



# The Fading of the Greens: The Decline of Environmental Politics in the West

*Anna Bramwell*

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We all care about the planet: few are untouched by a concern for the environment and the future of the earth. Yet very few of us apparently want to see the political representatives of Green ideology in power. Why should this be, and where did the energy behind Green politics go? In this sequel to her successful *Ecology in the 20th Century*, Anna Bramwell provides a witty and controversial analysis of the failure to create a new politics. Neither a Green text nor a political history, it focuses on the development of Green parties and ideology since 1945, and on the cultural context in which they developed in England, Germany and the USA. An environmental expert and policy-maker, Bramwell examines the shift from lonely conservative ecologists, fighting a losing battle against the emphasis on growth and reconstruction, to the emergence of 'deep' ecologism and a revulsion against the increasing industrialisation of the West. She explores the paradox of a movement hostile to orthodox science yet inextricably bound to science for its justification, its rationale and its values. The book traces how Green consciousness became skewed in political practice, preventing it from attracting support commensurate with popular feeling. Bramwell tracks this mismatch largely in relation to the dominance of the German Greens and their specific and untypical characteristics. Environmental consciousness, she argues, is undoubtedly here to stay, yet, 'in the process of rationalising environmentalism, of costing it, of playing trade wars with it, our concern for the intangible beauties of the natural world may go by the board'. The result of the manifest integrity and courage of Green activists may, ironically, be a West further impoverished by attempts to meet the demands of the developing world. But only the maligned West has the money and will to conserve the environment.

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