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Denmark

Huge demonstration against government welfare cuts

- News from around the world -

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More than 100,000 - organizers say up to 140,000 - joined demonstrations in Copenhagen and four other cities on May 17. The demonstrations were the largest for more than 20 years and reflect a growing alliance between trade unions and student organizations.

Protests are against the "welfare reform", launched by the government in early April and currently negotiated in Parliament. The ruling Liberal and Conservative Parties need support either from the far right Danish Peoples Party or Social Democracy to get the laws passed.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Copenhagen_rally.jpg]

The plan includes attacks on several welfare issues, including later retirement age (pension age up from 65 to 67), obligatory employment training programs for elderly unemployed workers (now benefiting from an exemption), cuts in unemplyment benefits for young workers and reduced public study grant.

Overall, the goal is to get more people to work more (by making their present conditions worse), in order to ensure "welfare in the future".

The Red-Green Alliance is refusing the general premises, arguing that there is money enough for more and better welfare - now as well as in the future. The Alliance is taking active part in the current mobilizations.

In Parliament, the Alliance together with the Socialist Peoples Party are against the "reforms", while Social Democracy is divided on the issue. Although the party president joined the rally in Copenhagen, she is working for a deal with the government.

The Red-Green Alliance puts forward as a key demand, that Social Democracy abstains from an agreement with the bourgeois government.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Aage.jpg]