

Olof Palme, and Moscow's new assassination policy

by Criton Zoakos

The professional, as it now has been established, manner in which the assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme was carried out, leaves very little room for the hypothesis that the murder was motivated by anything other than a major political motive. The theories involving Croatian, Kurdish, and similar groups such as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, can be dismissed as deceptive since, as it is known, the extent to which such groups have any professional "hit" capabilities, is defined by the extent to which they are under the influence of the major political players, i.e., the secret services of major powers.

Therefore, for those who still wish to treat the assassination of Palme as an unsolved "mystery," it makes sense to try narrowing the field of suspects by identifying the political consequences of the murder, and then matching these consequences with the known policy objectives of the "major players." From this perspective, the Soviet Union would appear as the principal beneficiary of the Palme assassination.

To argue, as Georgii Arbatov did repeatedly, that "imperialist dark forces," were behind the murder, is vacuous political hot air. The KGB's own *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, employing a mouthful, informed us that Palme was killed by the "ton-ton macoutes of the international dark forces," a description which might fit anyone from a Russian Orthodox deacon to a Bulgarian narco-trafficker, or a Sikh fanatic. Yet, numerous Russian officials insist solemnly that "they know who is responsible for the killing of Palme." One cannot help but suspect that they know only too well.

Some things ought to be said about Soviet presence in Sweden before the reader can form an adequate context for the Russians' bizarre behavior surrounding the Palme assassination. First, the greatest financial and industrial power of Sweden, associated with the Wallenberg family's group of interests, had, from the inception of the Soviet state, main-

tained a unique relationship with the Kremlin. During the Bolshevik coup d'état, tens of millions of dollars were conduited through Swedish banks to Lenin's organization, through an arrangement known as "The Trust," in which the notorious Alexander Helphand Parvus and his partner, Jakob Furstenberg, played a pivotal role.

Furstenberg, who was incorporated as a Swedish businessman to facilitate capital transfers to Russian insurrectionists, later, under Lenin, became the governor of the Soviet Central Bank and the principal architect of the Trusts of the N.E.P. period. It was during that period that the Wallenberg Group, with heavy financial assistance from John D. Rockefeller, established major business relations with the Soviets—relations which continue to this day. The latest publicly exposed service of the Wallenbergs to the Kremlin was revealed in April 1984 when a federal court of the United States fined a Wallenberg-owned company, Datasaab, \$3.12 million for having illegally exported to the Soviet Union an ultrasophisticated radar system which is capable of tracking "Stealth technology" aircraft.

The Wallenberg Group's chief executive officer, Hans Werthen, is so extensively involved in Soviet economic affairs, that many in the international business community consider him to be "the Soviet Union's third most important operative internationally," "more important than Kim Philby ever was," as one of them put it.

Equally important for forming an adequate background picture of Swedish affairs, is the current Soviet ambassador to Stockholm, Boris Pankin. Before his posting to Stockholm, Pankin was not a member of the Soviet diplomatic service. His officially listed job was "Director of the Copyrights Bureau of the U.S.S.R.," and his real job, Chief of the KGB Disinformation Directorate, in which capacity he directed, for a period of over ten years, a program of covert acquisitions and takeover of numerous newspapers and pub-

lishing houses in the Western world. Along with the businesses, Boris Pankin is reputed to have bought numerous influential journalists and opinion makers.

Yet, according to some very old observers of the top rungs of Soviet society, even the very impressive KGB director credentials of Boris Pankin are merely a deceptive cover story: He is supposed to be one of the most consummate and powerful men in the inner policy-making sanctum of the Russian state, his policy influence ranking close to that of Mikhail Gorbachov. These sources explain Pankin's present posting in Stockholm in terms of the important role that Sweden plays as a location where major Soviet policies are first tested out. To Kremlin policymakers, Sweden is, first and foremost, a "Trust" country, as it has been since 1917.

The "Trust," a generic characterization of the Kremlin's arrangements with the Western oligarchy—arrangements always characterized by "common and conflicting goals"—has been an ongoing relationship since the replacement of the Romanov dynasty with the, presumably more efficient, Soviet dynasty of the Russian Empire. This ongoing relation has been marked by numerous ups and downs, reflecting the successive dominance of "common" or, alternately, "conflicting," goals in the partnership.

Characteristically, during the height of Stalin's power, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Kremlin had embarked on a policy of bludgeoning Western oligarchical partners into submission to a Russian preeminence in policy. The Kremlin's principal instrument of persuasion against its Western oligarchical partners was the notorious "purges," and "Stalin trials." It was in the context of this policy that Josef Stalin ordered the disappearance of Raul Wallenberg, an illustrious member of the Wallenberg group of financial interests with whom the Kremlin does business.

Similarly with the disappearances and executions of persons such as Bukharin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and numberless Social Democrats throughout Eastern and Western Europe. Whenever the Kremlin wishes to assert its "conflicting" over its "common" goals over those of its Western oligarchical partners, it is the Social Democrats, the financial oligarchy's principal political tools, who pay with their lives.

Against this general background, can one ask the question whether the Kremlin—say, Boris Pankin—arranged for the assassination of Olof Palme? Numerous factors indicate how easy such an arrangement would have been for Pankin, who, by position, integrates the functions of three powerful Russian agencies capable of arranging assassinations: Ponomaryov's International Department of the Central Committee, Chebrikov's own KGB, and the Foreign Ministry—not to mention Pankin's numerous personal avenues of access to Western professional assassin outfits. In addition, Pankin and the KGB have more than ample means inside Swedish police, political organizations, and newspapers to ensure the post-assassination management of the news to best Soviet advantage.

For one thing, the KGB was in a position to know that there had emerged grave differences between Prime Minister Palme and Hans Werthen of the Wallenberg Group, over government economic policy. The KGB also knew that the differences were so grave that Palme brought himself to believe that he could get away by attempting a cleanup and reorganization of the Wallenberg banking and industrial empire. The KGB—or Pankin—were in a position to know that a potential assassination of Palme could, with skill, be attributed to the Wallenberg Group, itself a "Trust" partner. If not attributed, then threatened to be attributed to ensure post-assassination cooperation.

Such details, of course, can only be clarified by straightforward investigation of facts which, however, is very slow in coming. There is, in fact, a growing number of indications, that KGB "moles" inside the Swedish police are quite close to manipulating the ongoing investigations.

The most important, politically, element of the Palme assassination is the fact that it was timed to occur immediately prior to the keynote speech of KGB chief Victor Chebrikov to the 27th Communist Party Congress, and slightly before the announcement that the notorious Boris Ponomaryov had been removed from the Central Committee leadership. This sequence of events, significantly, was pointed out by a well known KGB/Trust disinformation conduit, the Israeli-Soviet immigrant Mikhail Agurski, who wrote his own analysis in a March 10 issue of the *Jerusalem Post*. Agurski's main error was his failure to mention Boris Pankin in his article, and many believe that Agurski owes Pankin more than a few favors.

Where Agurski is accurate is in his insinuation that the Palme assassination is probably some sort of political signal to the West, though he does not specify what kind of political signal.

For our part, we do not have to look far to identify the character of the political signal that the Kremlin is sending. Two days after the Palme assassination, Radio Moscow was broadcasting that former Austrian Chancellor the Social Democrat Bruno Kreisky, had received numerous death threats. Later, on March 13, a skillfully disguised message was published in certain Pankin-influenced papers, claiming that "Willy Brandt is next" to be assassinated after Palme. Clearly, the publicly recognizable heads of the Social Democracy have been targeted.

Those among the Western oligarchs who know how the game of "The Trust" is played, ought to open their eyes and recognize a return, in the Kremlin, of the old policy of Josef Stalin, that of killing the Social Democratic political assets of the Western partners, in order to ensure preeminence of the Russian "conflicting" goals. If our analysis is right, and if what we say happened at the 27th Congress indeed happened, then, not so much the retired Brandt and Kreisky, but François Mitterrand—the Social Democrat still in office (like Palme)—may be in imminent danger.