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Denmark

The Red/Green Alliance stood firm – and now we must move on

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The government chose to make the budget with the right wing. This is logical to anyone who have followed the government since it came into power. (The Social Democrats and SF will yet again undermine their own support among voters and members. But the government thought, that the Red/Green Alliance (RGA) could be whipped and threatened into anything.

?Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen said it clearly on the press conference Tuesday evening: Sometimes one has to stand firm. The RGA went into negotiations with the goal of making the government change its course. It would not. It chose to lock into the right wing's economic theories. It chose to submit to the budget laws of the EU. It chose to be bound by each and every agreement it has made with the blue bloc.

?The RGA went a long way to get an agreement on the budget, but even that was not enough. The government held its course – to the right, and the RGA stood firm.?

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The union leaders failed

?No amount of spin from the government can hide this in the long run. Not even when the party comrades of Corydon hasten to the rescue and blame the RGA for the negotiation breakdown. If they had thought a little more about their members and pressured their party comrades in the government, then we could have had a budget, that would be quite a lot redder, than the governments "final offer" to the RGA.

?- The chairmen of HK, Metal and 3F should have worried a bit more about their unemployed members and demanded that the unemployment subsidies were improved during the budget negotiations.

– They ought to have helped the RGA creating jobs in the municipal welfare.

– They ought to have insisted that mandatory clauses securing Danish workers' rights weren't hidden away in a committee.

– They ought not to have forgotten, that their members, too, will grow old and have the need for proper care, and they ought to have known from their trade-union work, that that which is not rights can disappear like snowflakes to the sun.??

The RGA on the offensive

?When the RGA stood firm, we send out a clear signal that there exists in Denmark a political force, which wants another way than the neoliberal, pro-capitalist and employer-friendly direction, that all other parties follow.

The Red/Green Alliance stood firm – and now we must move on

That's why it was in the right place, when Johanne in the same press conference talked about the RGA as the opposition on the left. The political basis for this government is the right wing. The task for the RGA is now to fight the government. ? ?The party energy must concentrate on supporting any kind of resistance and movement:

?- against the boss' pressure on wage and working conditions, including social dumping.

?- against the budget cuts on education.

?- for better unemployment subsidy regulations.

?- for better welfare in regions and municipalities.

?- for public climate investments

?- for more jobs

?The RGA have always defined one of its tasks in this way. But this final opting out of the RGA must lead to an adjustment of the course. At all levels of the party we must actually prioritize the local resistance and building of movements. And then we, as RGA-members, RGA-branches and RGA-networks have to see it as our task to take the initiative to activity and organizing.

We should do this together with others, also members of the Social Democrats and SF. But we cannot wait for this to happen spontaneously, or for the leaderships of the big organisations to take the initiative. We should do it even if no other political force is willing.

The attacks of the union tops on the RGA is an obvious sign, that we cannot wait for them, that we have to organize for the unions and in the trade-union organisations with a view to change the passivity and accept of the trade-union movement in face of the government's policies. ? ?

Alternative solutions

?At the same time we must present in public political answers to what is needed to solve this crisis on the conditions of the working class – not on the conditions of the upper class. The perspective in the last year on whether or how to drag or pressure the government to the left have consciously or unconsciously made the RGA spokespeople focus only on the day-to-day proposals that the government might jump onto. In this way we have underprioritised the demands and proposals that actually change something because they break with the logic of capitalism.

The RGA should continue to exploit the possibilities of the parliament, that can arise if the right -wing does not want to play with the government. Or if there is an actual pressure on the government from the outside. But this is not in conflict with pointing out anticapitalist solutions. Here we can find inspiration from as unlikely an angle as the USA.

Recently the first openly-declared socialist ever was elected to the Seattle municipality. Her campaign was focused on simple, easy to understand demands like raising of the minimum wage, control of rising rents and better public transportation, financed by a billionaire tax.

But she also spoke to striking workers at the Boeing airplane factories and said: "We don't need the bosses. Boeing should be owned and led democratically by the workers and the local communities."

That's the kind of stuff we need to get better at in the RGA. ? ?

Political bureau of SAP 29 November 2013