

The Soviet KGB tracks to the Palme assassination

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The Soviet tracks to the Feb. 28 murder of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme are now, three weeks after the event, indisputable, and furthermore constitute a classic study of Soviet disinformation techniques.

The U.S.S.R. was naturally among the prime suspects of the assassination, once its highly professional character had been established by Swedish authorities. But it was Moscow's mobilization of its enormous international press and media capabilities for the purpose of pinning the guilt on "right-wing" CIA circles, as well as the manner in which this was rapidly narrowed down to target the European Labor Party (EAP), which uniquely identified the Soviet paw print.

One need only review the sequence to see how the operation worked.

Beginning the morning after the assassination, the Moscow machine went into high gear. Georgii Arbatov of the Soviet party Central Committee, the U.S.-Canada Institute and the Palme Commission back channel, began the campaign with a speech to the then-ongoing Soviet Communist Party Congress. Arbatov claimed that, whoever the specific individual who pulled the trigger might prove to be, the authors of the crime were indubitably "right-wing" circles in the West, characterized as tied to the American CIA. Continued Soviet fingering of "the right-wing," "the CIA," "reactionary dark forces" and the like was then duly echoed by Soviet assets in the Swedish press, as the accompanying roundup shows.

Then on March 13, the Swedish police picked up one Victor Gunnarsson as a suspect. A one-time member of the Hare Krishnas and a known kook, the pathetic Gunnarsson could hardly be considered a serious prime suspect in what was established to have been a highly professional murder. Predictably, Swedish police chief Hans Holmer was forced to announce, only six days later, that Gunnarsson was to be released. Holmer reported that the chain of evidence which

police had used to establish Gunnarsson's guilt had collapsed.

In those intervening six days, however, the enormous Soviet press disinformation capability went into high gear. The aim was to use Gunnarsson to attempt incriminating Moscow's actual target and number one public enemy—U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche—by concocting spurious evidence linking Gunnarsson to LaRouche's political associates in the European Labor Party.

The Boris Pankin network

The operation was directed out of the office of the Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm, Boris Pankin, a man who is no mere ambassador. This is the same Pankin who is credited with engineering the 1981 election victory of Greek Premier Andreas Papandreou, through the medium of a press empire set up by Pankin and centered in the newspaper *To Ethnos*.

Pankin established his media empire, in Greece, Sweden and elsewhere, in his capacity as chief of the KGB's Disinformation Department (Department A). He holds the rank of Major General in the KGB. To indicate the intimate relationship between Soviet assassinations and subsequent disinformation, Pankin's Department A is housed jointly with the KGB's Department V (the infamous "wet affairs" or assassinations department), and Directorate S (responsible for recruiting and training agents to infiltrate Western organizations, including political parties, police and intelligence services, and journalism). Overall coordination for the three branches is conducted by the KGB's Special Directorate No. 1, which evaluates all information gathered, evaluates potential targets for liquidation, and then coordinates their execution and subsequent coverups.

Most likely collaborating with Pankin in the present disinformation campaign was his close friend and associate Sergei Losev, general director of the Soviet press agency TASS.

Losev is not only, by virtue of his position, necessarily a ranking figure in Soviet intelligence, but is one of the top Soviet experts on political assassinations and is, according to the testimony of his own lieutenants, a frequent visitor to Sweden. He is also a well-known "LaRouche watcher." It was Losev's employee at TASS, and co-author of many books and articles, Vitalii Petrusenko, who in 1975 "fingered" the Swedish EAP as being "a North American anti-communist organization which in Sweden and other countries is suspected of having committed various acts of espionage and sabotage" on behalf of "the CIA."

According to his book, Petrusenko's "information" came from—i.e., was laundered through—such Soviet assets as Per Fagerstroem, Olof Palme's press secretary from 1973 to 1976, and the "respectable" Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*. This is the same *Aftonbladet* which this month ran over a dozen pages "proving" the Gunnarsson connection to the EAP.

The surfacing of that presumed connection did not come from Swedish authorities. Once again, it was Pankin's Department A at work. It was a Swedish journalist writing for the *Svenska Dagbladet*, frequent publisher of anti-EAP slanders originating from Moscow, who was mysteriously directed to look up the names of 1,800 signators of EAP electoral lists from 1985 to find there the name of Victor Gunnarsson.

Never mind that the EAP at that time had rejected the unstable Gunnarsson's request to enter the party. Department A mobilized its assets worldwide to orchestrate the classic disinformation campaign. Well-established Soviet assets, such as the terrorist Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, were among those offering the advice that members of the EAP "make the perfect political assassins."

In Sweden, the unethical behavior of the press came in for attack from police chief Holmer. In a prepared statement issued March 19, Holmer criticized the Swedish press and media for its highly unethical and illegal behavior in "starting a witchhunt" by publishing the name and photograph of the arrested Gunnarsson, thus destroying, he said, the credibility of Gunnarsson's possible identification as a suspect in the case.

According to *The Times* of London, Holmer was particularly targeting the Malmoe Socialist newspaper *Arbetet*, which not only first published Gunnarsson's photo, but subsequently dug up a photograph of an EAP 1976 political rally and "identified" Gunnarsson as among those participating. *Arbetet* reporter Hakam Hermansson, who was among those responsible for publishing the photograph, admitted after Gunnarsson's release that not only was the photo fraudulent, but that his newspaper expects "to be sued for a lot of money" for its activities.

The aftermath to the Palme assassination is thus a textbook case of heavy-handed Soviet disinformation. It is precisely that disinformation which gives the murder of Palme a distinctly Soviet signature.

Documentation

Moscow's propaganda swept the news media

February 28: Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme is assassinated.

March 1: Georgii Arbatov, co-founder of the Palme Commission, Soviet Central Committee member, and head of the U.S.A. and Canada Institute, says at the Soviet Party Congress: "I do not know who killed Palme, but I know all too well who hated him. . . . I was with him at conferences in many corners of the globe, from Hiroshima to Mexico City, from Stockholm to New Delhi, and I saw demonstrations against him by fascist thugs, inflammatory articles, and provocations. Reaction loathed Palme. This is understandable, for Palme was an honest and bold man, although not of one mind with us, not a supporter of Communist ideas. . . . The last time I met him was in New Delhi. He delivered a lecture there on the first anniversary of the vile murder of Indira Gandhi. . . . Little more than a month later, he fell victim to a vile murder of exactly the same kind. . . ."

March 1: The Soviet news agency TASS says the motive for the murder and the culprit are still unknown, but it is "no secret" that Palme was inseparably linked with peace and disarmament, and East-West cooperation campaigns. It claims an all-out campaign is being conducted against pacifists in the United States and Western Europe.

March 2: Soviet Communist Party paper *Pravda* claims "right-wing circles" are behind the assassination.

March 2: Soviet government paper *Izvestia* claims "Western circles" were behind the assassination.

March 3: Georgii Arbatov tells Soviet news agency Novosti that the murderers come from "right-wing circles who are working against peace." A similar assessment in Novosti is given by prominent Soviet writer Chinghiz Aitmatov, a member of the kooky Esalen circles linked to Carl Sagan.

March 3: *Extrabladet*, Denmark's most widely circulated tabloid, runs a story by Paul Gazan claiming "police suspect the EAP [European Labor Party] as one possible extreme right-wing group" behind the Palme murder.

March 3: *tageszeitung*, the West German pro-terrorist newspaper linked to the Red Army Faction and the Green Party,

runs a story citing *Expressen* (whose article was to appear one day later) claiming the EAP is being investigated as a possible suspect in the Palme murder.

March 4: *Expressen*, Sweden's largest liberal daily, claims that the EAP is among the suspects for the Palme murder, saying the party "is known for its hate propaganda against Olof Palme." The same issue carries an article authored by Soviet Central Committee member Arbatov, entitled "Palme Hated by Many." "I don't know who murdered Olof Palme," Arbatov writes, "but I know very well who hated him. He was hated, bestially hated, by those who cannot accept, by those who hate what he spent his life for—peace and disarmament, dismantling of colonialism and its implications, safeguarding security in Europe and in the whole world, military, economic, and political security. . . . As a member of the Palme Commission . . . I have seen demonstrations by neo-fascists, seen hooligans curse him and threaten him, read slander articles. . . ."

March 4: Harry Schein, a Palme intimate, writes in the Swedish *Dagens Nyheter* an op-ed claiming that "all those who hated Olof Palme are guilty of his murder."

March 5: Radio Moscow reports that the Palme murder "is an attempt by right-wing elements who want to deliver a blow to peace and disarmament movements."

March 10: The Soviet *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, mouthpiece of KGB disinformation, publishes an article by Vladimir Lomeiko claiming that "many things" Palme stood for are close to "the new approach of the leadership of our party on questions of today's global problems," including "organizing for a nuclear-free civilization," etc. "For that reason, he was a target of the ideological adherents of violence. That is why they hated him. That is why the Ton-Ton Macoutes of the world's Dark Forces killed him. At this moment we do not know the names of his assassins, but we know the handwriting of political assassination."

March 13: Swedish police arrest Victor Gunnarsson as a suspect in the Palme assassination.

March 14: A correspondent for the Soviet press agency TASS in Stockholm tells a caller that the EAP is "the same group" as the neo-Nazi "European National Socialist Party," which had recently claimed the Palme murder in a public letter. The TASS spokesman reports his source as the Swedish news agency TT; TT denies it has ever issued such misinformation.

March 14: The second-largest Danish newspaper, *BT*, the noon tabloid of the *Berlingske Tidende*, reports that Gunnarsson is connected to the EAP. *BT* alleges Gunnarsson has

authored articles for EAP publications on a free lance basis, citing the Swedish security police, SAEPO, as the source of the information.

In a call to the SAEPO that day, Swedish EAP leader Michael Ericson is told categorically that no such accusations had originated with SAEPO, which has no information linking Gunnarsson to the EAP.

March 15: *BT* prints a statement from an EAP spokesman denying any links between Gunnarsson and the EAP. The spokesman is quoted saying, "It is a lie which must have come from Soviet or Soviet-related circles."

March 18-19: Newspapers and wire services all over the world put out the report that suspect Gunnarsson is a member of the EAP. Many link the party to Lyndon LaRouche; some quote the statement of EAP leader Michael Ericson, that the EAP broke off all ties with Gunnarsson when he was perceived to be an unbalanced individual, and that "there have been clear attempts by Moscow to lay the murder at our door."

March 19: Radio Moscow broadcasts in English to Europe: "Murder suspect Gunnarsson is a member of the fascist European Workers' Party with headquarters in the Federal Republic of Germany." Just one hour prior to the release of Gunnarsson, Radio Moscow modifies its line, omitting mention of the EAP and the epithet "fascist": "Speaking in a press interview, a spokesman for the police gave it to understand, that the man is involved with an extreme right-wing organization. The man is said to have hated Palme. One of the motives of his hatred was Sweden's good relations with the Soviet Union."

March 19: Swedish police release Gunnarsson, saying that a key part of the prosecution's evidence had collapsed. Police Chief Hans Holmer told a press conference that the decision was made after a confrontation with a key witness: "didn't give us what we expected." Holmer criticized the Swedish press for breaking Sweden's law against publishing the name and photograph of a suspect, and for launching a witchhunt.

March 19: Swedish journalists at the center of the KGB's disinformation campaign against the EAP are furious at Gunnarsson's release from custody, and fearful of lawsuits, particularly since they violated Swedish law by publishing the suspect's photograph.

March 19: Illinois Democratic primary victory for LaRouche-associated candidates Mark Fairchild and Janice Hart. WBBM radio, a CBS affiliate in Chicago, during coverage of the election results, adds, "In other related news, a man associated with the LaRouche organization has been identified as a suspect in the assassination of Palme."