

Report from Paris by Yves Messer

Student demos used against Chirac

Trilaterals, Trotskyists, and Socialists all have their hands in the movement being manipulated against the government.

On Dec. 4, more than a half million students, 1 million according to the organizers, demonstrated in France against a bill on the universities, known as the Devaquet bill.

The demonstration grew out of an ongoing mobilization that started two weeks before. By Nov. 27 some 400,000 demonstrated all over France against the Devaquet bill, on the day it was to be debated in the National Assembly. As a result, Universities Minister Devaquet was forced to step down, and his bill was withdrawn. Another result is that politicians are ganging up on the RPR government, from "left" to "extreme right," including Raymond Barre of the Union of French Democracy, Chirac's main political rival in the government majority coalition.

This was the first time since May 1968 that a mass student movement has been created in France. Then, it was aimed against President Charles de Gaulle and led to his fall; today it opposes the Gaullist government of the RPR's Jacques Chirac. The movement is controlled by the Socialists through a tactical alliance with the Trotskyists of the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party).

The purpose of organizing that kind of mass movement is 1) to prepare the ground for the Socialist Party in the 1988, or maybe earlier, presidential elections, 2) to block the anti-drug, anti-AIDS, and anti-terrorist policy initiated by Chirac's government since last spring—a policy the Socialists call the "new moral order."

More broadly, the aim is to keep

Chirac so busy with internal affairs that he will be distracted from the international scene. In this regard, it is the continuation of the De Borchgrave affair which tried to sabotage Chirac's foreign policy a few weeks ago, when *Washington Times* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave leaked quotes from an off-the-record interview on Mideast policy with the French premier.

The student uproar started Nov. 17 with a strike at Villeteuse University and then on Nov. 22 at the Sorbonne, well-known in France and elsewhere as a counterculture haven. The student union UNEF-ID, controlled by PCI Trotskyists who tactically merged with the Socialists in April this year, called for spreading the strike to all the universities.

The next day, 200,000 rallied in the Paris streets, organized by the teachers' union, the Federation of National Education, controlled by the Socialists and Trotskyists, a powerful network of interests within the national education system, with millions of members and billions of French francs. The movement peaked at the Dec. 4 demonstration, when provocateurs from both "extreme-left" and "right" ran riots against the police with molotov cocktails, steel bars, and paving stones. One provocateur was even seen aiming a pistol, a method reminiscent of the Red Army Faction-Greenies in West Germany.

Hundreds were hurt, and one was killed. The Socialist Party then appealed unofficially through its media to change the orientation of the movement from anti-Devaquet to anti-Pas-

qua (the interior minister) and anti-Chirac. On Dec. 10, a demonstration was organized to protest the "repressive methods" of the government's police forces.

So, the movement was consciously degraded to enrage the students and shift them toward a Green-like or "rainbow coalition-like" movement, since the overtly anti-technology, anti-nuclear, or pacifist movements as such, don't get much positive response from French youth.

The Devaquet bill, which suggested a narrower selection of students (a practice which already exists), had awakened the fear of the future, of not having a job. The general themes of mobilization were "equality" and "fraternity," as people are fed up with the sterile partisan left-right debate. Hence, unlike May 1968 this is a movement based on so-called moral values such as "justice and equality." The Trotskyists are trying to shift it toward a movement radically opposed to the anti-terrorism, anti-AIDS, anti-drugs, allegedly authoritarian moral order of the Gaullists.

This manipulation of student opinion started earlier, when the theme of "fraternity" mobilized thousands of people of North African origin born in France. Their movement, SOS-Racism, is also controlled by Trotskyists. Not surprisingly, the people organizing the student movement are members or sympathizers of this SOS-Racism.

Two figures are emerging out of this social upheaval: President François Mitterrand, the "monarch," "above the melée," defending the "oppressed minorities" and giving points to the government as an arbiter; and Trilateral member Raymond Barre, who has played the role, since he began running for President, of the man "outside the parties," "neither left nor right." Indeed: "Trilateral."