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The SI and the Incidents in Randers

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Early in 1965, quite a stir was made when J.V. Martin was brought up on charges in Denmark in relation to the publication of "subversive comics," three examples of which were included in the preceding issue of this journal (pages 21, 36 and 37). As he was responsible for the SI in that country, Martin found himself personally prosecuted following a complaint by the Danish branch of the "Moral Rearmement" movement, the famous American capitalist shock ideological organization, essentially concerning tracts clandestinely distributed by us *in Spain*. These tracts were formal détournements of comics, with naked girls expressing various truths in favor of moral and political freedom, which were inscribed in the traditional "speech balloons." This allowed Moral Rearmement to express their condemnation of the SI, starting with Martin, for crimes against morality and good custom, as well as eroticism, pornography, anti-social activity, outrages against the State, and so on. Along with these documents, the celebrated image of Christine Keeler, declaring her obvious superiority to the Danish princess who had consented to marry King Constantin (rightly described as a fascist before he proved it himself, last summer, turning against almost everyone in Greece) drew the additional accusation of injury to the Danish royal family. The ridiculous proceedings pursued by Moral Rearmement were closely followed by the entire Danish press. In a public statement, Martin immediately agreed that the situationists were indeed enemies of all the values defended by Moral Rearmement, and were actively employed in the *moral disarmement* of society as we know it. He also admitted, "It's certainly possible that the photos of the naked girls might have some erotic effect. Fortunately." He pointed out that while the question of the publication of pornography had nothing to do with our tracts, it certainly had a lot to do with the repressive morality they provoked, and moreover generally tolerated it. After all, the supression of publications injurious to the Francoist order by the social democratic authorities of a country officially opposed to Francoism was somewhat paradoxical. In the end, the judge decided not to take the case against Martin any further, dismissing the charges rather than dragging on a process that has proved instructive to say the least.

Not long after, NATO decided to move German troops into Denmark on two occasions, to participate in joint exercises with the Danish army. This was the first time that the German army had been allowed into that country since the end of its occupation in 1945. The fact aroused the usual hollow protests from across the Left, with their stock standard complaints and petitions. Naturally, no-one took any notice. The first German units were due to arrive in Randers, Jutland, on March 16th, where Martin happened to be living at that time. The notoriety stemming from his recent charges reinforced the liaison that his previous situationist activity had created with various avant-garde elements. Besides Martin, a few students from the University of Aarhus, local dockers, and old partisans of the armed struggle against the Nazis formed a committee to oppose the entry of the troops into their city, by force if necessary. Their declaration was plastered on posters and written on walls, drawing people from all over Denmark. Journalists from every Sandinavian newspaper — and even a few from Germany — converged on Randers to witness the encounter.



Pioniere verlegen Stacheldraht in den Straßen

(*Politiken* vom 17.3.65)

With the aid of important police reinforcements, the Danish army surrounded the city on March 16th. Their plan was to smuggle the German motorized column under cover of darkness to the barracks where they were due to be stationed. But the committee had organized surveillance of every route, so that it could be warned as soon as the approaching troops were seen. These small groups were able to slow the convoy's passage, giving the rest of the protesters enough time to assemble by the barracks at the point where the column was due to be shown in. The German vehicles arrived in the middle of a violent clash between the protesters and Danish soldiers and police. Rocks were thrown at the vehicles, and tyres

were slashed. A jeep was even stolen. After some time, the troops managed to enter the barracks, where they spent the night, only to leave again in light of this symbolic victory. Shortly afterwards, a spokesman for Bonn denied that they had ever intended to send a secind detachment of German troops into Denmark, and declared that the accomplishment of first manuever was perfectly satisfactory.



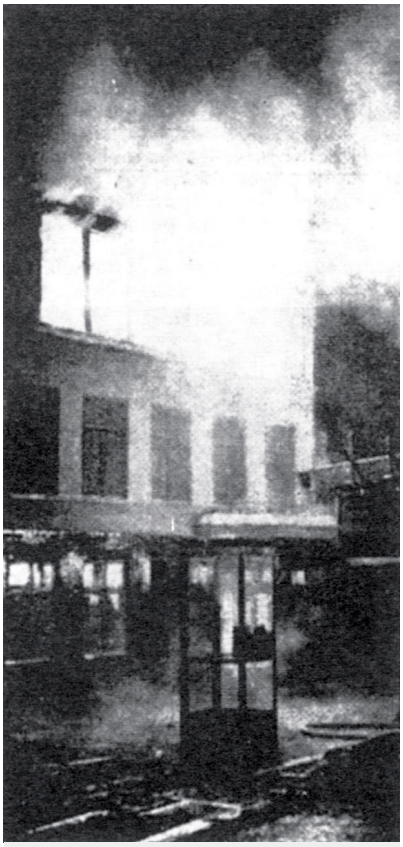
Polizei und Truppe stürzen sich vor der Kaserne von Randers auf die Demonstranten

(Foto in „Politiken" vom 17.3.65)

Two days later, on the evening of 18 March, while Martin and the rest of the group responsible for the demonstration were leaving his house at 16 Slodsgade — from which all ongoing action was organized, and which was therefore known to all as "riot headquarters" — a powerful firebomb ripped through the room that they had just exited, injuring his young daughter Morton, who was fortunately on another storey. In next to no time, the house was consumed by fire. While initial suspicions focused on an attack by the extreme Right, it was Martin who was arrested, police accusing him of terrorist activity that this "accident" had revealed quite opportunely.



The following day, however, the police retracted their completely groundless theory. They easily located the bomber, a demonstrator by the name of Kanstrup, who had *left a second bomb in a taxi,* in luggage bearing his name. Kanstrup has had a rather colorful career: leader of the Young Communists, he infiltrated a neo-nazi organization in the German Democratic Republic in order to blow the cover of their agents , whom he denounced to the authorities in East Berlin. He was subsequently arrested by the Copenhagen police for spying. After this mysterious turn of events, Kanstrup became a Troskyite, before secretly obtaining dual membership of a Left socialist group. It was on this account that he participated in the Randers demonstration, without revealing, of course, that he had brought two bombs along with him.



Das situationistische „Hauptquartier" am letzten Abend

(Foto erschienen in „Quick" vom 4.4.65)

According to Kanstrup's statements to the police, his bomb, which he had only ever considered putting to symbolic use, was accidentally detonated by Martin. It soon became evident that Kanstrup was a provocateur. It could not be established, however, whether the explosion was intended to actually kill the people who happened to be in the room a few moments earlier, or merely to destroy the building. Kanstrup could have activated the detonator himself, or an accomplice might even have triggered the bomb by throwing a grenade through the window (Kanstrup himself put this hypothesis forward then retracted it several times, considering the unlikeliness of the coincidence, and his own affirmation that he was the only person who knew of the bomb). We can't be bothered trying to figure out if Kanstrup was acting on behalf of the political police in Copenhagen — who have had a hold over him since his espionage affair — or the Stalinists — regardless of whether they are the insignificant Danish party or even his bosses in East Berlin. Indeed, in this instance, the goals of both institutions are the same. It is first of all a matter of brutally intimidating a protest group; and then worsening the situation by giving the impression that the organizers can be linked to a terrorist conspiracy with Eastern Bloc bureaucrats. While it is the Danish political police who have more to gain in manipulating Kanstrup in such a way (which they continue to demonstrate clearly enough), the Stalinists could only have found themselves dealt a rather telling blow by an autonomous organization which had just shown its capacity for powerful action.



J.V. Martin festgenommen

(photo parue dans « Ekstrabladet » du 19-3-65).

« —— Qui est-ce donc que ce docteur Fu Manchu ?

— Je n'en ai qu'une vague idée, inspecteur, mais ce n'est pas un criminel ordinaire. C'est le plus grand génie du mal qu'on ait connu sur notre terre depuis des siècles. Il est l'animateur d'un groupe politique dont la richesse est énorme, et sa mission en Europe est de « paver la route ».

Vous me suivez bien ? Il est à l'avant-garde d'un mouvement d'une telle importance politique qu'il n'est pas un Anglais ou un Américain sur cinquante mille à s'en douter. »

Sax Rohmer. *Le Docteur Fu Manchu.*

J.V. Martin, variously treated by the German press at the time as an anarchist and a pro-Stalinist, and in any case as anti-German (although posters in Germany underline that the reception in Randers was only aimed at German militarism), affirmed that his opposition to the Warsaw pact was equal to his opposition to NATO, and that the situationists were certainly not anti-German, to the point of naming one of their journals *Der Deutsche Gedanke* (German Thought).

The Swedish police and the Scandinavian press then uncovered a small nazi group in Sweden, which was trying to promote an image of systematic extremism by possessing a number of weapons and sending a few threatening letters in the post. At the beginning of Kanstrup's trial, and to the visible surprise of his lawyer — the Stalinist Madsen — the prosecuter suddenly and without explanation abandoned the charge of bombing an inhabited building, and limited himself to call for two months imprisonment without remission, which he obtained, for "possession of explosives and participation in an illegal protest"! It's not hard to figure out that Denmark has the judiciary leniency of the Wild West, for a short while later a young comrade who had thrown a simple teargas grenade into a mass conducted by the repugnant pastor Billy Graham was condemned to three months prison. The police laboratory in Copenhagen then concluded that the bomb *could have* gone off because of an extremely high temperature was reached in its vicinity (but without taking into account the fact that it exploded into unheated pieces). Finally, in December, the lawyer Madsen demanded that a new inquiry be opened, precisely accusing the police in Randers of having been aware of Kanstrup's attack on Martin's house twenty-four hours in advance; and therefore of at the very least having let him accomplish it. He also accused the army of having provided the explosives. His accusations were reported by the entire Danish press, including the Stalinist daily *Land og Folk* (1-1-66). Thus, the Stalinists only revealed Kastrup's shady role as a provocateur in the service of the police after a long delay whose uncertainty served their purposes.

This whole affair is interesting, as a sign of the general mounting of violence under the comfort of Scandinavian democracy; and the movement that carries this violence towards its transformation into contestation of society, here attempting methods best demonstrated by the Japanese avant--garde. It appears in the same current as the quite recent example of hundreds of young Amsterdam Provos who took to the streets on 10 March, completely sabotaging the wedding ceremony of a local princess to an ex-Nazi. It is remarkable that, from the day after the confrontation in which the SI's practice showed its excellence, a separate demonstration of peaceful protest called by various non-violent organizations, found itself attacked by teenage street gangs. Another notable detail is that with the complete destruction of the principle depot of SI publications in Northern Europe, most of the paintings completed eighteen months earlier by Martin and Bernstein for the exhibition "Destruction of RSG 6" (cf. I.S. #9, page 32 *[The Longest Months])* were also destroyed: here we have a supression of artistic negation without its realization! The "blanket" of art now finds itself burnt. It is also very significant that the proceedings celebrated in America or in Spain, or in the unity of action of the Moroccan and French police, can find their application in the army and police of social-democratic Denmark, where it is a matter of standing in the way of a movement that makes them anxious.

Situationist International: Situationistisch / Situationist: All das, was sich auf die Theorie oder auf die praktische Tätigkeit von Situationen bezieht. Derjenige, der sich damit beschäftigt, Situationen zu konstruieren. Mitglied der situationistischen Internationale.
Situationismus: Sinnloses Wort, missbräuchlich durch Ableitung des vorigen gebildet. Einen Situationismus gibt es nicht — was eine Doktrin zur Interpretation der vorhandenen Tatsachen bedeuten würde. Selbstverständlich haben sich die Anti-Situationisten den Begriff „Situationismus" ausgedacht.

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