

Danes Reject Euro Currency, Again

by Poul Rasmussen

With a surprisingly clear margin, 53.1% to 46.9%, the Danes decided, on Sept. 28, to keep their national currency, the krone, and maintain their national sovereignty, rather than adopt the euro.

In the view of a vast majority of Danes, there must be a limit to how much political power a nation transfers to any supranational institution. This has been the key issue in all of the five referendums held in Denmark, since the country joined the European Common Market in 1972. It was

on this basis, that the Danes rejected the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992, to the great dismay of the European elite. Only after being granted four exceptions, did the Danes accept the treaty in another referendum one year later. One of these conditions, was the opportunity to opt out from participation in the common currency, the issue of this year's referendum.

This time, the question of national sovereignty was, to a large extent, surpassed by the issue of the general welfare of the people. In a world of privatization, liberalization, and globalization, the Danish and the Scandinavian welfare model is already under immense pressure. Free schools, free universities, free hospitals, public pensions, etc., are not exactly economic idols of the growing international herd of wild-eyed liberal monetarists. But nearly all of the Danish population, from the right to the left of the political spectrum, wants to maintain the welfare state, and a majority seriously doubted the assurances of the Danish government, that this system could, and would be defended even if the krone were replaced

Don't Belittle Danish Voters on 'No' To Euro

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

September 29, 2000—As of the close of the day, Thursday, it appears that the Danish voters have voted their patriotic preference for keeping their national currency, over the Euro, by a considerable margin. In and of itself, the presently reported outcome was generally expected, and, apparently, its most immediate effects had been pre-discounted by the usual “financial markets,” that during the several days preceding that election itself.

Nonetheless, only fools will belittle the Danish voters' decision. Although last night's reported poll was not an unexpected development, the early result will include not precisely predictable, but early and significant, catalytical effects on the international political and financial situation.

The captains of English-speaking imperial financier interests, are still in charge of the ship, still relishing their temporarily continuing authority to rattle sabers, make wars, to hire and fire subordinate executives, and to decide which passengers will die next; but, so far, they exhibit neither the intelligence, nor the will to save the ship known as the world's financial system from sinking. They bark their orders, but, for all of that, the ship is sinking at an accelerating rate, the turbulence stirred up by each new subsidence growls more loudly, and the shudders of its

subsidence are more menacing than a few moments earlier. In the case of those present authorities, allusions to “Hitler in the bunker,” are timely. That is the situation on the battlefield, on the evening after the vote in the Danish election has been reported. As the Prussian military advisers to Russia's Tsar Alexander I counseled in 1812: “The enemy appears to be winning, but, therefore, that fool is also losing.”

To sum matters up, we have entered a revolutionary period, in which the script is complete with featured inclusion of a powerful and mass-murderous, but doomed and tarnished former glory of the old regime. In fact, the only way in which to understand the present situation, is to take a point some short distance into the future, and to use that as a vantage-point to look backwards toward the present moment, to view the leading personalities of leading powers and mass-media voices of the current moment as the future will view them, as doomed voices of a recent past. We must adopt the standpoint of that future vantage-point in time, a retrospective view, from the future, of the present as tomorrow's self-doomed past.

In a situation like the present world situation, revolutionaries may be slaughtered, or triumph. Either way, they will be honored for their contribution to the more distant future beyond. But, the sidewalk superintendents and bookmakers of current history will be consigned to that Hell where the contemptible bask in the well-deserved disgust they have, once again, so richly earned in this present crisis, as in notable parallels from the history of the past.

by the euro. When Social Democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen conceded defeat late in the evening of Sept. 28, he emphasized that the Danes might be divided on the issue of European integration, but they are not divided on the defense of the welfare state.

Despite the fact that 80% of the members of the Parliament, all the leading news media, all the industrial federations, most of the trade unions, and most of the banks conducted a massive campaign to get the Danes to vote “yes,” 87.4% of the electorate showed up to vote, and 53.1% of them defied the establishment.

Fuel Protests Start Economic Debate

by Rainer Apel

Four weeks after protests began in France, rising fuel prices continue to haunt most of western Europe, but the oil price issue has already been overtaken by other economic issues. Protesters are beginning to address the general course of European Union policies—for example, the deregulation of road transport and shipping, the set-aside measures for the farming sector, and the privatization of the energy sector in general. The most recent, speculative increase in fuel prices has just been the spark that sent Europe politically up in flames. And, this is a warning to the governments of Europe (if they care to recognize the writing on the wall), not to count on that protest ferment being easily bought off by some little concessions here and there.

The example of France, where the government showed “flexibility,” and granted concessions on the fuel tax, which ended the road and fuel depot blockades after one week in August, illustrates the underlying dynamic: During the last week of September, railway and urban transport workers paralyzed France, with strikes and protest actions throughout the country. The issue here, is more public sector investments, in personnel, equipment, rolling stock, in technical and safety upgrades, and, naturally, pay raises.

A similar protest wave is under way in Germany, where the labor unions, which have not backed the ongoing protests by long-haul truckers, have warned the government that it must review its plans for pension reform, or face labor outrage during October. Also, in Belgium, which was paralyzed by trucker protests during the first half of September, train and postal services were interrupted in late September, by strikes. Opposition to the privatization of the postal services is one of the motives for these strikes. Sweden, which has seen fuel protests during the first two weeks of September, may see

much bigger protests, because postal workers are soon expected to take to the streets in response to government plans to privatize the postal services, in an attempt to save money and handle services through the many little tobacco stores on neighborhood corners.

EU, Government Policies Targetted

Lastly, the farmers: In numerous European countries, farmers are either exempted from paying fuel taxes (as in Britain) or pay less than other productive groups, so that the fuel price issue as such was not a trigger for protests. But, the broad public outrage at the speculative price increases for fuel has created an environment in which the farmers are bringing forward their genuine interests in improvements in their situation. In all European countries, farmers have been a crucial reinforcement to the “battalions” of protesting truckers. Representatives of one farmers’ protest group, “Farmers for Action” in Britain, have repeatedly stated that their protest is not against high fuel prices as such, but rather, against the general direction of government and EU policies.

What farmers want to reverse, is the devastation that has hit the rural regions, because of the set-aside policies and the Brussels EU Commission quotas that curb production, and farmers say they want just prices for their products, for example, from the commercial dairies and supermarket chains. The price-cutting methods of the supermarket chains have also been attacked, by spokesmen for the long-haul truckers in Germany, as one among the many fronts where deregulation is ruining thousands of firms in the freight industry, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs. The combined effects of these deregulation measures, radicalized free market developments, and the increased fuel prices, will eliminate up to 100,000 jobs in the road transport sector over the next two years, German truckers have warned. What they want, is for Berlin to intervene with the EU Commission and re-regulate the sector.

Farmers also played a crucial role in fuel price protests in Spain throughout September; in mid-September, more than 100,000 of them took part in numerous tractorcades and road and fuel depot blockades throughout the country. Madrid, which still refuses to make more substantial concessions, has been warned that what happened in September, is only a prelude to what may happen. Also, Spanish fishermen have been very active in the running blockades of seaports and of several offshore oil platforms of British Petroleum and other oil companies. Fishermen have protested in France, Britain, Sweden, and Germany, as well.

‘The Guardians of Maastricht’

In every case, the policies of the national governments, which follow EU Commission budgeting regulations, have come under attack on many more issues than just the fuel prices. The nature of these protests throughout the EU is