

Trump supporter denounces socialism at Junge Union's Germany Conference

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The Young Union (Junge Union, JU) is the official youth movement of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU)—together known as the Union—which suffered a devastating defeat in the German parliamentary elections held last month. The so-called “Germany Conference” of the Young Union, held in the city of Münster last weekend, was the first nationwide meeting of Union politicians since the parties’ historic defeat.

The CDU has now abandoned any hope of forming a ruling coalition with the free market Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Greens (known as a “Jamaica coalition” based on the respective party colours) and is beginning to reposition and reorient itself politically.

CDU leader Armin Laschet prepared the party offspring for a new role as opposition party and took full responsibility for the defeat. “We achieved a bitter result. And as chairman and candidate for chancellor I bear the responsibility for this result.” CSU Secretary General Markus Blume, speaking on behalf of CSU leader Markus Söder who did not attend the meeting in Münster, also declared, “We have to acknowledge the reality. We are now in opposition.”

The future leadership of the CDU and its new political orientation are only beginning to emerge. But one thing is already clear: The Union will use its time in opposition to move further to the right.

This was most clearly demonstrated by the appearance at the Germany Conference of Rick Loughery, chairman of the American Young Republicans. Loughery is an avowed supporter of Donald Trump, who launched a violent coup on 6 January to prevent the election of Joe Biden as his successor as American president. Since then Trump has sought to turn the Republican Party into a fascist movement.

Despite this, Loughery was allowed to speak as a guest speaker at the JU conference. On behalf of their “brothers and sisters in the US,” he called on the delegates to “protect democracy and freedom” and stand together “in the fight against socialism.” Socialism is on the rise worldwide, and “we must fight it,” he stressed.

By “socialism” Trump and Loughery mean all those who are not prepared to unconditionally support their own fascist course. Even the US Democratic Party, the party of Wall Street and the military establishment, is regularly denounced by Trump as socialist.

The Union faction leader Ralph Brinkhaus, considered by many as a possible candidate to succeed Laschet as CDU leader, painted the spectre of the left wing dominating politics. The document drawn up the SPD, the Greens and the FDP (known as a “traffic light” coalition due to their party colours) in the course of their exploratory talks to form a new German government is “the most radical left-wing agenda we have had in Germany for decades.” In the manner of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), Brinkhaus accused the SPD, the Greens and the FDP of inviting illegal migration by continuing the brutal isolationist policy of the Germany’s outgoing grand coalition (SPD and Union) government.

As is the case in the US, such right-wing tirades have nothing to do with reality. In fact, the “traffic light” partners have committed themselves to tightening up the right-wing course begun by the grand coalition. They have ruled out higher taxes for the rich, will continue to implement the debt brake and continue the country’s program of massive military rearmament.

When representatives of the CDU rail against socialism or a leftist agenda, their remarks are directed against the growing resistance in the working class to

precisely such policies. The CDU is preparing to support the right-wing traffic light agenda in opposition and mobilise the most right-wing forces to implement it.

This is why many leading Union officials were full of praise for the programme of the SPD-FDP-Green coalition. Commenting on the draft, Laschet said at the JU conference, “The paper presented is quite okay. We could have gone along with some of it.” And Friedrich Merz, who is aligned with the extreme right wing of the CDU, told *Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland*, “I think you’ve presented a remarkable paper. That is a cause for respect and critical self-examination: We could have had that too.”

The JU conference was marked by the drive to intensify this policy. Johannes Winkel, for example, chairman of the biggest JU state association in North Rhine-Westphalia, called for a slowdown in the phasing-out of nuclear energy decided long ago, together with cuts to retirement pensions. Although it is supposed to be a pay-as-you-go system, one-third of the entire federal budget flows into the pension system, he complained. “That’s 100 billion euros that my generation is missing for investment in education, research or digitalisation.”

When the “boomer generation” retires, a “tipping point” will be reached, Winkel warned. He threatened to take legal action at the Federal Constitutional Court if the next federal government stuck to the current pension financing policy.

The speech by Carsten Linnemann, head of the Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses Union, who is also considered a possible candidate for the CDU leadership, was also greeted with jubilation. The 44 year old is a hardline neoliberal and right-wing critic of the policies of former Chancellor Angela Merkel. He called on delegates to “also tackle the very hot potatoes,” including the future pension system and civil service pay, which guarantee a certain degree of social security to a dwindling number of public service workers.

Linnemann pleaded for the next CDU leader to be decided by a membership poll, instead of the usual party congress. He wanted to ensure “in the future that the party decides, not the chancellor’s office,” and went on to criticise the abolition of compulsory military service and the withdrawal from nuclear power agreed

by the Merkel government.

The former head of Germany’s domestic intelligence agency (Office for the Protection of the Constitution) Hans-Georg Maaßen, who is on the far right of the CDU and openly sympathises with the AfD, expressed similar views. At a CDU conference in the state of Thuringia, he demanded the resignation of the entire national executive. “A new profile for a new CDU can also only take place with new people, and people who do not belong to the cadres responsible for just plodding on as usual,” Maaßen said.

The appearance of Trump supporter Loughery and the right-wing tirades at the Junge Union’s Germany Conference constitute a serious warning. The working class faces a comprehensive threat: while the coalition of the SPD, Greens and FDP is preparing new social attacks and massive rearmament at home and abroad, the Union and the AfD are mobilising ultra-right forces to enforce this programme against the working class.

The interests of the vast majority of the population no longer find any expression within the framework of the established political parties. They all defend capitalism and the profit system and react to the escalation of the class struggle with a sharp turn to the right. This can be seen most clearly in the question of the pandemic where all of the main political parties are pursuing a policy of deliberately infecting the population, resulting in a high number of deaths and incalculable long-term consequences.

In order to defend its interests, the working class must build its own party to infuse the struggle against social cuts, layoffs, fascism and war with an international, socialist programme. This is the perspective of the Socialist Equality Party.



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