

German Green Party renews state coalition with Christian Democrats in Baden-Württemberg

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Last Thursday, the state executive of the Green Party in Baden-Württemberg decided to continue its coalition with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

Winfried Kretschmann has been the Green Party premier in the southwestern state for 10 years. On March 14, the Greens emerged as the strongest party in the state elections, while the CDU lost almost 300,000 votes and suffered its historically worst result in its former stronghold state.

The CDU's election defeat was the result of the right-wing policies of the so-called "Green-Black" coalition in Stuttgart. These included social cuts, increased state police powers and a "herd immunity" approach to the pandemic.

Susanne Eisenmann, the CDU's lead candidate in the election, demanded in January, when she was state education minister, that schools be reopened immediately, regardless of the COVID-19 incidence rate. She then forced pupils back into the schools on a year-by-year basis, amid the second coronavirus wave. As a result, her popularity plummeted.

Kretschmann is the darling of the bosses in the auto manufacturing state of Baden-Württemberg. They are using the disastrous social consequences of the pandemic to push through a long-planned restructuring and mass layoffs. Among arch-conservative CDU members, the practising Catholic enjoys more support than many CDU politicians.

In 2019, her state government deported a total of 2,648 asylum seekers and has deported many more refugees during the pandemic. Instead of dismantling the refugee camps, where the coronavirus has spread rapidly due to the cramped and unhygienic conditions, the Green-CDU state government has kept the

detainees under lock and key, guarded by the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces).

The fact that the Greens are continuing their coalition in Baden-Württemberg with the CDU, despite the defeat of the Christian Democrats, is a clear signal of their intentions at the federal level. The Green Party is preparing to enter or even lead the next national government.

According to current polls, not only would an alliance with the Christian Democrats under a Christian Democratic chancellor be possible, but also a coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD) and Free Democratic Party (FDP), or even an SPD-Left Party-Green alliance under Green leadership. With the decision to form a coalition with the CDU in the Stuttgart state executive, the Greens are once again making clear that they will continue the hated policies of the federal grand coalition (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union-Social Democratic Party) no matter what.

The party fears the growing opposition to the disastrous coronavirus policy of the grand coalition, which is expressed in the free-fall of the CDU's poll ratings. While the SPD has been languishing well below the 20 percent mark for three years, the CDU/CSU's poll numbers have plummeted most sharply over the past several weeks, from just under 40 percent a year ago to 27 percent today.

The discontent is directed not only against the federal grand coalition but also the state governments. The Greens are government partners in 11 of the 16 federal states.

In its latest issue, *Die Zeit*, which is always extremely sensitive to signs of social upheaval, sounds the alarm. "What is becoming noticeable these days is a hitherto

unprecedented scepticism toward the system in the system-stabilising sections of the population. There is a loss of confidence among those who, until now, trusted politics.”

According to *Die Zeit*, “dissatisfaction with politics has been growing almost exponentially,” according to polls released in recent weeks. The number of those “who want to see tougher measures against the pandemic” is skyrocketing. “And just as rapidly, the absolute majority of those who think that no party is capable of dealing with the country’s problems is growing.”

Under these conditions, the Greens are closing ranks with the parties of the federal grand coalition. When Merkel’s CDU celebrated its 75th birthday last summer, the two Green co-leaders celebrated it as a natural party of government. “Just as we have always wanted [to be] something, you have always been something,” Annalena Baerbock and Robert Habeck wrote. “You are something like the institutionalised party of government, the essential service in the chancellery, the Bayern Munich [Football Club] of politics.”

In the Greens’ Bundestag (federal parliament) election manifesto, which the party presented a fortnight ago, they pledged to continue the right-wing and militaristic policies of the grand coalition. They promised more money for rearmament and war, a stronger repressive state apparatus at home, and economic “reforms” to strengthen German capitalism against its international adversaries.

The party, founded in 1980 under the banner of environmentalism, pacifism and grassroots democracy by representatives of the ‘68 student movement, has long since integrated itself into the ruling class. It represents the interests of wealthy sections of the upper-middle class, who see an insurgency of workers and the oppressed classes as a threat to their privileges.

In the federal government of Gerhard Schröder (SPD) and Joschka Fischer (Greens), which held office from 1998 to 2005, the Greens supported international combat missions by the Bundeswehr, massive tax cuts for the rich, the Hartz IV welfare and labour “reforms” and the reduction of old-age pension benefits. Today, they are among the most aggressive advocates of German militarism, stepping up state powers at home, deporting refugees and cutting social programs.

The pandemic has not only brought all the contradictions of capitalism to a head. It has also made the character of the Greens even clearer. In the pandemic, like the other capitalist parties, they place the interests and profits of big business above the health and lives of working people.

The only party that opposes these right-wing policies on the basis of a progressive perspective is the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party). It is contesting the upcoming federal elections in order to build an international workers party that counterposes to capitalist barbarism—“herd immunity” policies, war and environmental destruction—a socialist society organised according to the needs of the people and not the profit interests of the rich.



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