

Northern Flank by A. Borealls

Palme's legal '1984' state

A prominent Stockholm professor of public law scores the Orwellian transformation of Swedish family law since 1969.

Professor Jacob Sundberg, professor of public law at Stockholm University, recently gave *EIR*'s correspondent a chilling view of how Sweden has been turned into something dangerously close to the fascist state of George Orwell's *1984*.

"The major change in the past 15-20 years in Sweden has been the increased power of the bureaucracy over the lives of ordinary people. Look at the question of family life," Sundberg said. Up through the 1960s, families usually cared for their pre-school children at home.

"Today, you must place your child in one of the [state-run] Day Homes. This is primarily because of the change in the tax system in the early 1970s which increased the taxation of families so much that it became economically necessary for both parents to go out and work merely to make ends meet. In addition, the Social Democrats, as well as the other parties, campaigned to create what they called 'equality of the sexes.' This all combined to create a child problem which was then 'solved' by the nationwide creation of public Day Homes."

Sundberg elaborated: "The expanding social bureaucracy to staff these new public child care centers was being trained in the 1960s. During that time, the social school faculties of the universities in Sweden were dominated by Marxist social work and sociological theories.

"Today, some of these Day Homes operate as a kind of 'spy center' against the families." The family becomes "more careful." A creeping fear of the

power of this social bureaucracy grows among parents.

So-called "for the good of the child" proceedings can be used by the state to take custody of children and to prosecute parents for maltreatment. "It is through these child custody cases that the social bureaucracy has become very powerful. These social bureaucrats develop a kind of power lust, faced with responsibility to destroy entire families with their testimony," Sundberg charged. "Even doctors are involved and have become afflicted by this power disease."

But even more grotesque, in 1979 the Swedish political parties passed a new law, which makes so-called "humiliating" treatment of a child a criminal offense. Incorporated into this new Parents' Code is a provision which states that parents may not subject their children to "corporal punishment or any other humiliating treatment."

"You as a parent with your own child, can you call him stupid if he does something, or slap his face if he misbehaves? Under this law, the child is entitled to the same legal rights as a total stranger by Swedish law. You no longer enjoy a privileged relation to your own children. It was actually the Liberal Party which drafted this new law, but all the parties backed it.

"After this 1979 law, a religious group challenged this new law before the European Commission on Human Rights based on the Biblical injunction that parents have a duty to 'chastise' their children. The Swedish government defended its stand by saying that no criminal punishment under this

law had yet been applied against the religious group bringing the case. So the case was dismissed for technical reasons by the European Commission."

The architect of this series of incredible laws in Sweden was Carl Lidbom, the Socialist justice minister in the Palme government from 1969 to 1978. Sweden even has a term, *Lidbommari*, to describe this process. When he became justice minister in 1969, he reorganized the entire ministry and initiated a deluge of new legislation. The philosophy behind these laws was Lidbom's notion that new laws should be the locomotive of social change.

The two most important changes created under this process were the increase of the enormous power of the tax bureaucracy and the power of the National Trade Union Bureaucracy in Sweden. The process was completed by the so-called Bourgeois Government (1979-82). Since the 1970s, the state's tax agencies have become staffed by economists trained in chasing fraud and tax cheating rather than lawyers. Legal considerations became marginal; investigations to catch "tax cheats" become primary.

"The tax system became all-pervasive, so that people must now consider the tax implications before doing anything. For example, you can be ruled a 'tax cheat' if, say, you do not bill a friend or neighbor for a simple favor."

At the end of the 1970s, people began to realize that under the enormous tax burden, they could get more social benefits if they lived together without being legally married. "But the tax authorities have now calculated that the state is being cheated of billions of kroner by such practices, so now they want to computerize where everybody lives to be able to control this."