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Denmark

Anti-capitalist resistance to EU

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The election to the EU-parliament gave some hints on the political situation and the attitude to European Union.

Our first comment must be that the EU parliament still have a very limited legitimacy, reflected by the very low participation. In Denmark less than half voted and in the new member states the picture was even lower levels of participation down to 1/5. It is in this sense not a victory for the European Union. Another general trend was defeats for the governing parties. This can on one hand be interpreted as popular opposition to the policy on the national level, on the other hand an opposition to the Europe of the powers that be.

In Denmark the results of the 47% who did vote point in several directions. The most remarkable is that Social Democrats won votes and likewise defeat for the governing Liberal party. This is basically a vote against the government.

The other big loser was the “no-to EU movements”, the June Movement and the Peoples Movements against EU. Both movements lost votes, and went from 4 to 2 MEP.

For the resistance to EU and for the Red-Green Alliance, the election campaign and the results pose some questions that need to be answered. The defeat for the two movements underlines the political problems in the movements.

For the June Movement it is getting more and more obvious that it is no longer a movement against the core of the EU project. It is a movement that believes in reforming the EU. Democratization and opposition to militarization are some of the key words. It is in this harder and harder to see a difference between the June Movement and the Socialist Peoples Party.

For the Peoples Movement against the EU the biggest problem is that it is based on the principle of “no class”. In other words it wants to cover the political spectrum from right to left of opposition to the EU. That is why the Peoples Movement against the EU neither can nor will go to the core in the criticism against the EU as the Europe of capital.

The Peoples Movement has a perspective of Denmark leaving the EU followed by illusions about Nordic cooperation linked with association to the EU through the European Economic Cooperation like Norway. As if AP Møller [1] and Volvo's Gyldenhammer would be better than Berlusconi and Krupp.

In the Red-green alliance the opposition to the EU has been debated and this debate has obtained new nourishment after the election. It is obvious that opposition to the EU only got a very limited social expression, based on class positions, in the electoral campaign. That is why it is also clear that many sceptics and opponents of the EU are not attracted by the movements but instead vote for the Socialist Peoples Party and Social Democrats - or stay at home. This point is underlined indirectly by the fact, that one of the few candidates with a socialist profile, Søren Søndergaard, got remarkably many votes (18.500).

That is why it is important that the election is followed by a debate without prejudice in the Red-green Alliance on the place of the party in the opposition to the EU. A debate which should be linked with a debate with and in the Peoples Movement on the future EU opposition.

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If the opposition to the EU should be revitalized and be a progressive force there is a need to leave behind the depoliticization that characterizes the Peoples Movement today. The opposition to the EU must be based on the political groundings of the EU and be based without any doubt on the interest of the working class.

The coming discussion and referendum on the EU constitution gives the Peoples Movement a possibility to develop in that direction and show that the movement has an important role to play. This implies that the Peoples Movement organizes a NO-campaign, based on three elements:

1. A clear rejection of the EU constitution building the EU as a centralistic superpower.
2. A clear differentiation from the antisocial, anti-environment pro-capitalist neoliberalism that will be established with the EU constitution.
3. That there is no reason to get frightened by the threat of getting kicked out of the EU as a result of a no-vote, because getting out of the EU is part of the perspective of the Peoples Movement.

This is in contradiction to a no-campaign focusing on special "Danish" interests or the question of small and big countries.

Whether the Peoples Movement is ready to develop a more progressive profile that can attract EU sceptics from the Social Democrats and Socialist Peoples Party, and make rejection of the EU integrated in the class struggle is up to the future to answer. If not, the Red Green Alliance has to consider whether the party should run independently at the next EU parliament election.

Political Bureau of the SAP, Danish section of the Fourth International, June 25, 2004

[1] The biggest and most influential corporation in Denmark. Includes the Maersk shipping company.