

# Danish Red-Green Alliance supports budget cuts

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In November the Danish centre-left government passed a budget for 2013 that seamlessly pursues the same austerity measures as its conservative predecessor. This reactionary budget was supported by the Red Green Alliance (RGA—in Danish, *Enhedslisten*, literally *The Unity List*), an amalgam of pseudo-left groups.

Since October 2011, Denmark has been governed by a coalition of the Social Democrats, Socialist Peoples Party (SF) and the Danish Social Liberal Party under Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt. The government does not have a parliamentary majority and thus relies on the support of the right-wing opposition or the Red-Green Alliance.

The 2013 budget cuts follow the European Union guidelines for a debt ceiling, according to which Denmark must reduce its structural deficit by 1.5 percent annually from 2011 to 2013.

Following the 2011 elections, the RGA promised the government its support, and voted for the 2012 budget, although it was already clear that Thorning-Schmidt would continue the anti-working class policies of the previous Danish government. The RGA has now kept its promise and also supported the 2013 budget, even though it contains greater cuts in all social areas than last year's budget.

The RGA was formed in 1989 as an electoral alliance of the Left Socialists (VS), the Stalinist Communist Party of Denmark (DKP), the Maoist Communist Workers Party (KAP, which liquidated itself in 1994) and the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), the Danish section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, and was later transformed into a party. It belongs to the Party of the European Left and works in the European Anti-capitalist Left.

In the 1990s, the RGA supported the Social

Democratic minority government of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. After 2001, when the right-wing took over the Danish government, it spent ten years in opposition.

In the September 2011 election, the RGA won 6.9 percent of the popular vote and twelve seats in parliament. Last summer, the “left” grouping was polling at almost 14 percent, while the Social Democrats had fallen to a historic low of 17 percent. Since that time, given the miserable political role played by the RGA, the poll numbers between the two parties have once again diverged.

The pseudo-left grouping justified its support for the Thorning-Schmidt government on the grounds that the latter could be pressured into introducing policies in the interests of the socially disadvantaged. This is the global political theme of this upper middle class ex-left layer.

After the 2011 elections, the SAP issued a statement that declared, “Use the election victory to put pressure on the government and build the RGA”.

The statement continues, “The RGA has followed a tactic of being open to any negotiations with the government. The tactic was chosen to avoid that abstract radicalism that would make it easy for the government to justify a course of political collaboration with the right”.

Above all, this “tactic” serves to prevent the development of an independent movement of the Danish working class, and subordinate it to the Social Democrats and the unions. Since the elections, the RGA has unswervingly followed this line. It has constantly acceded to the government's demands and supported its most right-wing measures, claiming that to do otherwise would push the government into the arms of the right.

In 2010, the RGA national congress decided that

under no circumstances would the party support a budget that meant a worsening of the social situation, did not promise any significant social improvements and continued the government's austerity policies. The RGA justified its support for the 2012 budget by referring to a few minimal reforms in immigration and energy policies, declaring them to be the successful product of its politics.

Last year, the RGA insisted for months it would only vote for the 2013 budget if the latter included job creation measures for the unemployed or the extension of the period of entitlement to unemployment benefits.

Before the 2011 election, the current coalition government parties vaguely promised they would reverse the sharp cuts introduced by the previous conservative government, due to come into effect following the election, and pass a few measures that would benefit the unemployed. There was also talk of new jobs for the unemployed in the public sector, tax breaks for low earners and higher taxes on property owners.

None of this has come to pass. Despite this, the RGA voted for the 2013 budget.

The government has resolutely refused to meet the conditions of the RGA. Instead, it negotiated a neo-liberal tax reform with the right-wing parties, which only benefits those with higher incomes. Another reform makes it more difficult for the unemployed with disabilities to rejoin the work force.

Because the RGA feared the government would pass the budget with the help of the Social Liberal Party, it finally dropped all its demands. A few mini-reforms, such as the creation of 5,500 so-called emergency jobs for the unemployed, can hardly conceal the fact that the government's measures are aimed at pushing the burden of the economic and financial crisis onto the back of the working population.

Thorning-Schmidt and her coalition partners now boast they have returned to the politics of the centre, which, in reality, they never left. They justify their austerity policies with the cynical argument that the labour market "reforms" will help the unemployed find new jobs more quickly. For the state, according to this argument, the cuts that arise are merely a "positive side effect". The Social Democratic Party-Green Party government in Germany under Gerhard Schröder justified the welfare "reforms" and development of a

vast low-wage sector along similar lines.

Like Schröder, Thorning-Schmidt too has the aim of increasing labour flexibility (i.e., savaging working conditions), raising productivity and widening the income gap between the unemployed and those at work. The wealthy and those with large incomes need not fear any losses.



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