

German Green Party opts for coalition with conservative and neo-liberal parties

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Last Saturday a conference of the German Green Party decided to start negotiations on a coalition government with the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU) and the free market Free Democratic Party (FDP).

The decision for a so-called Jamaica coalition (named after the respective party colours in the black-yellow-green flag of the Caribbean State) was made with no votes against and just three abstentions. The so-called “left wing” of the party supported the decision. “Yes, of course, we want to govern,” retorted “left” faction leader Toni Hofreiter to the assembled delegates.

The Greens, first founded in 1980 by former leaders of the 1968 student rebellion, are striving for an alliance with the conservative and neo-liberal forces they had so bitterly opposed in their youth.

The 14-strong negotiation team elected at the party congress includes all wings of the party: from the premier of Baden-Württemberg, Winfried Kretschmann, who currently governs the state in a coalition with the CDU, the party’s election campaign leaders Katrin Göring-Eckardt and Cem Özdemir, the party’s former chairperson Claudia Roth, to the best-known representative of its so-called “left wing”, Jürgen Trittin.

The desire to return to the fleshpots of power overruled all the scruples and reservations about working with right-wing parties usually expressed by the Greens. In line with the party’s tradition the decision to form a right-wing government alliance was accompanied by much hand wringing and professions of moral qualms.

The party chairman Simone Peter pointed to the rise of the Alternative for Germany (AfD). “We see how racism, anti-Semitism, and lack of respect for democracy have taken their place in the Bundestag,”

she complained. It was now the task of the Greens to reestablish social cohesion. She did not explain how this is to be done in an alliance with the big business lobbyists of the FDP and a party like the CSU, which is increasingly adopting the policies of the AfD.

Katrin Göring-Eckardt presented the Greens as the social conscience of a Jamaica coalition: “In this alliance, we will be the ones who must deliver when it comes to social cohesion and social justice.” This is from the leader of a party which, as a coalition partner of the SPD, implemented the fiercest attacks on Germany’s social welfare system since WWII—the Hartz laws and the Agenda 2010 program.

Delegates repeatedly assured each other that they were not prepared to enter government at any price. “We do not accept the logic that there is no alternative. Opposition remains an option,” Peter stressed.

This is all hogwash. The Greens are seeking to secure a Jamaica coalition because they agree with the FDP and the Union (CDU and CSU) on all fundamental issues. The Greens have long since demonstrated their boundless adaptability at a state level. Presently they participate in governments in ten different states in no less than eight different political constellations.

There is a consensus between the Greens, the FDP and the Union over a number of central issues that were not even discussed at the Green Party conference: foreign policy, militarism and the build-up of a strong state.

The former Green pacifists are in the front line when it comes to justifying brutal wars under the pretext of defending human rights. In 1998, following the party’s entry into a “red-green” coalition with the Social Democratic Party, the Greens paved the way for the first overseas military intervention by the Bundeswehr—in Yugoslavia. The party then called for

German military participation in both the wars in Libya and Syria. In 2014, the Greens actively supported the Maidan coup in Ukraine and accused the German government of not being tough enough against Russia.

The Greens are advocates of the European Union, of a European army and French President Emmanuel Macron, who seeks to realise his “vision of Europe” via a state of emergency and drastic labor market reforms. The Greens are also among the loudest supporters of censorship measures which, under the pretext of combatting “fake news,” are aimed at suppressing free speech on the Internet.

The Greens are a party of the wealthy, urban middle class, which is closing ranks with the capitalist state as growing international and social tensions threaten their social and economic status. This was expressed most clearly at the party conference by Baden-Württemberg state premier Kretschmann, who argued in favour of Jamaica, declaring: “What we now need is simply a reliable government.”

Even with the Greens giving a lead, the formation of a new federal government is likely to be difficult and is expected to take many weeks. The first exploratory talks between the parties are planned for next weekend, two weeks after the Bundestag election. If these talks are successful then actual coalition negotiations will begin, which could last several more weeks.

Both the CSU and the CDU suffered severe losses in the election, and there are major conflicts inside and between the two parties. In both parties a strong tendency is insisting to move closer to the political positions of the AfD.

At present, a Jamaica coalition of the CDU, CSU, FDP and Greens is the only constellation with a majority to form a government in the Bundestag. The SPD ruled out a continuation of the grand coalition with the CDU/CSU on the night of the election. All parties have declared that they are not prepared to enter an alliance with the far right AfD. This could, however, change if the SPD retreats from its position or the CDU/CSU moves closer to the AfD.



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