

"We are neither left nor right; we are in front"



with updating
and new
American chapter

GREEN POLITICS

THE
GLOBAL
PROMISE

Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra

How the Greens are transforming the political culture of Europe and inspiring a worldwide movement that can change the course of America's future.

GREEN POLITICS

**BOOKS OF RELATED INTEREST
BY BEAR & COMPANY**

CRYING FOR A DREAM
The World Through Native American Eyes
by Richard Erdoes

THE GREAT TURNING
Personal Peace, Global Victory
by Craig Schindler & Gary Lapid

RETURN OF THE THUNDERBEINGS
A New Paradigm of Ancient Shamanism
by Iron Thunderhorse & Donn Le Vie, Jr.

SACRED PLACES IN NATURE
How the Living Earth Seeks Our Friendship
by James Swan

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF GREEN POLITICS
by Charlene Spretnak

TO CARE FOR THE EARTH
A Call to a New Theology
by Sean McDonagh

Contact your local bookseller or write:

BEAR & COMPANY
P.O. Drawer 2860
Santa Fe, NM 87504

"A solid, impressively researched book. For anybody who wants to be ready for the next wave of political activism, *Green Politics* is essential reading."

— *San Francisco Chronicle Book Review*

"I sincerely recommend *Green Politics* to American readers who want to know what is at the heart of alternative Green party politics. Spretnak and Capra have written an insightful and honest book which does not cover up the internal conflicts that must be solved when a movement is born."

— Petra Kelly, co-founder of the West German Green Party

"With the fanfare of political hype over political principle all about us right now, this book is particularly refreshing."

— *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"*Green Politics* provides a fascinating, richly detailed report on the impressive gains of the West German Green Party and similar European parties."

— *Village Voice Literary Supplement*

"*Green Politics* is a provocative introduction to a politics that is radically different from anything we have seen on this continent to date. This book is an important contribution to the literature of paradigm shift, which is evidently getting more real."

— *Co-Evolution Quarterly*

"As a sympathetic yet also fairly tough-minded look at the Greens, *Green Politics* succeeds well. Capra and Spretnak and friends have begun a discussion that is well worth joining."

— *Christianity and Crisis*

"At last! We have in *Green Politics* a book about the theory and the practice of decentralist/globally responsible politics."

— *New Options*

"This useful, well-written book describes the fundamental challenge posed by the Greens to both finance capitalism and state socialism. Their appeal for protection of the environment, decentralization of political and economic power, nonviolence, and restoration of human-scale democracy needs to be heard both in the West and behind the Iron Curtain."

— John McClaughry, formerly Senior Policy Adviser,
Reagan White House

"This book is more than a challenge to the prevailing status quo. It is a clarion call for the need to rethink and reorder our environmental, economic, and political priorities so that our children will have a future that emphasizes constructive preservation rather than destructive growth and mere survival."
— Rep. Ron Dellums, 8th Congressional District, California

"Yes!"

— Hazel Henderson, author of *The Politics of the Solar Age*

"This warm and penetrating conversation with the people and ideology of the Green party is the best work we've seen on the topic. Capra and Spretnak draw insightful lessons for American politics from the triumphs and failings of the German Greens."

— Hunter and Amory Lovins, authors of
Brittle Power: Energy Strategy for National Security

"*Green Politics* presents a vital, new political philosophy that provides a much needed intellectual framework for social change activists in the U.S. It is must reading for pragmatic visionaries."

— Eleanor LeCain, coordinator of the
Peace and Environmental Coalition

"*Green Politics* provides—also for the Greens themselves—an important synthesis and an excellent analysis."

— August Haussleiter, co-founder of the West German Green Party and editor of their weekly newspaper *Die Grünen*

"*Green Politics* is a very important introduction to the movement that may well be our best chance for safe passage into the next century."

— *Peacework*

Also by Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra

Charlene Spretnak:

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF GREEN POLITICS

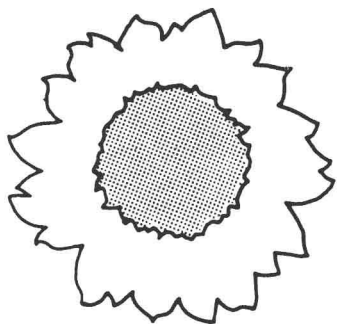
THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY (*editor*)

LOST GODDESSES OF EARLY GREECE

Fritjof Capra:

THE TAO OF PHYSICS

THE TURNING POINT



GREEN POLITICS

Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra

In collaboration with Rüdiger Lutz

Bear & Company
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Revised Edition Copyright © 1986
by Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra
All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast.

Library of Congress No. 86-70256
ISBN: 0-939680-28-9

Originally published in the hardcover edition by
E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1984.

Bear and Company
P.O. Drawer 2860
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the many people in West Germany who kindly aided us in our research for this book, and especially to Rüdiger Lutz, director of *Zukunftswerkstatt* (Future Lab), who facilitated our initial contacts with many of the Greens and expanded our understanding of recent political events in his country.

We are extremely grateful to the following members of the Green party for generously giving us extensive interviews, often in the midst of highly demanding schedules. Many of these people have also kindly supplied us with updated material during the past two years:

from the national executive committee: Rudolf Bahro, Wilhelm Knabe, Manon Maren-Grisebach, and Rainer Trampert;

from the national steering committee: Christine Schröter;

at the national party headquarters: Lukas Beckmann; we also thank Wolfgang Clabbers and Renate Lang for assistance;

from the parliamentarians in the Bundestag: Sabine Bard, Gert Bastian, Marieluise Beck-Oberdorf, Erika Hickel, Gert Jannsen, Petra Kelly, Joachim Müller, Gabi Potthast, Christa Reetz, Jürgen Reents, Otto Schily, Waltrand Schoppe, Walter Schweninger, Heinz Suhr, and Roland Vogt;

from the special assistants to the parliamentarians in the Bundestag: Alfred Horn, Sarah Jansen, Martha Kremer, Renate Mohr, and Connie Sauter.

We are also grateful to the following Greens in villages, towns, suburbs, and cities for giving us interviews and, in many cases, extending their gracious hospitality to us, and we thank Lukas Beckmann and Roland Vogt for kindly preparing a letter of introduction and contact lists of key Greens:

from Baden-Württemberg: Roland Görger, Wolf-Dieter

viii / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Hascenclever, Jürgen Maier, Emilie Meyer, Thomas Schaller, Gisela von Kügelgen, and Beate Orgonas; we also thank Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, Karl Mennicken, and Gert Meyer for their assistance;

from Bavaria: Anton Betzler, Gisela Erler, August Haussleiter, Bernhard Kölbl, Gabi Kloske, and Klaus Peter Morawski; we also thank Nanna Michael and Erika Wisselink for their assistance;

from the city-state of Bremen: Dagmar Eder, Bernd Schorn, and Helga Truepel;

from the city-state of Hamburg: Thomas Ebermann;

from Hesse: Chris Boppel, Thomas Gröbner, Klaus Kallenbach, Irene Khateek, Regina Maier, Marion Papaczek, Monika Scheffler, Frank Schwalba-Hoth, and Werner Wenz; special thanks to Alfred Horn for his assistance;

from Lower Saxony: Helmut Lippelt, Sylvia Muller, and Jürgen Paeger;

from North Rhine-Westphalia: Dieter Brandt and Udo Henke;

from Rhineland-Pfalz: Thomas Pensel;

from Schleswig-Holstein: Helga Fritzsche.

We are greatly indebted to the following members of Green or Green-oriented parties and organizations in other European countries for long conversations and correspondence: Erich Kitzmüller in Austria; Cécile Delbascourt, Dirk Janssens, Jean-Marie Pierlot, and François Roelants in Belgium; Jonathon Porritt in England; Michael Delore, Edouard Kressman, and Armand Petitjean in France; Grazia Borrini and Franco La Cecla in Italy; Pieter Mors and Hans Verstraaten in The Netherlands; and Stephan Wik in Sweden. We also thank Eva Quisdorp of Berlin for conversations about the international peace movement. It is our special pleasure to acknowledge telephone interviews with our Canadian "neighbors" Adriane Carr and Wally Thomas, members of the Green party of British Columbia.

In the United States we received valuable advice and assistance from many friends and colleagues to whom we are deeply grateful. We especially wish to thank our two consultants: Hazel Henderson, who made time for many discussions on global Green politics even though she was hard at work producing her television program, "Creating Alternative Futures," and

Mark Satin, editor of *New Options*, who gave us many hours of his time in detailed discussions of possibilities for Green politics in the United States. Mark also read the entire manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. A third person to whom we are very grateful for his advice, especially in the early stages of this project, is Byron Kennard.

We thank the following people for reading parts or all of the manuscript and offering valuable comments: Janet and Robert Aldridge, Walter Truett Anderson, Judy and Peter Berg, Michael Closson, Leonard Duhl, Daniel Ellsberg, David Haenke, Willis Harman, Barbara Huber, Michael Koetting, Kay Lawson, John McClaughry, Uta and Helmut Milz, Laura Nader, Janice Perlman, Kirkpatrick Sale, Nikki Spretnak, Keith Thompson, and Dana Ullman.

For research assistance we are grateful to Paul Gunn Allen, Ward Ashman, Chip Berlet, Sigi Brauner, John Ely, Colin MacLeod, Lina Hayward, Michael Helm, Phil Hill, Robert Koehler, Florentine Kraus, Jeff Land, Michael Marien, Gary Ruchwarger, and Philip Spielman. We also thank Renate and Robert Holub and Patrick Murphy for assisting us in translating a large number of Green publications. Special thanks go to Nettie Hammond, Nesta Lowenberg, and Alma Taylor for secretarial work and typing.

Above all, we are deeply grateful for the support from our families and close friends: Sheila Ballantyne, Jacqueline Capra, Pamela Crawford, Michael Duden, Barbara Green, Michael Koetting, Patricia Leonetti, Lissa Merkel, Maria Monroe, and Judith Todd. We also appreciate the kindness of John Eastman, Carolyn Shafer, and Eleanor Vincent.

We wish to thank Bill Whitehead, our editor at E.P. Dutton; Gerry and Barbara Clow, our editors at Bear & Company; and our agents, Frances Goldin and John Brockman, for their efforts on behalf of this book.

Foreword to the Paperback Edition

When we began working on *Green Politics* in the fall of 1982 our motivation was twofold, as we explained in the Preface to the first edition. We wanted to provide American readers with a comprehensive introduction to Green political thought, both in West Germany and in its global manifestations, and we hoped that the book would inspire American activists to form a Green movement in this country.

Soon after the hardcover edition of our book was published in April 1984, each of us began to receive letters and phone calls from people all over the country who expected us to found a national Green organization. We reacted differently to those calls. Fritjof decided right away that he did not want to become involved in any political work. However, he did want to offer the American Green movement an intellectual resource base through the Elmwood Institute, which he had founded in 1983 and developed with a circle of colleagues, including Charlene, in order to nurture new ecological visions and apply them to the solution of current social, economic, environmental, and political problems (The Elmwood Institute, P.O. Box 5805, Berkeley, CA 94705).

Charlene at first hesitated to initiate the founding of an American organization for Green politics, having recently

observed the extremely stressed and pressurized lives of the German Green leaders. She has no desire to be a political leader. On the other hand, she did feel some responsibility for getting Green work started in a sound way. She formed an inviting committee with four other people, and they convened a founding meeting attended by sixty-two Green-oriented activists in August 1984. The result was the Committees of Correspondence, which is now the major Green grassroots organization in the country. The story of its formation, goals, and subsequent growth is told in Chapter 10.

Has all this had any effect on American political culture? Perhaps not the sort featured on the evening news—but here is one example of Green presence. On 11 January 1986 the founding meeting of the Central Coast Greens, an affiliate of the Committees of Correspondence, was held in Carmel, California. Among those attending were members of the Nuclear Freeze Campaign, the Pesticide Coalition, the Sanctuary Movement, the Institute for Futures Forecasting, the Resource Center for Non-violence, Beyond War, the Emergency Response Network, the Sophia Center for Social Justice, and the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. In the opening presentation on Green principles and the growing movement, Daniel Moses, editorial director of Sierra Club Books and a regional representative for the Committees of Correspondence, spoke of his concern as a California resident about the pending release—for the first time in history, worldwide—of a genetically engineered microorganism into the environment. A bioengineering firm in Oakland had secured permission from federal officials to test their product, called Frostban, on an open field of strawberries near Salinas, an agricultural area known as “America’s saladbowl.” Most Greens—and many biologists—feel that insufficient testing has been conducted indoors to assure that no harmful effects will result from the artificially created organisms’ entering the soil, the water, the air, and the food chain.

After the discussion, the current chair of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors stood up and said that he agreed with what the Greens stand for and that he was joining the movement! The crowd cheered, and he then spoke of the growing doubts in the community about this unquestioned new technol-

ogy. Members of the East Bay Green Alliance told of their plans to hold an informational debate between two pro and two con professors at the University of California, Berkeley, and to organize a demonstration in front of the bioengineering firm in Oakland. (A photograph of the latter appeared in the 10 February 1986 issue of *Newsweek*.)

The following week some seventy of the ninety people who had attended the Green meeting went to the meeting of the County Board of Supervisors to hear the reading of the Frostban report. Just before the proceedings began, a telegram arrived, and was read aloud, from the Greens in the West German Parliament urging the Supervisors to "use your powers to prevent this potentially dangerous experiment from taking place." The support of the 150 citizens present, including representatives from many groups, helped the Board to subsequently postpone the release for forty-five days and have it moved to a more remote location. As of this writing, they are expected to ban the experiment in the entire county. Part of the process involved an attorney affiliated with the Green-oriented Foundation on Economic Trends, in Washington, DC., which is seeking a federal injunction to stop the release until environmental safety can be assured. The county is currently defying state and federal rulings and is refusing to accept the assertion that the technocracy always knows best.

Environmental issues are not the only focus of Green politics, and not all Green founding meetings spawn such direct effects the following week, but this story demonstrates the local Green vitality and international Green networking that are increasingly visible in the political landscape.

The level of Green activism has increased in other countries as well, and perhaps this book has played a small part in some of that growth. In addition to the British edition, translations have been published or are imminent in West Germany, Italy, Greece, Japan, and the Soviet Union. (The paperback editions of those translations include an appendix titled "The Spiritual Dimension of Green Politics," which is the text of the 1984 E.F. Schumacher Society of America lecture, by Charlene. In this country, it is published by Bear & Company as a separate volume.)

Meanwhile, how have the Greens in West Germany been faring? In the two and a half years since we conducted our research, their internal division between the *Fundis* (fundamentalists) and *Realos* (realists) has become predominant. The *Fundis* maintain that the primary purpose of the Green movement is to transform society; hence they fear too much compromising in the name of political expediency. In the words of the *Fundi* theorist Rudolf Bahro, who resigned from the party in June 1985 over this very issue: "Every rejected proposal of ours that contains the *whole* message is worth a hundred times more than an accepted one that just sets about correcting the symptom without intervening in the suicidal logic of the overall process."

The *Realos*, on the other hand, assert that affecting changes in the present system—even with reformist compromises—is essential. They favor forming coalition governments with the Social Democratic Party so that Green ministers would be appointed at local, county, state, and federal levels. The first such Green official is Joschka Fischer, a *Realo* who became minister of the environment, a newly created position, in the state of Hesse in October 1985.

Most *Fundis* have made clear that they are not categorically opposed to coalition-governing as long as Green principles are not squelched in the name of *realpolitik*. That is to say, the argument has become largely a matter of degree. Although tensions between the two camps often reached an intense pitch during 1984 and 1985, an appreciation of the complementarity of the two positions is increasingly evident. For example, the current spokespersons for the Green *Fraktion* in the Bundestag represent neither extreme of the *Fundi-Realo* spectrum but, rather, were chosen for their ability to work with both clusters of concerns.

As for the embattled principle of rotation in the German Green party, it survives—with accommodations. Greens-watchers delighted in following the events in the Bundestag *Fraktion* in March 1985 when all twenty-seven parliamentarians were to vacate their seats and be replaced by the alternates, who had theoretically been assisting the parliamentarians and who were theoretically then to be assisted by the ex-parliamentarians for the remaining two years of the term. When the moment finally arrived, most of the original Green parliamentarians left their

seats *and* the capital. A few remained in office with the party's blessings, such as Otto Schily, an attorney leading a federal-level investigation into illegal campaign contributions involving Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Another dragged out his departure over several weeks. Petra Kelly simply dug in her heels and stayed, insisting that the parliamentarians should be allowed to finish one—and only one—full term. As it turned out, the newcomers were glad to have the few experienced hands around, and Kelly became a source of unity within the *Fraktion* on several occasions.

At the level of European politics, three Green parties—Agalev from Flemish Belgium, Ecolo from French-speaking Belgium, and the West German Greens—won seats in the European Parliament in June 1984. That body has certain powers to veto and block legislation, but it cannot initiate any. “The European Parliament,” one of the German Green members told us rather cynically, “is neither European nor a parliament. Basically, it is the advisory assembly of the Common Market countries.” Nonetheless, it is a forum for discussion and recommendations, some of which have been successful for the Greens. Even though their numbers are small, the Greens have one committee vice-chair, that of the Environmental Committee. In that capacity Undine Bloch von Blottnitz has written several reports that have been accepted by the entire Parliament. One of those resulted in the banning of hormones in meat in the Common Market countries beginning in 1988 (1989 in Britain); another requires the British government to shut down the Windscale nuclear processing plant permanently unless they can prove that it is safe.

The Belgian and German Greens in the European Parliament often speak for the Green parties which did not win seats—such as the English and the French—and they have formed an alliance called GRAEL (Green Alternative European Link) with four Parliamentarians from kindred parties in The Netherlands, Italy, and the Basque region. GRAEL works with three European Free Alliance (regionalist) parliamentarians and four Danish “Anti-Marketeer” parliamentarians; together those three clusters form the Rainbow Group within the European Parliament. That group will serve until the next election in June 1989.

The organization called the European Greens continues to

link all the Green parties of Western Europe, serving mainly to hold discussions, coordinate conferences, and organize jointly sponsored campaigns. Currently, the West German Greens are officially observers, rather than delegates, in that body because many of their members disagreed with the European Greens' decision not to admit the Green Progressive Accord, a coalition of three Green-leaning leftist parties from The Netherlands.

This edition of *Green Politics* has been updated to include the most important recent developments in the West German and European movement, and an additional chapter on the Green movement in America has been added. The perceptive reader will also notice that we have changed the ordering of our names in this edition. In the original edition, we listed our names alphabetically, only to be subsequently dismayed that the "C" name was assumed to be the principal author. We hope the revised ordering will clarify the situation, for, as we explain in the Preface, Charlene originated the idea for this book, conducted most of the interviews, and wrote most of the text, including the updating and the American chapters.

We are pleased that the first edition of *Green Politics* has helped to generate a Green movement in this country, and we hope that this new edition will continue to spark interest in the vital process of creating a Green political future.

Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra
Berkeley, March 1986