

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

Olof Palme and the A-bomb

The pacifist premier, Olof "Nuclear-Free-Zone" Palme, is exposed as a godfather of Sweden's atomic-bomb project.

Our old friend, the pro-Moscow premier of Sweden, Olof Palme, has done it again. He's scored a new record for hypocrisy in this country where phony self-righteousness and double-dealing are so ingrained in government policy they may as well be written in the Constitution (and probably would be, if monarchist Sweden had a constitution). The latest on Palme? It seems that Olof headed a secret project in the 1960s to build an atomic bomb for Sweden. That's right, Olof Palme, who spends half his time today flitting around the world from one disarmament confab to another, "Mr. Nuclear-Free Zone" himself, turns out to be a regular little Dr. Stangelove.

This fascinating story of the Swedish A-bomb and Palme's leading role in it was leaked in Sweden just recently by *NY Teknik* magazine, in a series of supplements entitled, "The History of a Swedish Atomic Bomb, 1945-1972." As the title shows, Sweden worked on building an A-bomb, beginning in 1945 at the latest and continuing through (at least) 1972.

The fact that the neutral, pacifist Swedes really aren't all that peaceful is not news for anyone who cares to ignore the public propaganda and examine the facts. Today, the conventional military capabilities of Sweden—the size of the army, navy, and air force—are roughly the same as those of West Germany, France or Britain, despite a population only about one-seventh as big.

Nowadays, the Swedes don't talk much about that, since it's bad for Palme's image. But there was a time

when it was official policy to be quite open about how heavily militarized Sweden really is. For instance, as soon as the first atomic bombs had been detonated over Japan, articles appeared in Sweden calling for the country to get its own bomb. The Swedish military leadership argued, sensibly enough, that no nation that was serious about its defense could afford not to have this new arms technology in its arsenal. The fact that at that point only one country—the United States—had the bomb, and that this country was a superpower, did not discourage the Swedes. If anything, they said, having the bomb would be *more* important for a little country. In an article entitled, "The Atom Bomb—Prospects for the Future," published in October 1945, one top air force general put it this way: "Science and technology can provide a small country with the means of raising its military might far beyond its general war potential." Therefore, he concluded, little Sweden should build its own bomb.

The project was already under way at that early point. Every Swedish scientist with a background even remotely linked to nuclear physics was drawn into the project, some of them by military draft, and a crash educational program was started to produce more. The aircraft industry started building what was soon to become the biggest air force in Europe. Within seven years after the war, the Swedes had started producing four successive generations of jet aircraft. Clearly, one of the main aims was to come up with a delivery vehicle for the soon-to-be-produced nuclear arms.

The public version of the commander-in-chief's long-range plan for Swedish defense, published in 1954, called for a strike force of 216 latest-generation jet bombers armed with nuclear weapons. For comparison, that represented a force six times the size of France's force de frappe 20 years later!

Sometime in the late 1950s, someone in the Swedish elites apparently decided that all of this frank talk about Sweden's having nuclear weapons just was not in keeping with the campaign of pacifist activism being pursued by Sweden.

A "Ban the Swedish Bomb" movement was hastily pulled together from the socialist and liberal left wing. Opinion polls were produced to show that the population had rather suddenly shifted from strong support of Swedish nuclear weapons to clear opposition. And the government introduced a bill into parliament banning the bomb. Sure enough, in November 1959, the parliament passed the bill, authored by one Olof Palme, proclaiming that henceforth Sweden would refrain from developing or procuring these horrible and immoral weapons of destruction, and urging everyone else to do the same.

In reality, nothing at all was done to stop the Swedish bomb project. At exactly this point, the timetable was speeded up and funding was increased—by 100% within three years. To make sure that all this was kept totally secret from the population and the innocents in parliament, a tiny circle of representatives of the government, the military, and scientists were to be the only ones informed about the project from now on. The man chosen as chief government coordinator in this intimate circle was Olof Palme, who had just penned the law banning all R&D for an atomic bomb in Sweden!