

Green Party renews coalition with conservative CDU in Baden-Württemberg: A declaration of war on the working class

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The Green Party has agreed to continue its coalition with the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The two parties presented their 162-page coalition agreement last week. The coalition is a continuation of the governing alliance headed by Premier Winfried Kretschmann (Greens), which has ruled the state since May 2016. The coalition agreement is a declaration of war on the working class.

On the one hand, the billions paid out as “Corona aid” to Germany’s big corporations and banks are to be recouped at the expense of the population. The preface to the coalition agreement states that “financial leeway in the budget ... is very small. We will have to weigh things up much more carefully in the coming years: Which expenditures do we have to, and want to make? And which ones can we no longer afford for the time being?”

On the other hand, the state government, in close cooperation with corporate executives and the trade unions, plans to press ahead with the transformation of the German auto industry and wipe out tens of thousands of jobs. Baden-Württemberg, with its 11 million inhabitants, is home to the German auto industry, with about 235,000 employed directly by auto manufacturers or suppliers.

The coalition of the Greens and the CDU in Baden-Württemberg is regarded as a role model for a possible federal government. In order to suppress the growing opposition to planned social cuts and the official profits-before-life policy during the coronavirus pandemic, the state government plans to further increase spending on police and the judiciary.

The police and the judiciary will be further

strengthened “in terms of personnel and technology,” and public places will be subject to more extensive surveillance. The use of police body-cams is to be expanded and the state Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Germany’s domestic intelligence service) is to be reinforced. The coalition document states that “inter-agency exchange of information at a state and federal level” will be intensified and the observation of organisations that endanger the “free democratic constitutional order” will be expanded.

The anti-working class orientation is evident in various sections of the coalition agreement and is laid out already at the beginning of the chapter “Economy and Labour.” The coalition relies “on the power of free competition” and a broad alliance drawn from “business, science, trade unions and society.”

The agreement’s “Strategic dialogue—auto industry” is aimed at “involving the trade unions, the scientific community, professional associations and users to a greater extent” in order to “avoid compulsory redundancies via alternative work time arrangements” and drive forward the transformation process in companies based on “a retraining offensive ...” The coalition will support with all the means at its disposal the “ambitious plans of auto manufacturers to convert their production to battery-driven electric cars.”

In plain language this means thousands of well-paid jobs in the auto and supply industry will be slashed and workers condemned to unemployment.

Following 10 years in office, Premier Winfried Kretschmann is regarded as the sweetheart of auto bosses in the state of Baden-Württemberg. His alliance with auto executives is intent on exploiting the coronavirus pandemic to push ahead with long-planned

restructuring and mass redundancies.

Last year alone, it was announced that tens of thousands of jobs would be cut in the car industry, including up to 15,000 at the auto supplier ZF. At Daimler, up to 30,000 jobs are to be axed and experts assume that in the next 18 months about 15 percent of all jobs in the German car industry are at risk, around 130,000. According to another recent study, by the Ifo Institute, up to 221,000 jobs are threatened.

With regard to refugees, the coalition agreement proclaims it will tighten up the state's already very restrictive policy. For example, asylum seekers are to receive "rapid clarification about their further whereabouts in Germany." This involves expanding the existing system of reception ("anchor") centres in order to "conclude asylum procedures in the initial reception stage." The aim is to isolate, monitor and intimidate refugees to force them to leave the country "voluntarily."

Kretschmann's government has already deported a total of 2,648 asylum seekers in 2019 and even deported 1,383 refugees in 2020 during the pandemic. The coronavirus has spread rapidly in the cramped and unhygienic accommodation made available for refugees. Instead of dismantling the camps, the state has locked away migrants under guard by the German army (Bundeswehr).

The coalition agreement also pledges to expand the activities of the Bundeswehr, which is to expand its operations domestically and become a more visible presence.

The massive build-up of state forces is not designed to fight "right-wing extremist terrorist networks," as the Greens suggest in several places in their election programme. In reality, the Greens and the affluent middle class the party represents fear growing social opposition on the part of workers and youth and a political reckoning with their reactionary policies. This is behind the party's repeated demand for a powerful, heavily-armed police force.

In the state elections held on March 14, the CDU recorded its worst ever result. Its electoral setback was due to the right-wing policies of the outgoing Green-conservative coalition, which had pursued a policy of social cuts, strengthening state forces and infiltration. The fact that the Greens are continuing their collaboration with the conservatives, despite the

miserable result for the CDU, is a signal for federal politics. The Greens are preparing to head the next German government following the federal election due this autumn.

According to current state polls, the Greens could form a federal coalition with the CDU/CSU with Green Party leader Annalena Baerbock as chancellor, or even a coalition with the Social Democratic Party and the neo-liberal Free Democratic Party, also under Green leadership.



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