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FORMATION OF THE GREENS BLOC'S VIEWS IN THE FRG

„The Greens” are one of new parties on the German political scene. They emerged as a significant political force during the election in 1983, receiving 5% of the nation-level vote, which granted them Parliamentary representation on the federal level¹.

This is how „the Greens” became the fourth political party in Germany following CDU/CSU², SPD and FDP³. Their success was connected with a general crisis of so-called old parties as well as with the fact that rich German society began to focus their attention on post

¹ In 1983, during the election to the *Bundestag* on 6th March the Green Party obtained 5,6% of the vote. Thus „the Greens” got their representation in the *Bundestag* for the first time. Marieluise Beck-Oberdorf, Petra Kelly, Otto Schilly were elected as the members of the *Bundestag*, representing *Fractionen* of „the Greens”. Joschka Fischer was chosen the leader of the parliamentary *Fraktion*. During the very same month „the Greens” deputy Werner Vogel was forced to quit after his membership in the NSDAP and SA was disclosed. In 1984 the *Fraktion* of „the Greens” in the *Bundestag* elected an executive board which consisted of women only (so-called *Feminat*). Annemarie Borgmann, Waltraud Schoppe, Antje Vollmer were elected to be members of the board, whereas Christa Nickels became the chairperson of the parliamentary *Fraktion*'s board.

² The chairperson of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) is Dr. Angelika Merkel, their headquarters – Bundesgeschäftsstelle der CDU, Klingelhöferstraße 8, D-10785 Berlin. Fraktion der CDU/CSU, Deutscher Bundestag, Platz der Republik 1, D-11011 Berlin. The chairperson of the Christian Social Union (CSU) is Dr. Edmund Stoiber, their headquarters is located at Franz Josef Strauß-Haus, Nymphenburger Straße 64, 80335 München. Fraktion der CDU/CSU Deutscher Bundestag, Platz der Republik 1, D-11011 Berlin.

³ The chairperson of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) is Dr. Guido Westerwelle. The address: FDP – Bundesgeschäftsstelle, Thomas-Dehler-Haus, Reinhardtstraße 14, D-10117 Berlin.

materialist values (Sobolewska-Myślik 2004: 85 and ff.). Politically, „the Greens” were usually critical of both Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s⁴ and the Christian Democratic-Liberal coalition’s activities. Over the twenty years of their existence „the Greens” have led to a change of the party system which had been in operation since the beginning of the 1950s and consisted of two big rival parties: CDU/CSU and SPD as well as of FDP seen as a third force able to co-govern with either of the two (*Die Gremien...* 2003: 8 and ff.). „The Greens” are a political party that belongs to the so-called new social movements (Rudnik 1994). They are far from identifying either with the left or the right. Nevertheless, in terms of historical precedence, the so-called ecological issues were first broached by the leftist groupings. Moreover, „the Greens” do not acknowledge a division into individualism and authoritarianism although one can assume that they are closer to the former (chapt. VI *Bundnis...* 1999: 44–47). The German „Greens” support Poland’s and the other countries’ of Eastern Europe active participation in the restructuring of the EU institutions after they acceded to the European Union. This also applies to the shaping of particular EU policies with an emphasis on the policy of environmental protection and agricultural policy. Political changes, initiated in Eastern Europe in the period of 1989-1990, also contributed to the democratization of life in the GDR at the time. The civil rights’ movement (*Bürgerrechtsbewegung*) became important during this breakthrough time there. It was also the period when new parties were formed in Germany, including:

- Demokratie Jetzt (Democracy Now),
- Neues Forum (New Forum),
- Vereinigte Linke (United Greens),
- Grüne Partei (The Green Party),
- Grüne Liga (The Green League),
- Unabhängige Frauenverband (Independent Women’s Union).

„Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte” (the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights) had been active much earlier in the former GDR – ever since 1986, whereas „the Greens” were officially founded there on

⁴ Kohl Helmut – Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate between 1969–1976 and the Chancellor of the FRG between 1982 and 1998. He was an advocate of moderate socio-economic policy, which made it possible for the coalition of CDU/CSU/FDP to stay in government for many years (electoral successes in 1987, 1990 and 1994). In November 1989 he proposed a ten point plan for the reunification of the FRG and the GDR.

24th November 1989. "The Greens" from East and West Germany eventually united on 3rd December 1990⁵.

Analyzing factors that contributed to the establishment of „the Greens”, it should be pointed out that the party emerged on the basis of numerous ecological protests by citizens and a movement in support of independence. The party's basic aim was to protect the environment⁶, to dispense with nuclear energy⁷ and to strive for a peaceful co-existence of countries. The Green Party of *Bundesland* Nordrhein Westfalen (Northrhine-Westphalia)⁸ was founded in December 1979 – a few weeks before its state level equivalent in FRG was established. It was primarily founded⁹ by people from ecological¹⁰ and peace movements as well as the women's movement's representatives.

Various commune-based groups attempted to work together on their programmes and organizational structures in order to prepare to

⁵ The data obtained in „the Greens” headquarters in Munchengladbach in 2004.

⁶ In November 1977 the Environmental Protection Party of Lower Saxony (USP – Umweltschutzpartei Niedersachsen) is founded, in May of the same year – it emerges as a regional union. The SDP leader Egon Bahr revealed his official stance on the occasion claiming that the „Green electoral rolls are a threat to democracy”.

⁷ In October 1997 the Green Environmental Protection List (Grüne Liste Umwelt Schute) succeeded in winning one seat in the county government in Hildesheim, whereas Electoral Association – Nuclear Energy – No-Thank-You (Wahlergemeinschaft Atomkraft Nein Danke) won one mandate in the county of Hameln/Pyrmont, scoring 2,3% of the vote.

⁸ North Rhine-Westphalia comprises an area larger than Belgium, Denmark or Holland, having at the same time more inhabitants than the countries. It is not, however, an independent country but „only” a federated state. Rhine Province/Rhineland – a historical region in West Germany – within the borders of *Bundesländer* such as: Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia.

⁹ On June 9th 1978 former CSU members and ecological activists formed a Bavarian Green List – Free Electorate Association (Grüne Liste Bayern Bynd Freier Wähler). In July that year Herbert Gruhl, a Christian Democratic member of the German Parliament, left CDU, founding a party Green Action Future (GAZ – Grüne Aktion Zukunft) the very next day.

¹⁰ In March of 1978 the Green List party won one mandate in the county of Erlangen in the Free State of Bavaria, whereas in two counties in Schleswig-Holstein in the proximity of a nuclear power plant, they managed for the first time to cross the threshold of 5%. In the election in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg on 4th June 1978 Green Lists collected 3,5% of the vote. In Lower Saxony the party Green List Environmental Protection (GLU – Grüne Liste Umweltschutz) won 3,9% of the vote.

take part in local elections in NRW¹¹ in May 1980. However, „the Greens” did not succeed in the election, failing to win a single seat in the regional parliament. Drawing society’s attention to the ecological issues was the only objective they managed to accomplish, having received merely 3% of the vote at the time. During that period parties such as SDP, CDU as well as FDP highlighted the need to develop nuclear energy and to build motorways. Involvement in ecological issues was seen as nothing else but „naive rubbish”. „Care for the environment” is nowadays also included in their programmes¹². Already in September 1984 „the Greens” were much more successful in the communal elections in NRW, winning 9,1% of the vote. The result produced significant changes in the party itself. At the time „the Greens” won altogether almost 1300 mandates in city and local councils as well as in district and county representative bodies. This meant a substantial challenge for the party, given that its membership totalled only ca 8000. Currently, „the Greens” in NRW are more numerous, with ca 10 000 members. The scope of new tasks increased, however, at a faster rate than the party members’ number, especially at the communal level¹³. Ever since the communal elections in 1994, „the Greens” have formed „majority coalitions”, most frequently with SDP in many counties of NRW.

It was only in 1990 when „the Greens” made it into *Landstag* – a regional parliament of NRW in Düsseldorf (NRW’s capital), scoring a required minimum of 5% of the vote. Twelve deputies of the party had for five years been deeply engaged in politics opposing the single-party SDP government. In 1995 „the Greens” succeeded in forming the *Fraktion* in the Parliament which was twice the size and thus able to break the absolute majority of SDP. This paved the way for the „green-red”¹⁴ coalition to govern in Düsseldorf.

Basic assumptions of the Green Party’s programme (*Bundnis...* 1999) focus most of all on contributing to the development of a toler-

¹¹ This acronym stands for the name of the state: Nordrhein Westfalen (North Rhine-Westphalia).

¹² The data obtained in „the Greens” headquarters in Munchengladbach in 2004.

¹³ During the congress at the regional level in Ludwigsburg between 25 and 27 of March 1987 a „pro-green” association the „Rainbow Foundation” (Stiftung Regenbogen) was founded. It consisted of three equivalent foundations: Heinrich-Boll Foundation (Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung), The Women’s Foundation (Frauen-Stiftung), Coloured Foundation (Buntstiftung).

¹⁴ The Red – this is the way in which SDP is generally referred to in Germany.

ant, social, ecological and democratic European Union. This is facilitated by a strong representation of „the Greens” in the European Union, which is to constitute the best European guarantee to deal successfully with problems of globalization (chapt. IV, *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 77 and ff.), to take into consideration environmental and social conditions which accompany the growth of economy and trade. In particular, their programme encompasses striving for the creation of an independent and coherent European foreign policy which is based on democratic and ecological principles. „The Greens” fight for peace, solidarity, respect for diversity and equality (chapt. X, *Bundnis...* 1999: 69–71). According to their assumptions, Europe should take responsibility for the state of the environment, which ought to be followed by radical changes in the energy policy (Gutges 2000: 8–9) and transport policy. The production of nuclear energy must be phased out and replaced with cleaner and safer alternative sources of energy (chapt. III *Bundnis...* 1999: 21–23). The European Union should be open-minded and tolerant, protecting both natural and cultural diversity. The „Greens” are committed to attaining high social and ecological standards on the regional, European and international level. The standards must take precedence over purely commercial interests. In the „Green Europe” the rule of law and civic rights of both local communities and individuals shall prevail over purely military and economic dominance. Encouraging citizens to participate in public life as well as increasing involvement of society and non-governmental organizations in democratic co-decision-making are among „the Greens” priorities. According to them, the European Union should be based on the basic principles of equality and solidarity (chapt. III *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 61 and ff.) as well as on the principle of care for sustainable ecological development of the whole continent. The European Union ought to be a role model of peaceful co-existence of nations. It must safeguard peace and should be a prime promoter striving for peace in the unstable international situation (*Kommunalwahl...*). Nevertheless, environmental protection remains the basic objective of „the Greens” (chapt. I, *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 18).

„The Greens” have two priorities in this respect. The first concerns safe and healthy food for everyone. This is why they support a radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). They declare being in favour of the policy’s reorientation towards organic farming, promotion of regional produce and development of rural areas (*Bundnis...*

2002–2006: 15). In addition, such a direction of changes makes it possible to maintain landscape diversity and conservation of biodiversity of flora and fauna (*Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 11). The citizen as a consumer is primarily focused upon in their programme. He/she should be adequately protected by correct labelling of food products so that their ingredients and manufacturers may be identified. Animal rights ought to be protected, too, which pertains both their breeding and transport conditions. The principle of prevention becomes specially important for „the Greens”. Therefore, the grouping opposes genetically modified food. They also attempt to rein in the power of the chemical industry, compelling it to take responsibility for its products and production processes. A shift in the energy policy is the second priority of „the Greens” (*Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 13–15). They want to lift the anachronistic „Euroatom Treaty” which favours nuclear energy. The party aims also at making states comply with the Kyoto Protocol with respect to carbon dioxide emission. The European Union leads the battle to combat climate change – mainly because of pressure on the part of Germany. This attitude should be supported by other political formations. The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol through the establishment of a European Climate Stability Pact should result in guarantees of ecological safety (*Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 11). The Union has to continue its hitherto prevailing policy of abiding by Kyoto commitments. The party strives simultaneously to persuade states which so far have been reluctant to ratify and abide by these obligations. The transport policy has to be reformed in order to increase efficiency and reduce the emission of harmful substances (*Bundnis...* 1999: 21). This is a prerequisite for stopping climate changes and a necessary condition to prevent anomalously hot summers, big floods and their dramatic consequences. Another demand of „the Greens” entails so-called friendly social sphere (chapt. VII, *Bundnis...* 1999: 52–55). Its major objectives are:

- integrated communities,
- friendly cities,
- social and economic security for all European citizens (chapt. VIII, *Bundnis...* 1999: 59–61),
- proper distribution of regional and structural aid so as to give life to solidarity throughout Europe,
- elimination of dumping policy by the Member States,
- creation of the EU competition policy.

A „green social and employment policy” should counteract exclusion, guaranteeing access to basic public services for all citizens. It must be active protecting women's interests; gender equality is part of the policy. It is of great importance to create conditions that make it possible to reconcile good and satisfying work with simultaneously balanced family life, particularly by providing adequate child care (chapt. II. *Bundnis...* 1999: 41 and ff.).

„The Greens” believe that disabled people have the right to live a normal life. All artificial physical barriers and impediments that block their access to work should be removed. The grouping advocates, most of all, extended welfare policy of the state, for example:

- universal health care,
- universal access to gas, water and electricity facilities,
- decent pensions,
- universal access to good education (chapt. IX, *Bundnis...* 1999: 63–65),
- full employment (chapt. V, *Bundnis...* 1999: 34 et al.),
- safeguarding health and safety at work,
- decent minimum wages,
- providing fair labour conditions instead of promoting cheap labour,
- fostering a stable social protection system,
- furthering the tradition of the welfare state.

„The Greens” strongly criticize and oppose the neo-liberal tendency to leave everything to the market. They act to make sure that regional and structural funds are used to guarantee a social minimum to all EU citizens. Apart from their particular interest in environmental problems and the issues of welfare, „the Greens”, are also dedicated to democratic issues. Developing democracy requires dedicated involvement of citizens. Abiding by the principles of democracy entails thus full protection of civic rights, human rights as well respect for women's and minority rights. Minorities should be integrated at the EU level while their rights to difference and culture ought to be respected (chapt. IV. 2, *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 83–85). This can be achieved when citizens and civil society organizations participate in decision-making. Declaring respect for justice and acknowledging police cooperation at the European level, „the Greens” demand more guarantees of civic rights. This is to be done through taking a wide variety of initiatives to ensure that „the Charter of Fundamental Rights” is fully applied. In the tolerant and open Europe there is no room for extreme right-wing forces or undemocratic, nationalist reli-

gious movements. All citizens – independent of gender, colour, health, sexual orientation, religion, language, origin or culture – must enjoy equal civic and political rights. Non-EU citizens legally residing in the Union should have the right to become European citizens within five years of their stay in Europe (chapt. IV. 2, *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 83–85). Long-standing immigrants without a regular legal status must have an opportunity to regularize their stay in the EU. The EU has an important role to play in combating border crime. However, increasing effectiveness of the police and efficiency of the judiciary should not be attained at the expense of civil rights. „The Greens” demand universal guarantees of fair trials.

Democratization of Europe should mean more solidarity amongst people; more transparency of the Union structures; more accountability and democratic control of the European Parliament. It entails increased subsidiarity, coupled with decentralization of power in regions and cities; more inclusive decision-making including for instance local referenda. In particular, it means guaranteeing fair and equal access to and the mass media and information. All the elements of the Green politics discussed above are to aim at strengthening the peace policy. The policy, as practised by „the Greens” focuses on mediation, diplomacy and early conflict prevention (by means of issuing resolutions), fair trade as well as a policy of post-conflict reconstruction. According to this party, the UN is the best equipped institution to deal with global threats, whilst promoting a common European policy. Doing politics which is so broad in scope, „the Greens” favour also grass roots globalization (chapt. IV. 2, *Bundnis...* 2002–2006: 84–85).

The EU must play an important role in reforming and regulating negative side-effects of globalization that are currently manifest. The world economy needs to be transformed in order to make it more sustainable – mechanisms of democratic control of the economy must be created. In matters pertaining to world trade, „the Greens” believe in corporate accountability defined by valid and binding legal rules that affect big corporations. Europe should play a crucial role in the North-South aid system as well as in co-operation related to development of various European regions. The free trade regulations must take into account the necessity to protect both the quality of food, the living conditions and income of small farms. The national economy should be more present and involved at the regional and local level in order to sustain cultural diversity.

Summing up „the Greens” activities over the last twenty years, especially in the European Parliament, one must point out that the party has contributed to many political and cultural changes.

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