

8th International Conference

Contribution of AKP, Norway

COUNTRY REPORT AKP, NORWAY

1. The same main issues are central in the class-struggle in Norway as in the rest of Western Europe, even if the Norwegian state still is among the richest ones in the world - giving the bourgeoisie quite a good room of manoeuvre. But, as we know, for them the big heap of capital layed up from the oil-business and the fishing industry etc are not ment to be used for the benefit of the ordinary peoples, but in the international competition for more profits. So we also are experiencing

- **Demolishing of the the public sector;** health, education, infrastructure like post/tele/energy-sector etc. The mantra, of course, is to *improve it* through privatizing. But the result is making it more expensive for the users and less efficient for the total community. For the moment a hard struggle is coming up around the privatizing of the education sector. The energy sector is another one.
- **Demolishing of the social security net - replacing universal rights with individual responsibilities.** The main attac here now is about the **pensions**.
- **Trade union bashing.** The main attac now is introducing new **Labour laws**, allowing more flexibility in the working hours and over-time work (actually permitting 78 hours a week for a periode of several weeks) as well as more opportunities for the employers to use contract workers. Visiting India last autumn, we experienced they were fighting a similare law proposal there. Illustrating the internationalizing of capitalism. The level of organizing in Norway has dropped about 10 % the latest ten years, now beeing 52%.
This new laws also will stimulate socalled "**social dumping**", having contract workers downzising the wages by using low-payd workers with lower costs for social benefits. The enlargement of the EU now, May 1th, has given new oppotunities for the employers, Norway beeing a member of the EEA. Firms in the construction sector already are importing workers from Polish agencies in this sector doing the work on considerably lower wages.

Actually this developement was initiated with the **socialdemocrats** in the government. And they are still supporting the main line, f.i. they are heading the "pension reform commission". But from tactical reasons, fighting to replace the right-center government, they are now joining the opposition on some issues. They are also pressed by their trade union cadres to oppose some of the attacks.

Also the left-socialdemocrats in the Socialist Left Party are more vacillating members in the resistance front. Since the main target for the party leadership is to take part in a government with the socialdemocrats after the elections in 2005.

The main mass movement in the resistance front are the militant sectors of the trade unions. There also are a big umbrella-organisation called the "Welfare Action", uniting tradeunions, social progressive mass-organisations and also local parliaments in municiplities - altogether representing more than 1 million members. The Attac Norway also take part in this struggle on specific issues.

2. New attempt to have Norway a member of the EU.

Through the EEA Norway already are partly a member of the economical structure of the EU. Also Norway are a member of the Schengen Treaty. But the buorgeoisie wants to be a full fledged member, taking part in the political and military cooperation as well.

They don't dear to go for a third referendum before they think they have a good chance to win.

The developments the last years;

the enlargement of the EU, including poorer countries in the East, and the resistance from France, Germany and EU-institutions against the aggressive policy of the US have caused a change in the opinion in Norway.

The opinion polls now have shown a majority of ca. 45% - 35 % in favour of membership (ca 20 % insecure"). Only in the north of Norway and among the younger people there are a majority of No's at the moment.

If this will be the situation next year, the EU-issue will be a hot issue for the parliamentary elections. The Conservative Party, the main party in the government, as well as the Socialdemocratic Labour Party, the main opposition party, are announcing 2006-2007 as possible periode for a new referendum.

Our party already are starting to mobilise for a new propaganda offensiv from the NO-front. Also the Center Party are doing. The Socialist Left Party still will be a NO-party. But some of their members and cadres, in special in the intellectual circles in the urban areas, are leaning towards a YES. Mainly from different kinds of arguments focusing internationalism and promoting peace.

We think it will be a good chance also to win this third battle, actually to **prevent a new referendum**. The development inside the EU, as well as the international situation the coming years, most likely will be in our advantage.

The No to The EU mass organisation still have around 25 000 paying members and the capacity of a quick manifolding if the proposal for a referendum is put forward formally.

3. Antiimperialism/antiwar.

Norway is getting more and more tied up to the big imperialist powers, economically, politically and militarally. The US still is the "big chief". But the influence of the big powers in the EU is growing, also creating some dilemmas, in special for the socialdemocratic leadership. Also, as mentioned, the leadership of the Socialist Left Party have illusions on the "peace-factor" of the EU.

-Norway took part in the war against Yugoslavia.

-Norway gave an unreservedly support for the US after 9.11. 2001 and have taken part also in the US-campaign "Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan both with special troopers as well as air-support from the bases in Kirgisistan.

-Norway joined the US-"coalition of the willings" in May 2003, sending 160 soldiers for socalled humanitarian services to Irak. The popular mobilisation prevented support during the invasion in March 2003, and now also are forcing the government to withdraw the soldiers within June 30. But not to offend the US too much, they are sending more soldiers to Afghanistan instead.

-The concept and organisation of the Norwegian armed forces have been altered the latest ten years, and still are planned to be further changed, in order to primarily take part in international actions commanded by NATO, and even directly by the USA as seen in Afghanistan. Increasing Norwegian economical interests in the Caspian Sea area and Iran/Iraq is behind this development. The Norwegian bourgeoisie is relying upon their big brothers to be able to defend this interests. Therefore they are putting up "mercenary" soldiers for them.

-Norway plays an important role for the USA in peace negotiations around the world, in conflicts there the US can't take a direct role. As in the first phase of the Palestina-Israel negotiations, in Guatemala, Columbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and the Philippines. Liberation movements can also utilize this, being aware of the double role of the Norwegians. The Norwegian government as well as individual politicians also have own ambitions becoming a sort of professional "peace-makers".

-The antiwar/peacemovement in Norway at the grasroot-level are manifolded. The broad front are not antiimperialist, nor are the big bulk of solidarity organisations. But AKP are working hard inside this broader front, also to promote opinions like the necessity of supporting the armed resistance in Iraq nowadays at the same time we are working on consolidating the broader front in claiming "end of occupation", not only "Norwegian soldiers out".

4. Partybuilding.

The latest 3-4 years AKP has put **recruitment** as a high priority task. The membership in the party

decreased during the 1990ties, after the split out from the party in 1991, even as we in the same periode

indeed increased our political influence in many fields. After 2000 we have managed to turn this bad trend

in the prty-building, beeing ble in specil to recruit younger comrades again.

As the daily newspaper "Klassekampen" is a front-paper, on a revolutionary but not a communist plattform,

we have started to make an own party publication, "Akp.no", monthly in order to promote special party

opinions. This also improves the possibilities for the party-cells and individual partymembers to come direct

contact with peoples interested in the party. At the same time we also are improving our website in order to

reach more people directly as AKP, not only through our masswork for the front.

We also think that helping the Red Youth in building a stronger Youth organisation is an important link in

the partybuilding strategy at the present time.

We are to sum up our experiences and make further plans at our next Party Congress before summer.

May 2004

AKP