



Danish workers and youth shows the way ? rise against the cuts!

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The Danish working class have started to seriously resist the policy of cuts proposed by the new conservative government. Swedish workers and youth, experiencing the return of an openly bourgeois government for the first time in 12 years, have a lot to learn from its Danish brothers and sisters. The mass demonstrations in 10 Danish cities on the 3rd of October, the opening day of Folketinget (the Danish parliament), was a show of force that was accompanied by advanced methods of struggle.

The prime minister of the bourgeois government Anders Fogh Rasmussen had only the day before on a radio broadcast called the movement ?a bunch of socialist troublemakers?. On the 3rd of October he was silent. The movement is the biggest since the strike on Easter 1985. In Århus alone, Denmark?s second biggest city, 30 000 workers and youth participated in protest demonstrations of a size not seen in decades. At the same time a strike of day nursery workers continued into its third week, being supported by 600 social administrators . Students occupied many schools in the city after decisions taken on mass meetings which also elected committee?s to organise the blockades, the production of banners for the demonstration and so on.

In Copenhagen 15 secondary hi-schools were occupied on the day of the demonstration. Leading student activists talked about the inspiration from the French student movement that stopped the infamous CPE-law. 25 different networks of parents organised blockades of day nurseries in solidarity with the day nursery workers employed by the municipal being on strike. In Sweden the paper *Sydsvenskan* reported that Danish politics on this day moved out from parliament onto the streets.

The movement?s background goes back to the 17th of May this year. That date saw a nation wide demonstration against cuts in the pension system and attacks on unemployed youth. This protest forced the government to take a step back and modify its proposals. Shamefully, the Danish Social Democrats tried to take the honour for this. The party had by then participated in negotiations with the bourgeois parties trying to reach a deal only limiting the scale of the attacks, not stopping them. Not unexpectedly a new cold shower came with the newly proposed budget from the government earlier this autumn. The budget radically cuts economic support for the municipalities. Many billions of Danish crowns are to be saved through these cuts.

According to a survey by the Socialist People?s Party the budget means cuts of around 4 billion Danish crowns (about £370 million) during 2007 alone and even this is probably an underestimate. At least 15 000 jobs are being threatened and municipalities are going to be forced to make massive cuts in the day nursery service, in education and many other social services. In Århus alone it is expected that 410 million Danish crowns are to be cut every year until 2010.

The current offensive is a part of the neoliberal program that the government is trying to implement. Apart from the proposed cuts the government also want to force people to work longer hours. Another reactionary part of the offensive is the racist policies against the country?s immigrant?s and refugees. Measures that seriously undermines the possibility to get a permanent residence permit for refugees, to take part of the social security system and measures that hinders equal possibilities in education of immigrant?s children (for example attacks on two-language education) are all part of the politics pushed for by the racist Danish People?s Party, being one of the parties in government.

During the autumn the Danish working class have responded with continuing protests. Local strikes and demonstrations

have been a regular phenomena. In Århus, 12 000 took to the streets to protest against the cuts already on the 12th of September. On the 20th September another 7 000 youth went out on demonstration against the closure of 'The House', a facility which is a combination of library and cultural house. TUC-districts and different trade unions, such as Danish Municipal Workers Union and The National Organisation of Social Pedagogue, have taken part and supported the demonstrations.

In response, Anders Fogh Rasmussen in a blatant lie argued that 'the municipalities have got more money than ever before?'. This is not true. The cuts are a continuation of the neoliberal policy of strangulation sanctioned by the state that has continuously limited the spending on municipalities to the point where the resources do not meet social needs. The local; authorities budget has been allowed to grow by only 0.6 percent since 2003 (down from 1.6 percent after a government diktat). Rising needs in education, health service and other social services however demand a 3 percent growth of the municipal budgets at least, if actual needs are going to be met according to estimations. However the coffers of the Danish state have never been fuller ,with 80 billion Danish crowns in surplus. Fogh Rasmussen is clearly more concerned with using state finances to support Danish participation in the bloody imperialist occupation of Iraq than meeting the needs of the workers.

The demonstrations have brought some immediate results. In Ålborg, the bourgeois politicians 'succeeded' in finding some extra millions for social investments. But generally the bourgeois politicians are still reluctant to back off from their proposed cuts budget. On the 5th of October the municipality in Århus decided to move forward in implementing the proposed cuts. The bourgeois government clearly wants to demonstrate that it does what it wants to do, regardless of what the workers and youths on the streets think about it.

What the response from the movement will be is still to be seen. Karsten Ditlevsen of the Unity List (The Unity List is a reformist electoral party composed by different leftist groups) appealed for a national conference for the movement to discuss how to continue the struggle. This is a step in the right direction even though no date seems to have been set. The outcome of such a conference depends however on what the different groups propose to unite around. The will to fight has been clearly demonstrated on the streets. This potential must be used to deliver a final blow against the government. It was only after the threats of a general strike started to become real that Chirac and Villepin stepped back in France earlier this year over the CPE. This seems to be a key slogan in the current situation in Denmark that activists should fight for.

The Danish movement must look to the longer term. The goal must be to break the back of the bourgeois government and force it from office. Accordingly, the question of what kind of government the movement wants in its place becomes of vital importance. Therefore such a conference should start discussing what political alternative the movement needs. Here, the only progressive outcome from a socialist standpoint can be to call for a truly working class government. But such a government will fail to represent the workers unless it breaks with administering capitalism and its cuts. In this struggle it would be dreadful if the workers put all their hopes on the leadership of the Social Democrats. They have repeatedly, most recently in the negotiations in May, shown their will to compromise with the attacks from the bourgeoisie. Even the Socialist People's Party, striving for a compromise with the former, can only lead the movement into failure.

If a government is really to be able to tear up the roots of cuts and neoliberalism a working class government would have to abolish both the market dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and its state - and replace it with socialist planning and a state based on the working class's own democratic defence and interest organisations. Such a revolutionary working class government could then go on and play a decisive role in connecting the class struggle in Denmark with the struggle in other countries.

Apart from all progressive measures such a government could take to push forwards the positions of the working class it could also immediately stop the Danish involvement in the occupation of Iraq and support for US imperialism's project for power in the Middle East. It could tear up the racist laws that the bourgeois government have been implementing over the last mandate periods and, at the same time as fighting for equal rights regardless of national

origin or ethnicity, wipe the floor with Pia Kjaersgaards Danish People's Party! Such a government is what every revolutionary worthy the name should fight for. To be able to achieve this, a new revolutionary party of the working class, based on its mass organisations and the social movement that have erupted against the government, organising the vanguard of this movement has to be built now.

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