

Danish working class opposes government's bid to abolish public holiday to raise money for arms

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Mobilization at the Christiansborg Palace Square on February 5, 2023. Photo: via

Red- Green Alliance

Major opposition parties, left-wing groups, and trade unions in Denmark have protested the incumbent coalition government's proposal to abolish the public holiday on 'Great Prayer Day' (Store Bededag). On Sunday, February 5, around 50,000 people marched in the capital Copenhagen denouncing the government's plan to abolish the holiday. Unionists affiliated with the Trade Union Confederation and activists from the Red-Green Alliance (Unity List), Red-Green Youth, Green Left, Socialist youth Front (SUF), Communist Party, and Communist Youth of Denmark (DKU), among others, took part in the massive rally that culminated at Copenhagen's Christiansborg Palace Square.

In January, the government, headed by Mette Frederiksen, proposed a bill to add an extra working day to the calendar year by abolishing the public holiday on Great Prayer Day from next year. Great Prayer Day is a traditional holiday that falls on the fourth Friday after Easter Sunday and has been recognized since the 17th century.

The government's decision to add an extra working day is part of its plan to raise an extra 3 billion kroner (USD 0.43 billion) for the rearmament of the country. The move has led to outrage from opposition parties and the Danish working class, who have condemned the attempt to abolish a paid public holiday for the sake of funding the military and weapons of war.

According to [reports](#), the ruling Social Democrats and their right-wing coalition partners have decided to increase Danish military spending to 2% of the GDP by 2030 — against the backdrop of the ongoing NATO-U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and to cater to larger NATO plans in the Arctic, Nordic, and Baltic regions.

The Trade Union Confederation (FH) launched a [petition](#) on January 17 demanding to preserve the Great Prayer Day holiday, which had received the endorsement of approximately 467,730 people as of February 7.

On February 6, Anders T. Sorenson, editor-in-chief of the communist publication *Dagbladet Arbejderen*, told *Peoples Dispatch* that “the issue of ‘Great Day of Prayer’ is really about much more than just a day off. It is about the redistribution of wealth and a fundamental attack on the tradition that wages and working conditions are something that is agreed between workers’ organizations and employers—and without interference from legislators. I think the government has struck a nerve here that reaches into all sections of the working class. They are going to regret this attempt to pass the bill for the rearmament on to the workers.”

On February 6, Communist Youth of Denmark (DKU) [stated](#) that “the anti-worker SVM government and the other bourgeois parties in the government all agree that cuts in [spending on] the public sector and tax cuts for the richest are the way forward, with poor excuses that massive rearmament is a necessity. The abolition of [Great Prayer Day] is just a strategic disagreement in bourgeois Denmark, because in the end those in power will find a way to get the money for their mega-profits. Either way, the working class must work more efficiently for less pay, all while the capitalists’ profits grow and grow.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)

