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Danish general election

Big progress for Red Green Alliance

- IV Online magazine - 2005 - IV364 - February 2005 -

Publication date: Sunday 20 February 2005

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In the February 8 general election, the Red Green Alliance (RGA) gained 114.123 votes or 3,4 %. This is the best result for the far left since 1984. The Red Green Alliance was formed in 1989 as an alliance between several left parties. Since it has developed from an alliance to a political organisation where the majority see the RGA as their political organisation. The Danish section of the Fourth International, the Socialist Workers Party (SAP) works inside the RGA. Along with the development of the RGA, the perspective of SAP in the RGA has developed from assuring left parliamentary representation to see it as the base for building a revolutionary party.

RGA campaign

Though the election campaign was short - only three weeks - it was intense. The RGA had a very active campaign. From all branches the reports is that the level of activity and people active was higher than earlier campaigns. Four years of ultra-right government needs a clear alternative. This is neither offered by the Socialist Peoples Party nor the Social Democrats.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/REDGREENLOGO2_copy-2.jpg] Logo of the Red Green Alliance

The RGA has developed the criticism of the government's policy along with our alternative. One of the main issues brought up in the debates was unemployment. While the Liberal party and the Social Democrats promised more employment without any concrete proposals, the RGA proposed more jobs in the public sector with the argument that it is almost without cost because benefits and other expenses can be used to create proper jobs. This would improve public services and reduce health problems due to work pressure.

The RGA also tried to put forward opposition to the Iraqi occupation and the proposed European Union constitution. On TV we where never able to put these issues on the agenda. But we succeeded in organising a demonstration together with the Socialist Peoples Party against the Iraqi occupation and for withdrawal of Danish troops just three days before the election. With 5000 in Copenhagen it was the biggest demonstration since the war formally ended and it was given some coverage in the newspapers.

The RGA was also backed by other parts of the left. The International Socialists made a campaign for the RGA, using both RGA material and their own. The Maoist DKP/ML daily newspaper "Arbejderen" (the Worker) also carried positive coverage of the RGA during the elections. The old communist party, the DKP, was one of the founding organisation of the RGA; however they were divided between those active in the campaign and a sceptical wing who are more eager to make a joint communist party with DKP/ML and the KPID. The latter were the more Stalinist components of DKP who left the party in 1990.

Successful youth campaign

In Denmark we have experienced a radicalisation of the youth in recent years. We have seen the high school students as the most active movements against the right wing governments austerity policies. The RGA prepared a youth campaign together with Socialist Youth Front (SUF) a campaign aimed at the schools. It showed an improved cooperation between SUF and the RGA.

Red Green Alliance membership

The numbers are for October each year. In January 2005 membership was approximately 2,650. Almost 1000 has indicated they want to join the RGA since elections were announced on January 18 and 100 have already paid their dues to join.

Figures below give year, number of members and development.

1992	1,082
1993	999	(-7,7%)
1994	1,093	(+9,4%)
1995	1,189	(+8,8%)
1996	1,282	(+7,8%)
1997	1,479	(+15,4%)
1998	2,023	(+36,8%)
1999	1,968	(-2,7%)
2000	1,945	(-1,1%)
2001	1,992	(+2,4%)
2002	2,366	(+18,8%)
2003	2,321	(-1,9%)
2004	2,524	(+8,7%)

Red Green Alliance electoral results

Figures give the year, percentage and number of seats

1990	1.7%	(0 seats)
1994	3.1%	(6 seats)
1998	2.7%	(5)
2001	2.4%	(4)
2005	3.4%	(6)

Interview with JÅrgen Arbo-BÅhr

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/bmp/jorgen2.bmp>] JÅrgen Arbo-BÅhr

The RGA has a principle of rotation that doesn't allow MP's to run after seven years in parliament. Because of this Keld Albrechtsen and Søren Søndergaard, who had been MPs since 1994, were just able to run as candidates for the last time at the election in 2001. Søren Søndergaard is a member of SAP.

The New RGA MPs are Rune Lund, Per Clausen, Frank Aaen and - a surprise - Jørgen Arbo-Båhr. The latter is a member of SAP and worked as secretary responsible for labour issues. Earlier he was a trade-union activist of the potters' union. Below is a brief interview I recently did with Jørgen

▶ **What are the tasks after the election?**

▶ We should make the difference clear between the rightwing government and its liberal policies and the leftwing. The RGA must show there is a leftwing alternative. This is very important because the other workers parties move to the right in their pursue of power. This is also important in an international perspective because the left is faced with the same liberal policy in other EU countries.

▶ **What can be your personal contribution to the RGA parliamentary group?**

▶ I can contribute to the strengthening of the RGA's profile regarding the trade unions. Our task is to make the trade-unions an active movement. The trade unions suffer from the political crisis of social democracy. Fortunately there is a left current in the trade-unions.

▶ **How has the relationship between the RGA and the trade-unions developed in the recent years?**

▶ More and more there is an understanding within the trade unions that the RGA is necessary. Even Social Democrats in the top-layers of trade-unions see this. There is a need for a party that puts pressure on Social Democracy from the left. It is also because the RGA addresses issues that Social Democracy ought to take up.

▶ **Can you give examples?**

▶ Well, there is the shutting down of the industry and moving workplaces to low-wage countries. There is the pressure on wages. Employers start to demand lowering of the wages with the threat that otherwise they close. Also the use of unemployed in work-schemes is used to put pressure on wages along with workers from eastern Europe.

▶ **There will be a renewal of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for workers in the public sector this spring. Will that be an important issue?**

▶ No, not really. In the short term there has been created some space for improvements in working conditions. The big issue is the big reform of local and regional governments. This will put a lot of pressure on public sector workers. We have put focus on ensuring wage and work conditions. The reform is designed to open up for major privatisation and outsourcing this creates a lot of insecurity for the workers.