

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

Danish role in NATO at stake

Is Denmark about to become neutral—or is its Social Democratic Party on the verge of splitting over the issue?

The spectacular rejection of the European Economic Community's reform package by a majority of the Danish Parliament has created an unusually tense political situation in the country, and many fear that this will be the first concrete step in pulling Denmark out of the Western alliance. But the outcome of the public referendum, which will occur on Feb. 27, could also mean another thing: the final end of the Danish Social Democratic Party.

It came as no surprise, that the three small socialist parties in the parliament voted against the EEC reform package. Neither was it any surprise that the small Liberal Party, the Radikale Venstre, followed its traditional anti-EEC inclination and rejected the reform. But it was certainly a surprise that the anti-NATO left wing of the Social Democratic Party was allowed to determine the party policy on this issue. It should be remembered, that it was the Social Democratic Party which pulled Denmark into the European Economic Community in 1971, and even though the party has taken a dramatic turn to the left in its defense and security policies since the Social Democrats handed over governmental power to the Conservative Party in 1982, it still maintained its pro-EEC attitude.

By rejecting the EEC reform package the Danish Social Democratic party has sided with the communist controlled "Popular Movement against the EEC" which has attempted to present the new reform as an "European Union" or a "Neuropa." But a closer

look at the new reform reveals a striking resemblance to exactly those types of changes in the EEC bureaucracy, which the Danish Social Democrats have demanded for years!

The reform package includes the following main points: 1) reduction of the technical trade barriers among the member nations, 2) cooperation on environmental issues as a part of the EEC treaty, 3) cooperation in research and technology, 4) Treaty on Foreign Policy (based on the declarations from Luxembourg 1970, Copenhagen 1973, and London 1981), 5) fusion of European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Policy Cooperation (EPC) and 6) increased consulting influence of the European Parliament.

It is only the last point, the increased consulting influence of the European Parliament, which the Social Democrats give as the reason why they cannot support the package. They will never accept increased power to the parliament, they say, since this will remove national sovereignty.

Yet a closer look at the reform package shows, that the parliament will get no increased power at all. And the Social Democrats know this, so why are they deliberately forcing this crisis?

In the parliamentary debate on Jan. 21, the head of the conservative Centrum Democratic Party, Erhard Jacobsen, formulated it this way: "The public referendum is not only a question of a 'yes' or 'no' to the EEC reform package. It is not even a question of 'yes' and 'no' to the EEC. But it is a question of the future of Denmark in

all of Western Europe. I have no doubt that a 'no' to the EEC reform package would be a signal to our friends in the EEC and in NATO that we are about to go our own way in the question of international cooperation. In reality a 'no' would be a signal to our allies, that Denmark is about to become neutral."

Mr. Jacobsen said exactly what many fear to be the real reason behind the Social Democratic rejection of the EEC reform package. The anti-NATO left wing of the Social Democratic Party hopes to provoke a government crisis resulting in an early election, which could bring the Social Democrats back to power. A coalition government consisting of the Social Democrats and the rabid anti-NATO Socialist Popular Party would pull Denmark out of NATO instantly.

With the Northern Flank already crippled by the pro-Soviet policies of Sweden's Olof Palme government, a Danish pull-out would imperil the entire Western alliance.

However, this scenario might never come true at all. One member of the party, Robert Pedersen, voted for the package on Jan. 21, and several prominent Social Democrats have already announced that they intend to rally support for the reform package before the public referendum on Feb. 27.

This split in the party is linked to a rapidly growing dissatisfaction with the party leadership coming from the powerful Social Democratic-controlled labor unions. An open war between central union leadership and the infamous Ritt Bjerregaard, the former health minister who tried to legalize euthanasia in Denmark, has broken out. It is not at all unlikely that the final outcome of this power struggle will be a split of the Social Democratic Party. The public referendum on Feb. 27 could precipitate this.