two decades of its formation as a political party, it had become a partner in coalition governments not just at the local and regional but also at the national level.

The rise to prominence of Green postmodern politics in the 1980s occurred during a period of significant changes in the cultural and political climate of the Federal Republic in the 1970s. The changes took place in the wake of the first oil embargo of 1973, which resulted in grave economic problems and rising unemployment. The unemployment problem further worsened after the second oil shock of 1979. This led to the formation of a series of regionally limited, single-issue electoral organizations and public-

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<sup>1</sup> Ferdinand M, Rommel and Thomas Poguntke, "The Unharmonious Family: Green Parties in Western Europe", in Eva Kolinsky, (ed.), *The Greens in West Germany: Organisation and Policy*, (New York: Berg Publishers, 1989), pp. 26-32.

action interest groups. The Green Party supported by ecologists, and nuclear energy opponents, and the radical political left.

They formed a loosely organized unit for the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 and then obtained a permanent organizational structure on the national level with the foundation of the Greens in the early 1980s. The party platform as laid down in the Saarbruecker programme characterized the Greens as a grassroot democratic, ecological, social and non-violent alternative to the established parties. These, factors which encouraged the rise of the Greens, were accompanied by growing awareness of the environmental crisis which enabled them to easily cross the 5 percent threshold in the Bundestag as well as many representative bodies at the local, state, and regional levels.

At the Land level, the Greens were able to dislodge the Free Democratic Party (FDP) from their long-held position of coalition-balancer.<sup>2</sup>The rise of the Greens to political prominence has been attributed to their perception as the representatives of a new generation of postmaterialists and the process of marginalization affecting particular groups in West German society.

The Greens, who began as part of the protest movements in the 1980s and political counter culture in West Germany, no longer criticised society from the outside as a "system", but have entered into and act within the political sphere as circumscribed by the

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Schoonmaker, "The Greens and the Federal Elections of 1980 and 1983: Is the Opposition waxing?" in Karl H. Cerny, (ed.), *Germany at the Polls: The Bundestag Elections of the 1980s*. (Durham: Durham Publisher, 1990), pp. 142-66

constitution. The most striking indicator of this is the “parliamentarization” of the Green Party, which has now become a permanent feature of German politics.

The rise of the Greens was also facilitated by the fact that they had to accommodate themselves both to a more open and “democratic” internal structuring and to a more responsive agenda.<sup>3</sup> They also tended to seek more auto-direction, informality, and libertarianism. They also advocated more participation and more citizen involvement<sup>4</sup> In eastern Germany after a difficult process, the west German Green Party completed merger with its two Eastern counterparts-the East German Party and the Alliance90 and was rechristened as Alliance 90/The Greens in May 1993.<sup>5</sup>

The Greens take political activity seriously, and the emergence of this postmaterialist movement/party is one of the largest and most politically organized in the industrialized democracies of today.<sup>6</sup> The Greens have managed to carve out a reasonably secure electoral niche for themselves in the Federal Republic. The Greens have been able to successfully exploit the reluctance by the established parties to conceptualize alternative

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<sup>3</sup> R.K. Jain “German Polity in Transition.” *International Studies*, Vol.36, No.3, 1999, pp253-275.

<sup>4</sup> Piero Ignazi, “The Crisis of Parties and the Rise of New Political Parties”, *Party Politics*, Vol.2, No.4, October 1996, pp. 555-57.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Poguntke and Ruediger Schmitt-Beck, “Still the same with a New Name? Bunendnis 90/Die Gruenen after the Fusion”, *German politics*, vol. 3, No. 1994, pp. 91-113.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Schoonmaker, “The Challenge of the Greens to the West German Party System” in Kay Lawson and Peter H. Merkl,( eds.), *When Parties Fail: Emerging Alternative Organizations*. Princeton, 1988, p. 66.

approaches to tackling pressing problems. The rise of the Greens is in some respects a symptom of the gap between changes in the social structure and the failure by the established parties to develop relevant programmes for society. The challenge for the established parties is to incorporate and adapt to these changes. The challenge for the Greens is to remain at the forefront of the push towards radical reform and innovation.

The Greens have a history of arguing not only for social welfare programmes, but questioning the very essence of the capitalist/market economy. Their approach was less one of traditional leftist attacks on capitalist oppression, but rather a critique of the nature of industrialised society and its alleged dehumanising and unnatural attributes.<sup>7</sup> By the late 1980s, however, as the party struggled to survive politically, realists like Joschka Fischer argued that the Greens had to develop a more pragmatic set of policies, and they slowly moulded themselves into an alternative party of the left profiting from the Social Democratic weakness and an emphasis on issues of ecology and civil rights.

The Greens insisted on the linkage between the form of democratic procedures and the substance of authoritative allocation in key policy areas. The Greens were not interested in new policies, but also called for the restructuring of the decision-making process: less bureaucratic, elite-controlled parties, more influence of direct

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<sup>7</sup> Scott Erb, "Party Politics and Economic Policy in the New Germany," *German Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 3, December 2001), p. 197

democratic procedures (plebiscites), and dismantling the party-interest group cartels holding a firm lock on vital policies.<sup>8</sup> The Greens attracted constituencies that sought to democratise politics as a debate about procedures and preferences rather than exclusively the allocation of scarce values in the existing parliamentary democracy. This explains why the established parties faced serious difficulties in winning back voter groups that were sympathetic to the agenda of the Greens.

The Social Democrats followed the Greens on substantive policy issues like environment and disarmament, but were never willing to challenge the form of competitive party democracy in the way Green politicians advocated<sup>9</sup>. The Leftists and the Greens promoted the view that democratization of the GDR more important than unification. In the 1980s, the Greens emerged as the most consequential advocates of this position and were the only party that openly called for the abandoning the obligation laid down in the Preamble of the west German Basic Law that Federal Republic must strive for the reunification of Germany.

Despite serious differences regarding orientation between the "Fundamentalists" and the "Realists", a split in the foreseeable future seems undisputed. The Green Party has an international objective. It is a party which seeks to develop a new society, a

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<sup>8</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, "The 1990 German Federal Election and the National Unification: A Watershed in German Electoral History?", *West European Politics*, Vol.14, No.4, Oct.1991, p.126

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p.126.

society without military power and with good relationships with all the countries, relationship between East and West and North and South with better support for Third World countries. It is also against military pressure on weaker countries. The Greens point out that their long-term objective is to bring normalcy to Europe without military blocs, and without the presence foreign troops.

The four pillars of Green Party ideology are ecology, grassroots democracy, social justice, and non-violence. The Greens reject an exploitative form of economy and the unscrupulous plundering of natural resources and raw materials and the destructive intervention into nature's ability to renew itself. The Greens call for the end of the exploitation of both Nature and human beings.

They point out that both the capitalist and the state-socialist form of economic growth contaminate and destroy the very basis of human and natural environment. All established parties met the Greens with intense hostility and soon attained the role of the real opposition in the party system. The new party challenged almost every cornerstone of politics in the Federal Republic.

The Greens' emphasis on environmental and immaterial values was unprecedented in West German politics. Today the Green Party can claim to have changed West German politics as no small opposition party did before. Also the monopoly role of FDP as a sole coalition maker and coalition breaker in the German political structure was neutralized by the Greens.

The Green Party is not a homogeneous group but it was founded as the representative of environmental, anti-nuclear interest groups, citizen initiative groups but supported by individuals who rejected any established values. In fact many of the supporters of the Greens were mostly first time voters and mostly educated and strong-minded voters mostly held from the urban centric and middle class background. These people are the new generation of postwar period and have much concern about their history.

Another group of supporters hailed from those individuals and groups who were not happy with their own party policies and orientation. This is more relevant in the context of many unsatisfied SPD members who supported the Greens. There were also many voters who were neither committed to any party or the Green programmes and policies also attracted the ideologies.

Contrary to many perceptions, the Green Party survived and continued to be active particularly in the western part of Germany. The party had a remarkable impact in some policy areas, and marginal influence in other areas. Overall, they have contributed to the development of a more participatory democracy, more responsiveness on the part of the power holders, and to the crumbling of "Model Germany".<sup>10</sup> However, they have failed to reform the politico-administrative system from the ground up. In

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<sup>10</sup> Dieter Rucht, "The Changing Role of Political Protest Movements," *West European Politics*, Vol.26, No.4, October 2003, p.173.

the economic and foreign policy domains, SPD and GREENS have very close preferences and thus predict a long stable coalition as long as economic and foreign issues dominated German politics.<sup>11</sup>

The influence of the Green Party is illustrated by the fact that a number of major political parties in west Europe chose to reconsider some of their policies in response to Green Party activities. The age at which one is eligible to vote was reduced from 20 to 18 in 1970. The change has benefited the SPD in particular, and since 1980 the Greens as well. With the coming of Green Party, Germany has more than three political parties giving the electorates more freedom of choice. Today all the established political parties accepted the importance of environment in their policies, which was an exclusive to the Green Party many years ago.

With the end of Cold War and the dismantling of Berlin wall, many people especially the neo-realist were skeptical and predicted that Germany would go back to the past history and would slowly acquired nuclear weapons. But such fears are unfounded. In fact Germany reduced its army more substantially and became one of the strongest supporters of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the German decision to be a non-nuclear weapon state can be considered permanent.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Konig, Till Blume, Bernd Luig, "Policy Change without Government Change? German Gridlock after the 2002 Election", *German Politics*, Vol.12, No.2, August 2003, p.105.

<sup>12</sup> Oliver Meier, "A Civilian Power caught between the lines: Germany and nuclear Non-Proliferation", in Sabastian Harnisch and Hanns W.Maull, (eds.), *Germany as a Civilian Power*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001, p.68.



The Gulf War (1990-91) triggered an agonizing intra-party debate about the role and the use of force. So as a political grouping which had its West German roots in the peace movement, the Green Party contained a strong principled pacifist wing and thus rejected any use of force, and had demanded the dismantling of the Bundeswehr and the substitution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) with collective security arrangement with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the UN.<sup>13</sup> The West German Greens also rejected any German participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The East German Bündnis 90, however, took a more moderate view.

The change in the attitude of the Greens towards the use of force, the Bundeswehr and NATO again came through development in former Yugoslavia. The party was divided into three different wings of about equal strength. The radical pacifists on the left, the “*realos*” around Joschka Fischer, and a moderate middle left groups led by Jürgen Volmer, who tried to reconcile the difference through compromise positions. In fact, as early as mid-1992, some prominent Greens had publicly supported the use of force to disband the concentration camp in Bosnia. The debate challenged pacifist convictions that any use for force could only escalate death and suffering and posited under certain circumstances the need for military intervention to prevent mass murder, terror and eviction.

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<sup>13</sup> Oliver Meier, “A civilian power caught between the lines: Germany and Nuclear Non-Proliferation” in Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns w. Maull, (eds.), *Germany as a Civilian Power*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001, p.112

Thus, Joschka Fischer argued in the Bundestag. "We are in a real conflict between basic values. On the one hand, there is the renunciation of force as a vision of a world in which conflicts are resolved rationally, through recourse to laws and majority decisions, through brute force, a world in which military means are rejected, and in which the aim is to create structures to replace them and make them redundant. On the other hand, there is the bloody dilemma that human beings may be able to survive only with the use of military force. Between solidarity for survival and our commitment to non-violence that is our dilemma."

Fischer's position found considerable resonance in the party leadership, and an influential group of greens supported German participation in NATO operations to attack Serb positions and support UNPROFOR. When NATO launched air attacks in the former Yugoslavia in March 1999, an overall clear majority of the electorate supported German participation in the air strikes, and 52% were willing to see them continued even if German soldiers were killed.

A majority also felt that NATO had struck in the pursuit of humanitarian aims, and saw the use of force as justified in such circumstances. Remarkably, this majority was particularly large (72%) among voters of the Greens. The Greens continued their stubborn opposition to virtually every aspect of German defence policy, existing or contemplated.

The Green Party has clearly been forced to find a balance between the 'Green' commitment to the organizational style of the 'new politics' and the practicalities of operating within competitive party systems. Initial examination suggest that despite significant organizational reforms, the party organization still attempted to incorporate the values and ideas of the 'New Politics', such as decentralization. Undoubtedly, some of the more challenging aspects of Green Party organization have been removed as the parties have evolved. However, many reforms represented an amendment to the more utopian aspect of the Green Party organization of the Greens into established party frameworks.

The Greens, which started as a protest movement in due course of time, became an established party and one of the most successful Green Parties that existed and formed the government. But as Kitschelt, has rightly point out that Green Parties follow not the pure logic of party competition, but more or less logic of constituency representation.<sup>14</sup>

Since the Green Party in Germany is only two decades old, many observers of this party inevitably in one way or another raised the question about their future. There are various set of opinions about the party, the optimism is founded on the fact that the Greens to some degree have become a part of the established order,

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<sup>14</sup> Matthias Kaelberer, "The Emergence of Green parties in Western Europe", *Comparative politics*, Vol.25, No.2, January 1993. p.233.

as a pure anti-nuclear movement and the peace movement the German Green would fall victim to waves of political fashions.

The anti-nuclear movement and the peace movement have not survived as mass movements. However, the Greens in Germany have survived as political parties in the established parliamentary system. They apparently have been able to balance successfully their origins in social movements, and New Left with the imperatives of party politics. Their integration into the system has climaxed in the formation of the Federal government since the 1998 election and successfully came back to power in the 2002 Bundestag election in a coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The Green party represents a fundamentally new pattern of party politics that sets them apart from traditional parties in German politics.

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