

## Newsletter June 2006 – Special edition

### The students unite all over Europe!

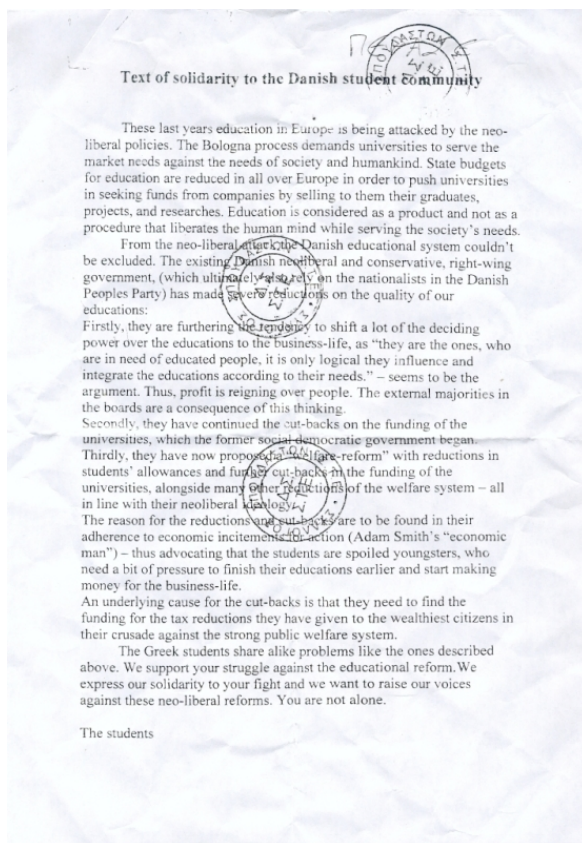
This newsletter consists of four articles which all present the situation of students who with different means fight the educational and social reforms that they are facing as neo-liberal policies are forced on them.

In Greece, France, Denmark and Germany the students and the left are seriously kicking ass. ENDYL try to organize the experiences and knowledge of the movements and hope to spread the enthusiasm to all the member organisations.

We encourage all the member organisations of ENDYL firstly to follow the examples and express solidarity with each other – via statements, visits, articles etc. Secondly we ask you to contribute with your own experiences. Mail them to the board and we will collect them in our new Web Forum.

On behalf of the board,

*Janne Andersen*



## France, The beginning...

*Reportage by Sebastien Bracq, PCF/MJCF*



As usual, when times are dark and future seems compromised, France, French

people, and especially young people, stand up and show that there is hope as long as there is life.

Less than one year after the historical defeat of the capitalists forces and their liberal project for Europe, a few months after the violent events in the suburbs in which we could recognize in a certain way the reject of the neoliberal politics and their effects like discriminations, racism, unemployment... Once again the French people express their will for change, for rupture with the actual logic that leads the world to disaster.

The liberal forces have a project for us. More precarity, less rights, rentability, money, money, money! Although they lost the referendum and the regional elections, they go on their way, trying to destroy the social conquests of the social movement throughout the last century, building a society of egoism, where only the stronger shall survive.

To achieve their goals, they do not hesitate forgetting to discuss with organisations before promoting what they call good reforms, using violence against demonstrators, trying to divide people that have common interests: young students against young people from suburbs, "French" people against "immigrants", immigrants in legal situation against the one who don't have papers...

But, even if they do their best, it seems like it doesn't work this time.

Trade and students union are totally united. All the left parties also. As long as I can remember, and I have had quite some experience, I have never seen such a determination in all the demos. And even if there is violence around them, they are growing bigger and bigger every week. 3 million in the whole country today, 700 000 in Paris. Its almost indescribable but this determination is almost physical. The attitudes of the demonstrators affects every spectator. Facial expressions showing pride, happiness, solidarity, excitement.

You should know that this week is a strategically one for the promotion of the CPE. On Thursday, the prime minister had invited the unions to come and discuss: they all rejected the invitation. The constitutional court is also at the point to give its judgement on the legal character of the CPE.

We need also to go on informing and mobilizing against this project as the symbol of the future world they want us to live in, and at this point all

the support to our fight that we get is very important. Firstly it shows that we are not isolated in the fight against the globalized capitalism, and second it proves that they can not divide us as French workers that have better conditions of living from the workers of all the countries in the world.

United and determinated we shall stay. As I said at the beginning, and it will also be my conclusion: as long as there is life, there is hope.

Never give up!



*The 29th of March 2006*

## Denmark – The Danish left writes history

Reportage by Janne Andersen, SFU

**The left and the social movement in Denmark have awakened. Because of solid cooperation in the left wing we managed to mobilize more than 100.000 people in a demonstration against government reforms. This event has marked a new epoch for an united and strong Danish left-wing and social movement. SFU being stronger than ever.**

Two months ago the Danish right-wing government presented its visions for the future welfare state of Denmark: with neo-liberal proposals, that would make Mrs. Thatcher dance the happy turkey, they put forward proposals for reforms that would tear apart the strong social structures and create clear class barriers and inequality. Massive cut downs on the public sector and severe reductions in the social benefits, unification and specialisation of the students and discriminating social legislature directed towards the ethnic minorities.

This was the occasion for the opposition to pull itself together, put away the differences for a while and work together with the all parts of the social movements in the common fight against the government. In cooperation with the workers movement, the students movement – primary school, high school, technical school and university students – the left wing from the Social Democrats to the extreme left, people from the social and cultural movements and ethnic minority organisations - all united under each their claim and criticism of the government.

We started mobilizing for a common demonstration the 17th of May.  
The main parole was: *No to cut downs – Yes to welfare and security*

### Success, continued success and even more expected success



We managed to gather 140.000 people in the streets of Denmark – 100.000 of them in the streets of Copenhagen! The press was with us all the way and everybody in Denmark knows about the event.

Is has been a historical event, not seen since the financial crisis in the 80ties.

Families, elder people, young people, ethnic minorities, students, workers, unemployed - everybody defying the picture of

the "clash of generations", that the government tried to create, to play off the parties against each other.

But we have not dared to rest yet, only to ride on the wave of goodwill and sympathy of the many that have supported us.

This last week the student movement has proceeded our proclaimed war against the reforms. We have promised that we will not stop until all the reform has been removed off the table.

The Danish student movement in the higher- and middle-range educations has practically been dead the last 15 years. Now it has got a boost that has revitalized it. It is now again ready to put up a fight for securing "the free thought" in the mind of emancipated, influential and creative students.

### **A reborn culture of "squatting"**

We squatted the faculty of social studies at the University of Copenhagen with a symbolic event the day before the big common demonstration. Student activists dressed in suits were checking the identity cards from the students before entering the faculty. They were "sent from the government" to make sure that nobody who were late in their study, passing nominated time, could enter. The university is receiving money per student head and it would, if the government's reforms passes through, not receive any money for the "slow and lazy" students who can not finish in nominated time + one year. Therefore the students were being regarded as parasites in the institution, and were forbidden access inside.

Friday after the demonstration we occupied the Institute of Sociology, where about 100 students participated throughout the day and ended with a big party. This week other universities and some teachers colleges are being squatted. It is as a warning of what will come in fall if the government does not flush out its plans.

In universities we have not yet got any assemblies to democratically decide about these activities. We only have the Students Council which is now a days a very stiff, formal, and unengaged forum not experienced with political activity. So we are at the moment looking to our Greek and French comrades to find inspiration to organize the student movement the best way.



We are in the beginning of a very needed process towards building a strong students movement working cross-politically, cross-organizational and cross-institutional to embrace as many students as possible to oppose the right-wing.

SFU is one of the driving forces in all these initiatives and we have never had so much attention from the Medias and so many members and sympathisers as today. It has given the organisation a boost and our members an energy that can be felt and seen in these "post-demo-days".

We send the wishes for a similar blossoming of the left in the rest of Europe.

Let us share our experiences in our common struggle for an educational system providing equal possibilities, influence, space for difference and nurture of the free thought.

Let the struggle continue!

*The 21. juli 2006*





## Germany, The fight about the study fees

Reportage by Bernd, JD/JL



Right now, there are a lot of protests going on against the introducing of study fees in different federal countries.

Since the supreme court (Verfassungsgericht) legitimated study fees, which were forbidden before, in nearly all federal parliaments debate about study fees started. By now, some countries introduced them, some not. Right now, there is a debate in Hamburg, Hesse, Bavaria and Northrhine-Westphalia. And there is also a lot of protest and resistance. Demonstrations, street-theater and festivals but also occupations, blockades and riots.

In Northrhine-Westphalia (NRW) the law for study fees has not passed through yet, but it is up to the universities if they choose to introduce them. So the student movement is fighting at the different universities now to stop that.

Just a few hours ago the senate council of my university was stopped by students making a lot of noise and make it impossible to decide something. This happened at a lot of universities these days and is going to happen again. This afternoon there is a federal wide meeting coordinating and exchanging experiences on the different



activities in NRW.

After the last year protests this is called the 'summer of resistance reloaded' (you can find some reports and pictures on [de.indymedia.org](http://de.indymedia.org)).

The police is partly completely overreacting

by beating people, using teargas or throwing students out of symbolically occupied university buildings by force. Those reactions are not normal for peaceful student actions in Germany. Some inexperienced people are a bit frightened by that but on the other hand there are a lot of brave actions although they were arrested before and still fighting.

It is going to be a hot summer of resistance.

*The 2nd of June 2006*



## Greece, a giant victory won

Reportage by Yannis Bournous, Neolaia Synaspismou

The Greek student movement is reaching its highest moment: 411 university departments are now occupied all over the country. The National Federation of University Professors is on a permanent strike and form a common front with the student movement. Last Thursday (the last national demo in Athens, of approximately 25.000 participants) the Federations of Teachers of Primary (DOE) and Secondary (OLME) education organized a 3-hour strike, in order to participate in the demo. Nevertheless, the neoliberal right-wing government decided to show its teeth: they announced that the new laws will be brought in the Parliament in the Summer

Session (probably in August) and they accuse us of being "a minority who wishes to destroy our universities".

The rumour today in many major media (including even centre-right press) is that the Government is thinking seriously of withdrawing the law proposal for October.



Today and in the next two days there is a new round of General Assemblies in Schools, in order to decide the continuation of the occupations and other actions of resistance and press the government more.

THE BASIC DEMANDS OF THE GREEK STUDENT MOVEMENT, AS THEY HAVE BEEN FORMED BY THE NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION ASSEMBLY OF OCCUPATIONS:

- Immediate withdrawal of the Law Proposal for the reform of the Legal Framework, that defines the foundation, the principles and the function of higher education in Greece.
- No reform of Article 16 of the Greek Constitution, which forbids the foundation of private universities and defines that public and free education, is a right of all people and it is an obligation of the State to provide it.
- Withdrawal of the new laws (that were voted last year) about the initiation of a marketized "evaluation" of universities by external actors of the market and the Industry owners, the introduction of managers in every school and the initiation of a sponsored, super-specialized, "life long learning", which will demolish the value of degrees and dismantle the curricula of schools into a personalized addition of credits, without any professional rights.
- Guaranteed professional rights for every student that gets his/her degree.
- Free transfers, accommodation and food for all students.

### Severe police violence

Yesterday at the demo we experienced the hardest repression I have ever seen in the last 8 years that I am politically active. In front of the Ministry of Education and in front of the Parliament some groups clashed with the Special Forces and, from that point, the Police began a blind attack against all blocks, which were full of 18 and 19-year old students, most of which participate in the movement for the first time in their life.

They turned the city centre into a gas chamber and even threw "panic bombs" (bombs that make a huge sound when they explode, in order to terrify the demonstrators). They even threw stones against the blocks and, in one point, managed to brake the human chains we made, circle two blocks of unprotected students and suffocate them in tear gas, hit them on



their face and body with globs and with their shields and arrest many of them. The demo managed to march ahead and kick out many of the people that were trying to cause trouble, by braking stores and throwing molotov bombs.

Over 10.000 people reached and entered the occupied Polytechnic School, in order to be protected. We stayed in the School for at least four hours, guarding the doors and trying pushing the black block to clash with the Police outside the University.

The Special Forces surrounded the School and started throwing tear gas bombs in the School, in order to suffocate us. We were medically well prepared and managed to help all people who faced breath problems.

Finally, after negotiations of Alekos Alavanos (the President of our Party) and the Federation of professors with the Minister of Public Order, the Police withdrew its forces and we left the Polytechnic in a common big block, singing songs of freedom and slogans. The movement now demands not only the withdrawal of the new law, but also the resignation of the Ministers of Education and Public order, as the main political responsible for what happened yesterday. This demand has been also expressed by the professors and Synaspismos: 42 people arrested, over 150 badly injured. Yesterday it was another day of disgrace for democracy and human dignity.

Nevertheless, it was one of those small moments in your life, when you realize that you make your duty towards yourself, the society and History. If one month ago all this could be a dream, today it's an unrefused reality. Next Thursday we shall flood the streets again.

More decisive, more massive, more proud than ever before.

They make laws, We make history.  
We continue. We shall win.

Latest news:

THE GREEK MINISTER OF EDUCATION JUST ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWS THE NEW LAW PROPOSAL FOR OCTOBER!!!!  
THE FIRST BIG VICTORY OF THE GREEK STUDENTS MOVEMENT IS A REALITY! WE ARE MORE MASSIVE THAN EVER! THIS MOVEMENT IS LIKE THE FLOWERS THAT BLOSSOM EVERY DAY!  
WE CONTINUE!



P.S. We really thank all of you who collectively or personally send us messages of solidarity. Please, do your best to make these events known to your youth movements. Demonstrations and/or solidarity actions in Greek embassies or consulates will help the student movement a lot!<sup>1</sup> *Tuesday, June 13, 2006*

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<sup>1</sup> ENDYL was organising a demonstration in solidarity to the Greek student movement, Wednesday 14th of June, in front of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.