Shades of Green: Engaged Pacifism, the Just War Tradition, and the German Greens

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Abstract
The German Green Party’s evolution from an absolute pacifist party to what we call engaged pacifism during the period from 1992 to 2005 deserves the attention of just war scholars because such an evolution shows how and why pacifists can come to accept – and limit – the use of force. Because the German Greens’ values are embedded in pacifist principles linked to Germany’s strategic culture – a presumption against war, fear of state power politics and escalation, and a deep sensitivity to war’s destructiveness – their foreign policy outlook is defined by an alternative logic encompassing different strategies and goals compared to the just war tradition. The Kosovo crisis and the War on Terror demonstrate how the Greens’ engaged pacifism offers a form of critical solidarity with the just war tradition by serving as a check on certain interpretations of the jus ad bellum criteria.

Keywords
German Green Party, humanitarian intervention, just war theory, pacifism

Introduction
The just war tradition, according to Brian Orend, is a ‘connected body of ideas and values which considers when war can be ethically justified. It offers a set of moral rules which societies should follow during the beginning, middle, and end of war.’ However, as the post-9/11 period confirms, it evolves and adapts as security conditions change. In the words of Michael Walzer, the Iraq war revealed ‘a significant expansion of the doctrine of jus ad bellum’ as some scholars (e.g. Elshtain, Johnson, and Orend) argued for an expanded...
doctrine of *jus ad bellum* to include preventive war, regime change, and spreading democracy.\(^3\) Other scholars (e.g. Bellamy, Walzer, and Nardin) have challenged this expansion by rejecting the logic of regime change and calling for a more restrictive applicability of humanitarian war.\(^4\) The resulting scholarly debates reflect what Cian O’Driscoll calls the ‘renegotiation’ of the just war tradition ‘as an ongoing project that is made and remade by those who engage it, while still allowing for the possibility that it respects certain parameters and boundaries.’ O’Driscoll goes on to suggest that ‘future research might take the route of exploring these parameters and boundaries in greater depth with the aim of fostering a more self-reflexive just war tradition.’\(^5\) One avenue for such research that reveals an alternative logic for thinking about war and challenges the expanded doctrine of *jus ad bellum* that emerged in the just war tradition after 9/11 is the German Green Party’s attempt to formulate an effective security policy that reflected their pacifist principles amidst the foreign policy challenges of the post-Cold War era.

The German Greens’ ethics of violence – what we label engaged pacifism – is the product of what Kerry Longhurst calls Germany’s strategic culture – a ‘distinctive body of beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding the use of force’ that emerged from German history – and the political dialogue within Germany about foreign policy after the end of the Cold War.\(^6\) Germany’s strategic culture is linked to two schools of thought that emerged from defeat in the Second World War – the philosophy of ‘Never again war’ and ‘Never again alone.’\(^7\) Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen explains that during the Cold War, the political mainstream generally tended to converge ‘on a set of assumptions and policies that honored both precepts.’\(^8\) However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the outbreak of ethnic civil war in Yugoslavia triggered immense human suffering in the heart of Europe, which led to the breakdown of the convergence between these two precepts. While mainstream parties such as the Social Democratic Party (SPD) loosened adherence to ‘Never again war’ to pursue a more important role in international affairs for Germany, other parties, such as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the Greens (at least initially), rejected such a move by strictly adhering to the absolutist pacifism implied by ‘Never again war.’ However, following an internal dialog throughout the 1990s, which saw the Greens, influenced by the precept of ‘Never again Auschwitz,’ loosen their adherence to the absolutist pacifism of ‘Never again war’ and join the ruling coalition with the SPD, German foreign policy evolved by the end of the millennium to what Hans Maull has called Germany’s ‘particular role concept as a Civilian Power.’\(^9\)

The German Greens’ evolution from an absolute pacifist party to engaged pacifism during the period from 1992 to 2005 deserves the attention of just war scholars. Such an evolution shows how and why pacifists can come to accept – and limit – the use of force, and in the process exposes a logic for thinking about the use of force that is distinct from moral reasoning employed in the just war tradition. Just war scholars consistently claim the tradition is the most comprehensive ethics of war and peace to evaluate the recourse to force in international politics because it provides a morally grounded set of criteria states must satisfy to use force: just cause, right intention, right authority, last resort, probability of success, and proportionality. While there is disagreement within the tradition on the moral weight and rank ordering of these criteria,\(^10\) pacifism tends to be discarded because it is seen as utopian, rewarding aggression, and failing to protect people. Indeed, pacifists are criticized for proffering idealist beliefs in a political vacuum without having to face the tough, real-world security challenges governments face every day.\(^11\)
There are, however, various forms of pacifism that complicate such an easy dismissal. A. J. Coates distinguishes between absolutist and contingent pacifism. The former can conceive of no circumstances in which war is morally permissible, while the latter ‘accepts the moral permissibility of war, at least in principle,’ under certain conditions such as self-defense and ‘Other defense’. However, the acceptance of the moral permissibility of war even under very restricted circumstances, suggests Coates, ‘is perhaps sufficient to disqualify this form of pacifism as pacifism in the strict sense.’ This criticism may be warranted in some circumstances of contingent pacifism, but systematically rejecting pacifism overlooks how a historically informed pacifist philosophy, such as that of the German Greens, responds to changing security conditions and offers an alternative interpretation of the dilemmas of international politics.

We are interested in understanding the German Greens’ shift within the paradigm of pacifism from absolutist to contingent pacifism and exploring the frontier between engaged pacifism and the just war tradition. We accept that there is a wide spectrum of pacifisms that rest on diverse philosophical convictions, and acknowledge that one’s pacifist convictions can, like the myriad of theories of just war within the ambit of the tradition, be shaped by historical experience, technological changes, political and social transformations, and fluctuating security conditions. While Coates suggests that ‘it is the genesis of absolute pacifism out of contingent pacifism that presents the just war tradition with its most formidable challenge,’ we suggest that understanding the passage from absolutist pacifism to contingent pacifism can be particularly useful in discerning the limits on the use of force that a self-acknowledged pacifist might draw. Revisiting the German Greens’ philosophical evolution can thus provide the context for debate and dialogue between the just war tradition and pacifism that can lead to a more comprehensive ethics of war and peace.

The German Greens’ philosophical evolution from an opposition party founded in the early 1980s steeped in absolutist pacifism to a contingent form of pacifism we label engaged pacifism in the 1990s and into the third millennium illustrates a real-world example of how pacifists negotiate the dilemmas of the international realm. We label the German Greens engaged pacifists because of their choice to jettison their absolutist pacifism in order to take part in the executive political decision-making process, thus directly influencing foreign policy decisions. During previous conflicts, such as the Gulf War of 1991, the Greens’ absolutist pacifism and position as an opposition party led them to engage in demonstrations and protests to criticize the war. However, the ethnic violence in the Balkans during the 1990s led to a fierce internal debate that called into question the efficacy and viability of their absolute pacifism and their identity as an opposition party. By the time of the Kosovo crisis and war in 1998–9, the Greens embraced a new type of engagement based on participation in the executive decision-making process. As a member of the ruling coalition, they pushed a pacifist agenda to resolve the crisis, but also supported the limited use of force when diplomatic solutions failed.

While we could have labeled the Greens just war theorists because they came to accept some form of humanitarian war as just, to do so would betray the fact that the logic behind their ethics of war is not steeped in the just war tradition’s moral vocabulary and mode of reasoning. Rather, engaged pacifism lies on the frontier between the paradigms of pacifism and the just war tradition. While there are areas of mutual agreement,
such as accepting the use of force in the case of humanitarian emergencies, the German Greens’ engaged pacifism reveals important areas of incommensurability. Since their values are embedded in pacifist principles linked to Germany’s strategic culture, their foreign policy outlook is defined by an alternative logic encompassing different strategies and goals. The Kosovo crisis and the War on Terror (particularly the Iraq case) demonstrate how the Greens’ engaged pacifism offers a form of critical solidarity with just war theorists by marshaling ideas from a pacifist tradition, thus serving as a check on certain interpretations of the *jus ad bellum* criteria.

**The roots of Green pacifism**

From its origins in the 1980s amid the German parliament’s decision to permit the stationing of US middle-range nuclear rockets in Germany, the German Greens have always had a difficult relationship with foreign and security policy given their pacifist philosophy. The Greens’ pacifism is linked to a very distinct historical element born from Germany’s history as an aggressor nation and perpetrator of genocide during the Second World War: ‘the most important consequence of German history for us is “Never again war.” But it is also “Never again Auschwitz.”’ During the Cold War, explains Ludger Volmer, a prominent Green foreign policy expert and later a senior leader in the Foreign Office, the two maxims were mutually supportive of absolute pacifism. In the era of potential nuclear conflicts, the consequences of war – world destruction – were simply too dire. The Greens maintained a deep skepticism of military-driven state politics (including NATO), which they viewed as the motor of aggressive states seeking imperialist gains. Even in non-nuclear wars, the destruction war causes to innocents, according to the Greens, far outweighs the benefits it could bring because war would most likely lead to escalation rather than a solution. For example, during the US-led war to counter Saddam Hussein’s aggression in 1990–1, Angelika Beer, a prominent Green security expert, called the US decision to use military force ‘the wrong signal and especially the wrong lesson from German history.’

While this rejection of war is an underlying element of a broad range of pacifist arguments, the lessons learned from the violence of Nazism add a vital moral dimension to the Greens’ pacifist philosophy. Unique to German Green pacifism is the recognition, encapsulated in the concept ‘Never again Auschwitz,’ that they also had a moral responsibility to prevent the type of mass killings seen in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. During the humanitarian crisis that emerged following the explosion of civil war in the former Yugoslavia in 1992, the maxim ‘Never again Auschwitz’ enabled a debate within the party about the viability of absolute pacifism to stop the ethnic violence, thus leading to the emergence of a new blend of pacifism: engaged pacifism.

**Shock and aw(e)fulness: Green pacifism confronts ethnic cleansing**

The deeply troubling mass killing in Bosnia was a test case for the security and peace policies of the Greens that raised a difficult question: how could they develop an effective human rights-oriented security policy capable of addressing regional conflicts defined by intense nationalism and violence without giving up their values of pacifism?
The violence in the former Yugoslavia challenged the critical value of their pacifism – that war leads to more violence and victims (i.e. escalation) – as the threshold of violence inhibited the potential efficacy of peaceful intervention. While all pacifists would surely oppose and seek to prevent mass killing, the uniqueness of the German Greens lies in their understanding of moral responsibility linked to their historical past. That understanding created an irreconcilable gap between the values of absolute pacifism – the total rejection of war – and the responsibility embodied in ‘Never again Auschwitz.’

During the early years of the Bosnian crisis, the Greens’ official position continued to adhere to absolute pacifism, proclaiming that the concepts of non-violence and the protection of human rights were complementary. Officially, as Volmer explains, the credos ‘Never again Auschwitz’ and ‘Never again war’ remained two sides of the same coin as the Greens continued to argue for the creation of an ‘overall solution’ for Bosnia that avoided military intervention.24 However, under the surface, by 1993, the Greens were increasingly divided on the viability of absolute pacifism in the face of such a humanitarian crisis. The traditionalists (fundis) rigidly adhered to the basic constitutive concepts of absolute pacifism, deploring the use of military force in any situation. However, as Hans Maull explains, a second group, the realos, recognized that the war in Yugoslavia created ‘new types of challenges’ for Green peace politics that traditional values might not necessarily be able to address, and at times even proffered the necessity of military intervention.25 Thus, the Greens projected a pacifism in crisis, defined by lofty ideas but confronted with the clear recognition of a deep contradiction at the heart of party philosophy. Prominent Green leader Joschka Fischer later articulated the internal contradiction in a speech before the Bundestag on 12 June 1995: ‘Between the solidarity for survival and the requirement for non-violence – that is our contradiction.’26 This contradiction points to a deep inconsistency within pacifism: the consequences of inaction born from clinging to one’s ideals in the face of ongoing violence can be greater than the costs of using force. To cite Orend’s critique of pacifism, it is problematic for one ‘whose principles exhibit a profound abhorrence for killing people, to be willing … to allow an even greater number of people to be killed by acquiescing to the violence of others less scrupulous.’27

The turning point for the Greens was the massacre at Srebrenica in July 1995. The killing of approximately 8000 civilians in a UN safe-zone exposed the utopian limits of the maxim ‘Never again war.’28 Srebrenica, to quote Dalgaard-Nielsen, left the Greens ‘speechless’ as the disparity between anti-militarism and support for human rights was ‘exposed in the most gruesome manner.’29 That it happened in Germany’s own backyard and exposed the ineptness of the UN, which the Greens saw as a critical bulwark of a pacifist security policy, made this event different from past instances of violence. After Srebrenica, a philosophical hierarchy emerged in which the maxim ‘Never again Auschwitz’ increasingly took precedence over ‘Never again war.’ The strict adherence to non-military measures lost its appeal for some Greens to the brutality of the present as the memories of Auschwitz cast a long shadow over the Greens, prompting a call to pursue a more realistic and morally responsible political position.

Joschka Fischer, the future Green foreign minister from 1998 to 2005, emerged to have a defining role in the internal Green debate after Srebrenica. As he poignantly noted in a discussion several years later, the massacre was a turning point that revealed the irresponsibility – moral and political – of clinging to absolute pacifism:
I was a non-interventionist until Srebrenica, until the mass murder following the seizure of the UN enclave, where people had put their trust in the security guarantees. This was where my position as a non-interventionist was shattered. Not only out of humanitarian considerations, but also out of very real political considerations; non-intervention can be far more dangerous than intervention.30

In other words, the Greens’ policy of absolute pacifism had been helpless to effect change, meaning a change in their philosophy was needed.

In an open letter published in July 1995 entitled ‘The Catastrophe in Bosnia and the Consequences for our Party, the Alliance 90/The Greens: A Letter to the Bundestag Faction and the Party,’ Fischer detailed his new position on the use of force, setting off a firestorm within the party. For Fischer, a pacifist could not simply accept the ‘victory of the brutal, naked violence in Bosnia,’ meaning actions that ran counter to absolutist pacifist principles might be necessary in emergency situations.31 Throughout his letter, Fischer points to a moral responsibility to protect the life and rights of those in harm’s way. Amid worsening violence and a disastrous human rights situation, preventing a worsening of the situation that would lead to further loss of innocent life was a justification for abandoning absolute pacifism. Fischer, in an interview with Der Spiegel, recognized that while violence always breeds more violence, survival, at times, was dependent on violence; that was the ‘contradiction’ of modern society.32 By appealing to those in the party who believed firmly in ‘Never again Auschwitz,’ Fischer was able to begin the Greens’ reconciliation with the use of limited force, marking a move away from absolute pacifism and toward a more contingent form of pacifism.

Fischer’s change could be interpreted as a philosophical shift toward the tenets of the just war tradition. The conceptual kernel of pacifism – anti-warism – is irreconcilable with the just war tradition because, as Orend duly notes, ‘the one says warfare can be permissible, and then defines those conditions, whereas the other says, regardless of the conditions, war cannot be morally justified.’33 Thus pacifists who try to integrate pacifism and just war theory are simply just war theorists.34 To make this claim in the case of the German Greens is, however, to overlook a consequential point: the logic that shapes their thought process is different from that of just war theorists.35 As the next two sections detailing the Greens’ foreign policy logic for dealing with the Kosovo crisis and the Afghanistan and Iraq wars illustrate, the Greens’ pacifist logic led to the application of a different and circumscribed ethics of the use of force compared to some of the positions that emerged from the logic of the just war tradition.

Engaged pacifism: Reconciling Green pacifism and the will to govern

As an opposition party during the Bosnian crisis, officially the Greens did not have to engage in the political decision making-process and could afford to hold onto absolute pacifist views that critiqued any use of force, but did not necessarily offer viable solutions to the crisis. Their actions were largely consistent with Alex Bellamy’s critique that absolute pacifists ‘offer little insight into the legitimacy of the decision to wage war … [or] the moral dilemmas that those with public responsibilities must confront.’36 If an
absolutist pacifist stance were followed in the international realm, Bellamy suggests it would force ‘governments to abrogate their moral responsibilities.’37 However, a more contingent pacifism, such as the Greens’ engaged pacifism, can offer insight into the decision to wage war and how war is fought, as the case of Kosovo demonstrates.

In the run-up to the German elections in 1998, and as the situation in Kosovo deteriorated, the Greens were engaged in another internal debate. Approached by the center-left SPD to be a coalition member, the Greens had to decide whether to remain an opposition party, or embrace the will to govern – and all the responsibilities that came with governing Germany responsibly.38 From the perspective of the SPD, the acceptance of the Greens into the coalition was not a straightforward matter, even though they were the only viable left-leaning party; the other party on the left – the new-socialist PDS – remained committed to absolute pacifism and was thus not a viable coalition partner. Rather, the SPD ruled out any coalition with a Green Party that would not accept the limited use of force meaning that, as Christoph Egle details, in order for the Greens to have a direct influence – in this case a ‘Green’ influence – on both foreign and domestic policy, they would have to alter their foreign policy stance.39

While many Greens had come a long way since the Bosnian crisis by recognizing the limits of absolute pacifism, the party as a whole still remained significantly divided on the question of the use of force. The potential of joining the ruling coalition in 1998 upped the ante because this meant they would have to engage in the deliberative processes aimed at finding a viable solution to the situation in Kosovo, meaning that they could not categorically rule out the eventual use of force. After considerable internal debate, the Greens decided to join the coalition, arguably to have some influence on domestic and foreign affairs.

Absolute pacifists, however, from within and outside the German Green Party, criticized the Green leadership for selling out their true values to the temptation of power politics. The *fundis* believed joining the ruling coalition at the federal level would decisively undermine the party’s very essence as an anti-establishment party and their absolutist pacifist principles, even as they admitted behind the scenes to having no solution to the specter of future violence in the Balkans.40 The US Green Party, moreover, which had no such desires for influence and remained true to its absolute pacifist roots, noted in an open letter to the German Green Party during the Kosovo military action in 1999 that the cost of the will to govern was the sacrifice of Green pacifist values:

that German Green leaders would support a US-led NATO military offensive in a non-NATO country is inexplicable to us because it encourages the US to act as a ‘rogue superpower’ and to pursue its objective of extending NATO into the future indefinitely…. We call on Foreign Minister Fischer and other Greens in the Bundestag to push for an end to Germany’s support for NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia and to support a legitimate international peace-making process. If this causes a break in the [SPD–Green] coalition, so be it…. It will do more good for the cause of peace and human rights if the Greens maintain the integrity and credibility of our principles.41

For the US Greens, the choice between participating in government and compromising on one’s principles was clear – it was better to be in the opposition and pure rather than bloody one’s hands with the difficult decisions of governance. For the German Greens,
however, adherence to the maxim ‘Never again Auschwitz’ meant that such a choice was not as clear-cut. While there was some political opportunism involved in the decision to join the ruling coalition, this only had an impact after many in the party came to recognize that absolute pacifism was not tenable in the current world.

If the Greens did not sell out their ideals for a piece of the ruling pie, the question is: how did they become convinced that further compromise on the ideal of absolute pacifism was necessary? At least three factors helped to pave the way for this process, which demonstrate how the Greens did not embrace the tenets of the just war tradition to navigate the international challenges they confronted, but forged their own ethics of peace and violence from their history as Germans, their pacifist ideals, and the lessons of warfare in the contemporary world.

First, the Greens were exposed at first hand to the brutality of ethnic violence in Bosnia and Kosovo, which carried particular resonance given the importance Germans placed on educating young people about the events of the Second World War. Fischer explains how trips by Green Party members to the Balkans in 1998 demonstrated the ‘concrete reality’ of the war zone, and had clear psychological effects on many Green Party members by showing the human side of ethnic violence. The trips juxtaposed the harsh facts on the ground with the party’s utopian ideals, raising questions about the possible impact the Greens could have as an opposition, rather than governing, party, while strengthening the sentiment of moral responsibility that something had to be done to avoid a repeat of the human suffering and political failures experienced in Bosnia.

Second, the Greens’ entrance into government was a process of negotiation on two levels that revealed how governance and absolute pacifism were antithetical given the demands of the international security environment. On one level, the SPD led a conscious effort to engage the Greens in personal and enduring discussions prior to the formation of the Red–Green governing coalition in 1998. The importance of these meetings should not be underestimated because they represent the magnitude of the dialogue about the trade-offs between absolute pacifism and the will to govern, revealing that Green Party members did not simply sell out overnight; rather, the process was long and deep in scope. Held daily in restaurants, in the Bundestag, and other forums, SPD members exposed Greens at all levels to the political stakes, and, in particular, laid bare the idea that without a change in the Green stance in some aspects of foreign policy, there could be no chance of a coalition. On another level, once in government individual Green Party members were integrated into senior government positions (e.g. Ludger Volmer in the Foreign Office and Joschka Fischer as Foreign Minister). This first-hand experience of governance exposed them to the complexities of the international environment and the difficult real-world dilemmas government officials faced. With these positions came not just a critical voice in foreign and security policy debates, but a voice tempered by a new sense of responsibility that served to moderate absolutist views. Volmer duly remarked the significance of the governing experience:

While as an opposition party we had to do nothing but state our opinion openly and bluntly, and theoretically develop half-way conclusive alternative strategies in order to gain a public presence, we must now, as a ruling party, try to implement our political positions in practice within the complex interchange of international relations…. Now, the debate [about war] no longer had only a philosophical character; it was a question for practical government policy.
In other words, stating opposing opinions entrenched in absolutist and idealistic ideals was no longer the same option as it had been when the Greens were an opposition party.

Third, participation in the government promised to provide the Greens with the opportunity to directly influence the security agenda instead of sitting on the sidelines. The lessons of Srebrenica had shown them that absolute pacifism was ineffective in the face of ongoing violence, the UN was ineffective in protecting civilians in safe havens, the attitude of major powers was doing little to allay the situation, and the looming threat of more ethnic violence in Kosovo was cause for impending concern. Thus, the question of standing by in the opposition was no longer seen as a morally responsible stance. Embracing the will to govern, however, did not mean compromising on pacifism entirely, but, rather, tempering it to offer a plausible solution to existing security challenges while still incorporating Green principles such as fear of escalation, avoiding harm to civilians, and skepticism of state realpolitik. The choice to join the ruling coalition solidifies the Greens’ shift from absolutist pacifism to a form of contingent pacifism we call engaged pacifism, leading to a new type of engagement based on participation in the executive decision-making process rather than relying on traditional pacifist responses to war such as protest, civil disobedience, and calls for disarmament.

However, despite participating in government, the Green leaders were under no illusion that Germany would follow a Green foreign policy. Volmer recognized the limits of the Greens’ influence:

We are dealing here not only with a coalition partner and an opposition, but with the various conflicting interests of nation-states, alliances, and international organizations … the real world of national foreign policy confronts us with the simple truth that the Greens are not a great power. There are many other protagonists who also represent legitimate interests, and who are stronger. The need to work within this setting, continues Volmer, belies the possibility of going it alone with a ‘purely Green politics,’ which would be ‘ineffective because of the self-isolation which would immediately follow.’ Volmer’s recognition that the real world is a conglomerate of alternative interests and war ethics puts into perspective the potential impact of engaged pacifism. As one voice among many, the Greens could not hope to stave off war forever because they had to recognize the arguments of their partners in government as well as their allies – especially the United States. This is not to say that they had no influence, that their views on the ethics of war were marginal, or that they abandoned the overarching pacifist beliefs that continued to shape their thinking about a resolution to the ongoing situation in Kosovo.

Germany was considered an important member of the NATO alliance whose support for the impending war in Kosovo was vital. Within this context, the Greens’ influence initially amounted to a strong and continued push for a diplomatic solution to resolve the situation short of war. To quote Volmer: after the pivotal Racak massacre in January 1999, while ‘the Americans wanted to start bombing … immediately … it was the Green Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer … who with great personal dedication, persuaded the other foreign ministers to organize the Rambouillet negotiating process instead of going for quick bombing.’ Echoing Orend’s acknowledgment that pacifism is ‘a rich source of material regarding the last resort rule,’ this push for negotiations in early 1999 was an
attempt to prevent the crisis from reaching a state of what Fischer feared most: ‘escalation automaticity.’ Later, even as the United States called for air strikes after the Serbs refused to sign the treaty, Fischer, as his biographer Paul Hockenos explains, travelled to meet with Milosovic personally to plead for peace one last time by offering ‘all the carrots the Europe–Atlantic Alliance had to offer: the lifting of sanctions, Yugoslavia’s re-entry into international organizations, loans, foreign investment.’ Negotiations were thus privileged, but, as Volmer lamented, ‘the Green ideal that even the most difficult conflicts can be solved through negotiations and in a peaceful way rebounded off the character of Milosevic’ who still refused.

Fischer argues that the fear that atrocities like those seen in Bosnia would happen again convinced the Greens to reject ‘negotiation at any price’ and acquiesce to the NATO bombing campaign. The resurgence of violence in Kosovo again enabled the maxim of ‘Never again Auschwitz’ to sway a majority of opinion and override the Greens’ presumption against war. Thus Volmer, acting as a member of the Foreign Ministry, publicly claimed that his requirement for a UN mandate had receded to the background, replaced instead by the ‘hyper-legal emergency’ on the ground.

The reluctant acceptance of the bombing campaign that began in March 1999 to quell the threat of a humanitarian crisis coincides with the conclusion drawn from the just war tradition that humanitarian war could be just in the case of supreme emergency. From a just war perspective, as Bellamy explains, the Kosovo debate boiled down to the tension between right authority and just cause. Bellamy argues that the decision to wage war was justified because of the threat of an ‘immediate humanitarian crisis that forced reluctant states to agree to the bombing campaign’ despite the lack of a UN mandate. In just war language, this means that just cause took precedence over right authority. However, while the just war tradition and the Greens’ engaged pacifism converge on the necessity of war to stop the ethnic violence in Kosovo, they diverge on the potential justifications for escalating the war.

As the situation in Kosovo worsened during the sustained bombing campaign in April 1999, just war theorists debated whether it was just to introduce ground forces. Orend argued that the criteria central to the just war tradition provided ‘the best aid’ for deciding whether to introduce ground forces into Kosovo, while criticizing political leaders such as Tony Blair and Bill Clinton for paying too much attention to just cause and not enough attention to proportionality. He weighed the costs of sending in ground troops as part of the commitment to the Kosovars against the proportionality and probability of success criteria. Walzer saw NATO’s dilemma as centered on the level of commitment to the just cause of stopping the violence: inefficient air power versus more risky, but more effective, ground forces. For Walzer, acting responsibly implied military escalation by sending in ground troops.

For the German Greens, however, there was considerable unity at all levels to reject the introduction of ground forces. Angelika Beer, a leading Green security expert, captures the Greens’ reticence when she explains that the option of ground forces was a ‘painful border’ past which the Greens would not go because they feared it would bring considerable danger of escalation while not creating any reasonable chance for a political solution. Moreover, if the war escalated to this point, the Red–Green coalition would not remain intact, a reality that compelled and constrained Fischer to act quickly to find an alternative solution that resonated with the pacifist tendencies of his party.
The impossibility of accepting war escalation born from the Greens’ pacifist ideals, coupled with constraints imposed by the domestic politics of coalition government (as opposed to the criteria of the just war tradition), inspired the so-called Fischer Plan. Because the Greens were willing to compromise on absolute pacifism and engage in governance, Fischer was in a position to implement a peace plan in mid-April 1999 that significantly influenced the resolution of the Kosovo conflict. To quote Hockenos’s assessment of the Fischer Plan: ‘although it initially met with an icy silence from Washington … [the Fischer Plan] would form the basis of the accord that would end the war.’ It was ‘a creative alternative to superpower thinking, broadly multilateral and reaching out to bridge the gap between East and West.’ Setting aside the divisive Rambouillet accords, it kick-started another round of negotiations instead of escalating the conflict. This effort arguably demonstrates the direct impact engaged pacifism can have in the international realm. In the words of Volmer, the ‘Kosovo engagement was the implementation of Green peace politics in a time of war.’

The Greens’ version of engaged pacifism provided a pacifist-based logic that favored diplomatic solutions short of war while accepting the eventual use of force, limited the scope of the force applied, and influenced a post-war outcome based on negotiations. These decisions made during the Kosovo crisis and the war itself were influenced by pacifist ideals that, because the Greens were politically engaged, allowed them to have an important impact on the decision to go to war, the way the war was fought, and the peace settlement. Echoing Hockenos’s assessment, the case shows how a state such as Germany, influenced by the engaged pacifism of the Greens, can be a ‘negative, preventative power on important issues’ such as the use and abuse of force, as well as a source for responsible solutions to the peace process.

Critical solidarity and the limits of engaged pacifism

The Greens’ pronounced move away from absolute pacifism to engaged pacifism faced a new challenge with the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Green leaders and members universally condemned the attacks, using words such as ‘stunned’ and ‘horri-fied.’ But while German Chancellor Schröder of the SPD declared Germany’s ‘unlimited solidarity’ with the United States on the day of the attack, the Greens’ leadership issued a proclamation opposing an all-out war against terrorism, invoking the general fears embedded in pacifism that such a response could further incite violence.

Unlike the Bosnian and Kosovo crises, this time the realo leaders did not have the crutch of ‘Never again Auschwitz’ to use. Instead, for Fischer and others in the party, the ‘primary question’ facing the Bundestag was linked directly to another tenet of Germany’s strategic culture – ‘Never again alone.’ Specifically, would Germany leave its ‘most important partner’ – the United States – to fight terrorism alone? Volmer recognized that, as an ‘ally of the attacked partner, we have not only the moral authorization, but also the moral and political responsibility to contribute our capability to the defense.’ But while there was recognition that the United States needed to be supported, the Greens were divided as to the level of support. The debate within the Greens came to a head in early November 2001 when Chancellor Schröder, as a sign of solidarity, called for the deployment of 3900 German troops in support of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom.
in Afghanistan. Putting German forces on the ground was seen by many Greens as going too far. Within a day of the announcement, there was considerable talk that the SPD–Green coalition would not have enough votes to pass the proposal as eight members of the Green Bundestag faction opposed it. Simply put: the Greens were forced to decide between continuing to have influence as a governing member of the ruling coalition, which meant pushing further the limits of their engaged pacifism, or a return towards their pacifist ideals. According to Hockenos, Fischer understood that if the Green Party wanted to ‘have a say in this war and its aftermath, if it want[ed] to agitate for diplomatic solutions as it had during Kosovo, then it [had] to play the game, not pout on the sidelines.’ After considerable debate, the party voted to preserve the coalition, a choice that showed their solidarity with the United States and empowered their commitment to having an impact on Germany’s foreign policy decisions and the running of the war.

However, unlike the ‘unlimited solidarity’ that Schröder had promised the United States, the Greens developed a more measured stance encapsulated in the party resolution of December 2001 entitled ‘Fight International Terrorism, Act with Critical Solidarity, Continue the Red–Green Coalition’ (FAC). As the FAC resolution makes clear, for the Greens, ‘solidarity is not synonymous with unquestioning or automatic support for US military strategy … [because] the end does not justify the means.’ The Greens’ solidarity meant they recognized that ‘force cannot, unfortunately, always be ruled out as a last resort. We recognize the right of self-defense according to Article 51 of the UN Charter.’ That said, the Greens remained a ‘military critical party’, meaning that they were fearful of the potential for escalation, did not see war as a constructive foreign policy tool because they saw war through the lens of its destructive violence, and supported multilateral ‘protection’ and ‘peace rebuilding’ missions under a UN mandate.

As a member of the ruling coalition, the Greens’ agenda for Afghanistan was to restrain the level of German force employed, to push for policies that would end hostilities as soon as possible to allow for humanitarian activities to commence, and to focus on non-military means to prevent the very real terrorist threat from spreading. The FAC party resolution delineates how they recognized the terrorist threat did not end with the war in Afghanistan and how they understood that they had ‘a responsibility to protect the population, international security, peace and the open society as best we can.’ They were thus ‘prepared to do so within the framework of a broad-based international coalition against terrorism.’ However, they believed that ‘responsibility is not possible without independence. This is why we are in favor of critical solidarity.’

The Greens’ engaged pacifism was put to the test during the build-up to the Iraq war, which showed the limits of their acceptance of violence to resolve international threats. Throughout 2002, as the US rhetoric continued to escalate, the Greens – in a sign of critical solidarity – recognized that there was a potential threat from Iraq and continued to support the United States in Afghanistan, but strenuously rejected calls that this threat required a US-led invasion. Unlike previous instances – Bosnia, Kosovo, or Afghanistan – the Green discussion on the Iraq crisis was significant in that there was no debate at all on whether to use military force. Without a distinct shock to react to, such as mass killings or terrorist attacks, the feeling of urgency seen during the Balkan crises and immediately after 9/11 was absent. While the Greens’ stance coincided with the ‘no’ to ‘military adventurism’ issued by Chancellor Schröder, we want to focus on how their engaged pacifism
evolved into a form of critical solidarity that offers a check on the possible interpretations of *jus ad bellum*.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the just war tradition saw what Rigstad identifies as a split between two competing factions, the conventionalist view working within the ambit of state sovereignty and an emergent revisionist view justifying a more expansive view of *jus ad bellum*.

The split is marked by the reordering and renegotiation of the *jus ad bellum* criteria in response to new security conditions. More specifically, the revisionist view of the just war tradition de-emphasizes the so-called prudential criteria of *jus ad bellum* – last resort, proportionality, and probability of success – and thus loosens the moral restraints on war that the conventionalist interpretation poses. According to O’Driscoll, after 9/11 the just war tradition underwent a shift toward a broader view of *jus ad bellum* that ‘reverses the progressive narrowing of the *jus ad bellum* that has been evident in the just war literature since as early as the nineteenth century.’

We want to focus on one aspect of this shift that was impossible for Greens, because of their pacifist perspective, to accept: the use of war as a tool to remake the world order.

In the case of Iraq, the just war tradition provided a framework in which multiple just causes could be vindicated: self-defense in a preventive war against an evil dictator seeking weapons of mass destruction, spreading democracy, and humanitarian intervention to restore civil order to Iraq. These causes ultimately expand the criteria of *jus ad bellum* beyond the more restrictive legalist paradigm by tapping into the historically informed moral logic of the tradition that emphasizes war as a moral tool to fight evil and remake the world order. Jean Bethke Elshtain, drawing on Augustine, sees protecting the innocent and restoring civic peace and security as primary elements of *jus ad bellum*, and therefore cites these as just causes to intervene in and democratize first Afghanistan, and then Iraq.

James Turner Johnson turns to Aquinas to argue that the Iraq war was just because its intention was to ‘create a new order in Iraq – a society no longer ruled by the forces of tyranny and re-established on the basis of democracy, freedom, and all other aspects of genuine justice.’

Kessler also turns to Aquinas to place emphasis on proper authority, just cause, and right intention, calling the prudential criteria of last resort, probability of success, and proportionality ‘not independently necessary.’

This shift in the just war tradition was subject to debate and criticism from within the tradition itself. Both Crawford and Patterson criticize the validity of preventive war as an accurate interpretation of the *jus ad bellum* criteria. Brunstetter and Zartner turn to the historical foundations of the tradition to challenge the Manichean presentation of the world presented by the revisionists and to emphasize the negative consequences of linking humanitarian ends to just war. Walzer, Bellamy, and Nardin each challenge the view that humanitarian war should be expanded to facilitate regime change, arguing that it should be restricted to egregious cases that shock the moral conscience. These challenges, and the intellectual debates that ensued, are important and we do not want to diminish the contribution of such scholarly dialogue to the renegotiation of the just war tradition. Rather, we seek to add to the debate by bringing the German Greens into the conversation. Our point is that while the just war tradition allows for a wide range of interpretations on how war can be used in foreign policy, including the use of war to remake the world order, the German Greens’ engaged pacifism, because it does not accept all of these possibilities, serves as an important check on the malleability of the just war tradition.
In contrast to the revisionist trend of the just war tradition that discarded the prudential criteria of *jus ad bellum* to embrace a more constructive view of war, the Greens’ engaged pacifism – influenced by the maxim ‘Never again war’ – offers a more restrictive view of the use of force. Because the Greens interpreted the threat posed by Iraq through the lens of war’s potential destructiveness, a shift similar to the revisionist trend of the just war tradition could not be accommodated by the moral reasoning of their engaged pacifism. Angelika Beer, who had been a proponent of the unlimited solidarity offered by Schröder in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, changed views in February 2002 arguing that this solidarity did not include support for military actions against Iraq. Instead, she argued the risks posed by Saddam Hussein must be countered through the UN and measures short of war.79 That same month, Fischer called for increased sanctions and the return of UN inspectors, who had been thrown out in 1998, to reduce the threat.80 As the war drums grew louder, Fischer argued that military action for the purpose of changing the regime in Baghdad was irresponsible because of the unpredictability of war and the incalculability of the damages it might cause.81

The Greens’ critical solidarity inherent in their engaged pacifism in the case of Iraq did not mean the categorical rejection of the use of force. They did not fall into the trap, identified by Johnson, that many who hold a presumption against the use of force fall into – to ‘tar all uses of force with one brush.’82 As the cases of Kosovo and Afghanistan demonstrate, the Greens had come to the painful recognition that sometimes force was necessary, and continued to support German deployments in these areas even during the Iraq crisis. However, the Iraq case had not crossed the threshold of their presumption against war, suggesting clear limits to engaged pacifism. Rather, the Greens argued that the focus of the fight against terror should not be on expanding the war effort, but on conflict prevention as well as political, economic, and humanitarian measures. This agenda reflects the initial articulation of critical solidarity that emerged in the FAC party resolution in 2001:

> the fight against terrorism cannot be won solely, or even largely, by military means. Rather, this objective can only be achieved, if above all political, economic and humanitarian measures are taken. The Bundestag calls for greater efforts to solve regional conflicts that have been smoldering for years. It advocates conflict prevention and a consistently non-military approach to handling conflicts.83

The Greens’ focus on preventive humanitarian and peacemaking measures, which Booth argues are largely brushed aside by the moral righteousness of just war rhetoric, also differentiates the agenda of engaged pacifism from the revisionist trend of the just war tradition.84

In hindsight, the Greens’ critical solidarity with the United States could have been seen as a warning sign that President Bush was pushing the limits of just war logic too far and served as a check on what many see as the easy malleability of the just war lexicon to legitimate the use of force. In the just war tradition, as Johnson argues, wide ‘consensus is a check on the motivation of any such intervention … the more robust the consensus the better,’ though the need for consensus does not override the right for states to ‘act alone in cases of pressing need.’ This is because the state is ‘inherently most
capable of meeting the moral requirements of the idea of sovereign authority’ given the weakness of the United Nations. The Greens, however, informed by their fear of state power politics, point to a meaningful presumption against states acting unilaterally. This alternative view of right authority – ideally in terms of a UN mandate, but eventually working through the NATO alliance in the case of an agreed-upon supreme emergency – can serve as a check on abuses from states who turn to the just war lexicon by seeking broad consensus on the necessity and goals of war. The just war tradition should therefore take seriously the tenets of the German Green foreign policy as described in the FAC party resolution:

Green foreign policy is based on independent perspectives. It places its hopes in a new peace policy for the 21st century. In view of the dangers posed by privatized violence, this policy focuses on bringing the following issues to center-stage: the strengthening of United Nations, the universality of human rights, the prevention of violence, the non-military handling of conflicts, and the validity of law in international relations.

While not preventing war altogether, a dialogue between the just war tradition and the German Greens’ engaged pacifism may lead to the ‘self-restriction of power and international integration as opposed to uncontrolled power politics, hegemony or nationalism’ and may, therefore, contribute to a more peaceful international society.

**Conclusion: Engaged pacifism as shades of green**

In this article, we have highlighted the evolution of the German Green Party from absolute pacifism to what we have called engaged pacifism. This shift was a product of Germany’s strategic culture – specifically, the maxims ‘Never again war’ and ‘Never again Auschwitz’ – as well as the importance of being a responsible partner ingrained in Green ideology (‘Never again alone’). It arose in response to the ethnic violence that erupted in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and evolved into a form of critical solidarity that accompanied the more bellicose philosophies of Germany’s NATO allies in the ‘war on terror’. As the cases of Kosovo and Afghanistan demonstrate, the efforts of the Greens’ engaged pacifism to resolve foreign policy challenges at critical moments is not a naive humanism that should be cast aside, but instead represents a rational alternative that sets a different threshold on the use and goals of force compared to the possibilities that emerge from the just war tradition.

Our examination of the Greens has specifically been framed within the context of the just war tradition, implying that the tradition as such can benefit from internalizing the lessons from the German Greens’ shift from absolute to contingent pacifism, a shift that was the product of a unique history, national character, and philosophy different from the roots of the just war tradition. While some may argue that the transformation of the German Greens is one from a pacifist to a just war party, such semantic acrobatics misses the point – their engaged pacifism was embedded in a set of pacifist principles linked to Germany’s history, a presumption against war, a fear of escalation, a skepticism of state politics, and a desire to protect human rights, which constitute a different ingrained logic when facing foreign policy challenges. We are not suggesting that the lessons learned by the Greens are morally better than those drawn from the just war tradition or are
repeatable in other green parties; in fact neither the UK nor the US Green Parties supported using military force in Kosovo, Afghanistan, or Iraq. Rather, the German Green Party’s internal debate about the use of force highlights an important moment in the philosophical dialogue about the ethics of war that both reinforces and challenges some of the core elements of the just war tradition.

The just war tradition and engaged pacifism converge in at least three areas: the understanding that absolute pacifism is untenable if one wants to govern responsibly, the legitimacy of the use of force to protect the rights and dignity of the innocent during emergency circumstances, and the necessity to avoid civilian casualties. Abandoning absolute pacifism, however, does not mean the abandonment of the values of non-violence. Rather, as the German Greens show, engaged pacifism is embedded in a bundle of pacifist values that, because it embraces the will to govern, can influence the foreign policy realm. The internal debates about the potential scope of force in response to the ethnic violence in Kosovo and the US-led war in Afghanistan point to several areas in which the Greens’ engaged pacifism diverges from the *jus ad bellum* criteria of last resort, right intention, proportionality, just cause, and right authority. More importantly, the Greens’ rejection of the use of force in the Iraq case serves as a philosophical challenge to the expansion of *jus ad bellum* that occurred in the just war tradition following the 9/11 attacks.

The German Greens’ vision of engaged pacifism is thus a form of critical solidarity that can keep the just war tradition in check, although it does not satisfactorily answer all the questions we face today, or guarantee a world of future peace. However, a dialogue between just war scholars and the Greens’ engaged pacifism offers a valuable narrative about the just use of force, revealing that it is a mixture of two shades of green – the olive branch and military dregs. And in critical contrast to the just war tradition, the Greens point to an approach in which the former holds the upper hand. As such, the critical solidarity of the Greens based on engaged pacifism offers an ethics of peace and violence to help avoid engaging in the future in *prima facie* ‘just’ military adventures.

**Notes**

1. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not represent the position of the US government. We wish to thank the Fulbright commission for their funding support in 2001–2, without which the numerous personal interviews and archival research that provided the background for this article would not have been possible.
9 Hans W. Maull, ‘Germany’s Foreign Policy, Post Kosovo: Still a “Civilian Power”? ’ in Sebastia


11 Orend, Morality of War, pp. 245–63; Alex J. Bellamy, ‘Is the War on Terror Just?’; Interna


13 The German Greens’ engaged pacifism resembles what Martin Ceadel calls pacific-ism, a kind of contingent pacifism that hopes to abolish war, but recognizes that ‘until the causes of aggres
sion are eradicated, military force will be needed, though it must not only be defensive … but compatible with the progressive cause which will eventually abolish war’; Martin Ceadel, ‘Pacifism and Pacificism’, in Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (eds), The Cambridge His

14 For a sampling of various pacifist approaches across world history, as well as modern exam

15 Coates, Ethics of War, p. 82.

16 There was the potential for such a debate following the 9/11 attacks when a group of US scholars drafted the letter entitled ‘What We Are Fighting For: A Letter from America’ to make the case for a just war. A group of German scholars then rejected the just war claims in a letter entitled ‘A World of Justice and Peace Would Be Different.’ However, as Maja Zehfuss argues, there was no real dialogue or debate as the two groups of scholars failed to ‘engage the other’s arguments’; ‘Remembering to Forgive? The “War on Terror” in a “Dialogue” between German and US Intellectuals,’ International Relations 19(1), 2005, pp. 91–102; p. 91.

17 ‘Der Golfkrieg und seine Folgen,’ no date, Bestand, B.I.3, Akte Nr. 57, Archiv Grünes Gedächtnis, Berlin, Germany; henceforth, AGG.


33 Orend, *Morality of War*, p. 244 (emphasis in the original).
34 On such an attempt, see James P. Sterba, ‘Reconciling Pacifists and Just War Theorists,’ *Social Theory and Practice* 18(1), 1992, pp. 21–38.
35 In this vein, Dalggaard-Nielsen calls the Greens ‘converted pacifists,’ but this still misses the point; *Peace Enforcement*, p. 248.
36 Bellamy, ‘War on Terror,’ p. 291.
37 Bellamy, ‘War on Terror,’ p. 281.
38 Maull, ‘Germany and the Use of Force,’ pp. 56, 61.
43 Interview by author with Karsten Voigt, Member of the Bundestag and German–American Coordinator, 17 December 2002, in Berlin, Germany.
45 Compare to the acceptance of war on the center-right, which was largely driven by concerns about Germany’s influence and international standing; Dalggaard Nielsen, ‘Strategic Culture,’ p. 349; Rathbun, ‘Myth of German Pacifism,’ pp. 70–1.
46 Volmer, ‘Krieg in Jugoslawien.’
48 Volmer, ‘Krieg in Jugoslawien.’
51 Volmer, ‘Krieg in Jugoslawien.’
53 Volmer, ‘Krieg in Jugoslawien.’
58 Daaglard-Nielson, ‘Strategic Culture,’ p. 349.
59 Hockenos, Fischer, p. 270.
61 Hockenos, Fischer, p. 273.
67 For a discussion of the political minutia of the debate, see Scott Erb, German Foreign Policy: Navigating a New Era (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003), pp. 198–203.
69 ‘Internationalen Terrorismus bekämpfen.’
72 O’Driscoll, Renegotiation of the Just War Tradition, p. 163.
Daniel Brunstetter and Dana Zartner, ‘Just War against Barbarians: Revisiting the Valladolid Debates between Sepúlveda and Las Casas,’ *Political Studies*, forthcoming 2010. (Published online: Political Studies, no. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00857.x.)


‘Internationalen Terrorismus bekämpfen.’


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