



# FREEDOM

*Bulletin*

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## THE NEW LUDDITES

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN MOVEMENT

On 15 June 1989 2.3 million people turned out in Britain to vote for the Green Party in the European Parliament elections. This represented 15% of the national vote, the largest share ever taken by a Green party anywhere in the world. Since June, the Green Party has come out of the political shadows where it had languished for 16 years, membership and income has soared, it is fêted by the media and its opinions have gained new credibility with Government and Opposition politicians alike. However, the origins and prescriptions of the Greens are still only superficially understood by many. Political observers have been unable to comprehend a party that does not fit into the conventional political spectrum and espouses nothing less than the revolutionary overthrow of industrial society. Here, we strip away the comfortable media image of the Greens to expose the third force in British politics: the New Luddism.

#### 1. THE RISE OF THE GREENS

The Green Party was founded in 1973 under the name People and became the Ecology Party in 1975. The party stood 109 candidates in the 1983 General Election, including two 'affiliated candidates' from the Greenham Common women's peace camp, but won only 1% of the vote. The party did slightly better in the following year's European Parliament election but concentrated on extra-Parliamentary activities such as protests against the Sizewell B nuclear power station and the Greenham Common and Molesworth nuclear bases. 1984 also saw the party lose its most articulate leader, Jonathon Porritt, who became Director of Friends of the Earth, although he remains a very influential party member. In September 1985 the party changed its name to the Green Party, imitating the far more successful environmentalist parties in mainland Europe. Since then, the Greens have made steady, if unreported, electoral progress, as can be seen from the following table:

	Candidates	% Vote
June 1987 General Election	134	1.4
May 1988 Local elections	395	4.0
May 1989 Local elections	641	8.0



The party took a major gamble in April this year by deciding to fight all 78 mainland UK Euro-constituencies, staking £78,000 in election deposits and £172,000 in campaign expenses. In the event, the gamble paid off handsomely — the party saved its deposit in every constituency and established itself as Britain's third party.

## 1.1 Who Voted Green ?

The Green Party's base of members when it went into the 1989 campaign was only about 8,000, however, it is estimated that some three million people in Britain belong to some form of environmentalist group and this represents the pool from which the Green vote was drawn. **Naturally, there is a great deal of overlap between these groups; one survey found that 80% of Green Party members belong to another organisation, with Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) (44%), Friends of the Earth (21%) and Greenpeace (12%) topping the list.** However, the Greens scored their highest votes in June in the south of England, taking two thirds of their support from the Conservatives and former Alliance parties.

## 2. THE GREEN MANIFESTO

The first point to be made about the Greens' manifesto is that they do not see themselves as being 'Left-wing' or 'Right-wing' in the conventional terms of the political spectrum. Rather they take a 'third position' stance against all the ideologies — Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism, Communism — that they see as associated with industrial society and all its ills. Interestingly, this 'third position' is one shared by the anti-Capitalist National Front. The NF has taken environmental issues on board recently, launching its own 'Greenwave' organisation. After the June election the Green Party candidate for the Kent Euro-constituency, Jim Tidy, wrote to local NF activists saying "I was amazed to see how much we have in common." This probably explains why the NF's sponsor, Colonel Gaddafi of Libya, sent a congratulatory telegram to the British Green Party after the June poll and why a delegation from the European Greens organisation (see below) attended the twentieth anniversary celebrations of Gaddafi's *coup d'état* in Tripoli this month.

The founding principle of Green politics is the abandonment of economic growth as an objective of policy and the shift away from consumption to a "conserver" economy. This is the essential message repeated both in the Green Party's election programmes and in its political 'bible' the *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*. In the drive to reduce society's absolute level of economic activity, population control is a top priority. The party envisages a reduction in the UK's population from the present 56 million to around 35-40 million over a few generations. How this is to be achieved remains obscure as the Party claims to be opposed to compulsory birth control. However, in their influential book *A Green Manifesto*, which is recommended reading for Party members, activists Sandy Irvine and Alec Ponton recommend tax and benefit penalties for large families; a ban on infertility treatment and "a more realistic approach to abortion". The book also attacks those who have access to contraception but nevertheless choose to have large families: "this, more than any other factor, explains why social change cannot be left to individual action". Irvine and Ponton also quote approvingly the US ecologist Kingsley Davis who said, "If having



too many children were considered as great a crime against humanity as murder, rape and thievery, we would have no qualms about 'taking freedom away'." The drift of this argument seems to be towards a policy similar to the Chinese government's notorious 'one child only' family laws which have caused great emotional suffering and led to an epidemic of female infanticide.

Another Green target is the private ownership of land. The party's manifesto for this year's European elections unequivocally states "most of the land in Europe is owned by a small number of wealthy individuals and organisations... to the Green Party this state of affairs is unacceptable." A Green government would nationalise all land and impose a tax on any development of it; the aim of the land tax being to "encourage wilderness". The party is completely opposed to the type of intensive agriculture that has made Britain virtually self-sufficient in food since 1945. Factory farms, food processing, artificial fertilizers and pesticides would all be either banned or tightly controlled. How the Greens expect to feed even a shrinking British population remains unclear; the manifesto merely promises to "explore ways in which urban areas can produce some of their own fresh food".

## 2.1 Green Economics: Back to the Dark Ages

The Greens' economic policy amounts to a return to the mercantalism of the Middle Ages when kingdoms aspired to self-sufficiency or autarky. Having rejected "the futile goal of economic growth", a Green government would see international trade dry up as Britain disengaged from the international money markets, broke up multinational companies and abolished private banking. Even trade within Britain would decline as the bulk of economic activity would be shifted to successively smaller regional and local units. A 'turnover' tax would actively penalise enterprises that wanted to expand beyond limits set by the state. Air travel and long distance road haulage would be curtailed. The Green Party likes to present itself as the ally of local communities but ignores the fact that communities thrive by concentrating their efforts on what their endowments of natural resources and labour are best suited to and trading these, nationally and internationally, for goods they cannot produce. At the same time, the Greens would impose ceilings on national raw material consumption levels with any unused materials being compulsorily bought back by the government at the original price. **In fact, the drift of Green policy, despite their rhetoric of localism, is towards a centrally planned economy dictating land use and mineral extraction, rationing raw materials, imposing import controls and stifling private business and trade.** As Irvine and Ponton state "we need a collective, rather than a private, approach in which society sets appropriate parameters for the quantity... of goods and services available".

On energy policy the party goes far beyond its well-known commitment to close down all nuclear power stations to argue against any additional electricity generation at all. Green energy policy is not concerned with finding alternative ways of powering existing society but with facilitating the transition to a post-industrial one. This involves trimming the 'fat' of the motor car, food processing, pharmaceutical, advertising, fashion and 'luxury' good industries. Even so, by their own admission, Green policies would push up energy prices and necessitate state subsidies to, for example, pensioners.



For housing, Greens favour a return to “vernacular architecture” using local materials, presumably meaning a return to wattle and daub huts for many. A Green health service would promote alternative therapies such as acupuncture and yoga. The education system would be broken up into small local units with differences between age and ability groups abolished. Ecology would be a compulsory part of the curriculum, private schools would be abolished but there would be state support for ‘experimental’ education.

The Green Party is committed to a policy of “non-violent defence”. The party advocates complete unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from NATO, and a military posture based on popular resistance to enemy occupation. Jonathon Porritt favours a Gandhian-style policy of civil disobedience to deter invaders, but then he also regards the Soviet Union as having acted “defensively” by invading Afghanistan. The Green Party also supports the break up of the United Kingdom itself believing that “strong regional movements... especially in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland” and “greater regional autonomy” should be encouraged. Whether or not the Green Party includes the IRA or the Welsh bombers The Sons of Glyndwr as “strong regional movements” is not stated.

### 3. BAD COMPANY – THE EUROPEAN GREEN PARTIES

Despite the Green Party’s declared opposition to the European Community the party actually has closer links to its sister parties of the continent than any other UK party. Since 1979 the British Greens have been part of a coordinating alliance with *Die Grünen* from West Germany and *Les Verts* from France to formulate joint policies and election strategies.

#### 3.1 Die Grünen

The German environmentalist movement came together to form a political party before the 1979 European elections. They were motivated largely by a desire to profit from the exceedingly generous West German election law as it relates to campaign expenses. Under this, any party winning more than 0.5% of the vote is entitled to have expenses reimbursed proportionately from Federal funds. As there is no obligation to prove that this money has actually been spent on electioneering a party that runs a frugal campaign can effectively receive a windfall running into millions of Marks. In 1979 *Die Grünen* received just such a windfall amounting to £1.5million.

In March 1979 the *Sonstige Politische Vereinigung, Die Grünen* (Alternative Political Alliance, The Greens) was formed from two regionally based ecology parties in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, the centrist Green Action Future and the neutralist Independent German movement. *Die Grünen*’s executive was joined at this time by Petra Kelly and Roland Vogt of the Citizens’ Initiatives Union, an umbrella organisation of anti-nuclear pressure groups, who were to emerge as the German Greens most prominent leaders.

*Die Grünen* made steady progress throughout the early 1980s and approached the 1983 Federal election with much optimism, despite deep divisions. The most visible of these divisions was between the ‘*Fundis*’, fundamentalist greens who would accept no watering down of the party’s anti-industrial society ideology or compromise with other parties and



the 'Realos', realists who share the *Fundis*' ideology but want to work with other groups within the political system. Petra Kelly leads the *Fundis* arguing that *Die Grünen* are an "anti-party party" who should only work with others committed to "radical and non-violent and feminist as well as pacifist approaches". Kelly also argued passionately against moves in 1981 to expel the Berlin Alternative List from the party as Marxist infiltrators, a decision she is now thought to regret. The decision not to expel the Berliners led to *Die Grünen* losing many of its more conservative members including one of its founders, Herbert Gruhl, a former Christian Democrat activist.

### 3.2 The 1983 Federal Election — Die Grünen Break Through

The party's 1983 election manifesto was an unequivocal statement of the party's revolutionary philosophy. Election to the *Bundestag* was merely a "supplement [to] activities outside parliament" which consisted of building "a new democratic movement" including the "peace, human rights, women's and Third World movements". **The party's famous commitment to non-violence was in reality an apology for violence:** "Non-violence does not exclude active social resistance and so does not mean passivity for those involved. The principle of non-violence means that resistance against government measures is not only legitimate in certain circumstances, it may even be essential... (for example sit ins, blocking of roads, obstruction of vehicles)".

#### Other manifesto commitments included:

- A shift to labour intensive production and the abolition of conveyor belt factories.
- Closure of all nuclear power plants.
- Phasing out of the petrol engine.
- An amnesty for those convicted of violence at anti-nuclear demonstrations.
- Disarming the police and abolishing its anti-terrorist unit.
- Expulsion of NATO troops and nuclear weapons and German conventional disarmament.
- Support for Third World 'liberation movements'.
- Free abortion on demand and women-only courts to try sex offences.
- Full legal homosexual rights.

**Standing on this platform, the German Greens won 27 seats in Parliament.**

Despite *Die Grünen*'s disruptive tactics within the *Bundestag*, particularly their determination to 'rotate' seats among activists, the party continued to make electoral progress, winning seven seats in the 1984 European elections. The party also began to be wooed at this stage by the socialist SPD opposition as a possible coalition partner. After the Autumn 1983 Hesse regional elections *Die Grünen* held the balance of power and resulted in voting the SPD into office and being offered the environment and energy portfolios in return. However, the Hesse Greens were denounced by party speaker Jutta Ditfurth for collaborating with the police "murderers" of a demonstrator who died in a riot. The Federal SPD leader Johannes Rau also distanced himself from *Die Grünen* in the run up to the 1987 general election, (The Greens in his home region had issued a manifesto calling for, amongst other things, the legalisation of sex between adults and children).



At the 1987 election *Die Grünen* increased their number of seats to 44, including two non-voting MPs elected on the Berlin Alternative List. Almost immediately afterwards, however, fighting between internal party factions broke out anew, leading Petra Kelly to describe the rows as “tantamount to a declaration of intellectual and political bankruptcy.”

### 3.3 Greens Condone Terrorism

In November 1987 *Die Grünen*'s Co-Speaker Regina Michalik provoked a national outcry when she called for a “broad show of unity” with gunmen who killed two policemen and wounded nine others during a riot at the Frankfurt airport development. **This was not, however, the first time senior German Greens had expressed support for terrorism.** In 1985 two Green MPs sent letters of support to Red Army Faction hunger strikers in jail and Jutta Ditfurth has called for a free pardon for all convicted terrorists. Another German Green MP issued a statement of support for the Basque terrorists ETA during a visit to Spain.

Nevertheless, the SPD still courted *Die Grünen* as a coalition partner. As noted above, *Die Grünen* stand in West Berlin on the Alternative List (AL) which includes the most radical supporters of the Green alternative lifestyle as well as apologists for violence and terrorism. After the West Berlin Senate elections in January this year the local SPD leader, Walter Momper, forged an alliance with the AL, despite having emphatically ruled this out before the poll. The AL has already succeeded in having the Berlin riot police disbanded after May Day disturbances which left over 300 police injured. **The rest of its agenda includes the abolition of prisons, disarming the police, an amnesty for drug offenders, ‘negotiations’ with convicted RAF terrorists and the cutting off of West Berlin’s air link with the Federal Republic; under the guise of environmental protection.**

*Die Grünen* are at the crossroads of German politics. On the one hand, the prospect of a partnership with the SPD at next year’s Federal election and fresh transfusions of German taxpayers’ money could lead to the alarming prospect of a Green share of government in a key NATO and EC ally. On the other hand, a new outbreak of internecine warfare in the party over the coalition debate and the present rumblings of financial scandal could see the party confined to a political ghetto on the far-Left of German politics.

### 3.4 Les Verts

The French Green party, *Les Verts*, was formed in February 1984 from two previously rival Green parties; *Mouvement d’Ecologie Politique* (MEP) and *Les Verts — Confédération Ecologiste*. With little electoral success behind them, *Les Verts* unexpectedly won nine Euro-seats last June. *Les Verts* are the most conservative of the European Green parties, a stance characterised by a statement made by an executive member at the party’s 1984 Conference when he said “it is better to violate a woman than the statutes.”

### 3.5 Brice Lalonde — Setting Europe’s Green Agenda

Throughout their history, the French Greens have been dogged by the quixotic character of Brice Lalonde, the self-styled *Monsieur Ecologie* of the 1970s who is now French



Environment Minister and President of the European Council of Environment Ministers. Lalonde first emerged when he stood as an ecology candidate in a 1976 Paris by-election and the following year he encouraged people to vote Socialist in the Paris municipal elections. Tensions within the Paris ecology group over Lalonde's egotism led to it breaking up. However, in 1978, MEP, after procedures hotly contested as undemocratic, selected Lalonde as the party's candidate for the 1981 Presidential election. Lalonde succeeded in polling over one million votes in 1981 but the campaign ended with MEP members taking him to court over large sums of money allegedly left unaccounted for. When the *Rainbow Warrior* affair broke in 1985 Lalonde was widely interviewed by the media because, as a personal friend of the Greenpeace President, he had often sailed with the organisation against his country's nuclear test programme in the Pacific. In the run up to the 1986 National Assembly elections Lalonde called on Mitterand's Agriculture Minister Michel Rocard to quit the socialists and join him on a new Green list. Lalonde was widely regarded as politically unacceptable at this time but after the Socialists' re-election in 1988 Rocard, now Prime Minister, invited Lalonde to be Environment Minister despite his never having won an election.

Among the measures that Lalonde will press for when he helps set the EC's environment agenda is the mandatory 'green labelling' of all products sold in the Community after 1992 and a new world body to impose a global tax on carbon emissions.

### 3.6 Towards a Green International?

After the 1979 European Parliament elections the Coordination of European Green and Radical Parties was set up by *Die Grünen*, MEP from France, the two Belgian Green parties *Agalev* and *Ecolo*, the UK Ecology Party and the Dutch and Italian Radical parties. The Coordination's objectives were to exchange policy ideas, support each other's campaigns, issue joint press releases, organise conferences and seminars and work towards a joint election manifesto. The Coordination's first leader was *Die Grünen*'s Roland Vogt.

By October 1983 the Coordination had been joined by the Green parties from Sweden, the Irish Republic and Austria but the Radical parties had left by mutual consent after their anarchic antics proved intolerable. The organisation was thus relaunched as European Greens and its first Joint Declaration committed members to "cooperate closely... to pool aims and means thus creating a genuine Green International". In early 1984 a Dutch Green party called *de Groenen* applied to join but *Die Grünen* wanted European Greens to back a cartel of Dutch parties called the Green Progressive Accord and which included the Dutch Communist Party. This issue again split the movement but an agreement on a technical alliance was essential to win reimbursement of expenses in the forthcoming European elections. Eventually, the Germans won this battle and the Dutch GPA was signatory to the European Greens pre-election Paris Declaration in April 1984. The Declaration pledged the Green parties to campaign for a neutral Europe, "uncompromising" environmental policies, and "closer cooperation" with (unspecified) Third World movements.

In 1988 European Greens was joined by the Finnish Green Party, *Vihreä Liitto*, whose founding father Pentti Linkola dedicated his autobiography to the German terrorists Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. One of the organisation's Co-Secretaries, with



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leading British Green Sara Parkin, is Swedish Green leader Pehr Gahrton who "seriously doubts whether man will ever recover without a period of matriarchy." In August this year, the Green Party's Jean Lambert was given the full voting rights of an MEP at the Parliamentary Group's meetings despite her party having no seats.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Since their unexpected success at the European poll, the Green Party has come under sustained attack from Conservative, Democrat and Labour politicians alike, all deriding the unrealistic nature of Green policies and claiming the mantle of the environment's friend for themselves. Nevertheless, public concern about environmental issues has remained high and some on the orthodox Left are attempting to forge strong links with the Greens; a natural development given the European Greens' Communist connections. The CND leader Meg Beresford has called for such a move, one described as "excellent" by Green Party speaker and BBC sports commentator David Icke. Since early June Green Party speakers have shared public platforms with representatives of such diverse organisations as the Communist Party, the Communist League, the Communist Lesbian and Gay Group, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Socialist Society and the Socialist Workers' Party to discuss common strategies including electoral pacts. Another Green leader, Penny Kemp, is expected to share a platform with Ken Livingstone MP, a member of Labour's National Executive notorious for his support for *Sinn Féin*, at Labour's Annual Conference. However, Labour front-bencher Bryan Gould has said the Greens would need a "virtually totalitarian state" to enforce their no-growth policies.

In the medium term, the British electoral system, if nothing else, is likely to prevent the UK Greens scoring the sort of success of their continental partners. However, this does not mean that the party presents no threat to the established order. A change of leadership in the Labour Party after a fourth election defeat could, for example, see the party adopting some of the Greens' prescriptions for the economy and society. At the same time, as 1992 approaches, more and more European environment legislation is going to be inspired by the European Green parties and scrutinised by Brice Lalonde. **The British Green Party is certainly not going to go away and may even hold the balance of power on some local authorities after next spring's elections, raising the possibility of Berlin-style 'Red-Green' coalitions here.** For this reason, more than any other, it is vital that everyone understands the full nature and implications of Green policies before they cast their vote.

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