

## Northern Flank by Göran Haglund

### The Palme murder and the KGB

*Uncomfortable questions must be asked as to who is really shaping the police investigation into the Palme murder.*

A public brawl has erupted among Swedish law enforcement officials probing the Palme murder, with charges of gross incompetence against Stockholm Police Chief Hans Holmér. This coincides with attacks by the government on its own security police, SÄPO, for leaking the expulsion of five Czech spies.

A severe rift has emerged between Holmér, who heads the Palme murder investigation, and Stockholm Chief Prosecutor K. G. Svensson, the prosecutor in charge of the case, who challenges the extraordinary powers usurped by Holmér. According to reliable sources, Holmér, whose career has not suffered from his intimacy with the ruling Social Democrats, is attempting to wield such extraordinary powers against the European Labor Party in Sweden, the most vocal critic of the regime now headed by Palme successor Ingvar Carlsson.

The Carlsson regime, closely watching Holmér's work through two government representatives in the 12-man body directing the inquiry, has intervened to back Holmér. Learning of the Holmér-Svensson rift, Justice Minister Sten Wickbom had his undersecretary make an urgent phone call April 26 to the home of Svensson's superior, National Chief Prosecutor Magnus Sjöberg, insisting that Svensson be restrained.

This followed by one week Carlsson's return from Moscow, when a new turn in the investigation was announced, toward looking for a crazy,

lone assassin. Breaching usual protocol, Soviet Ambassador to Sweden Boris Pankin, and gei Losev, two top KGB disinformation specialists, took part in Carlsson's Moscow talks.

A central issue of the rift is Holmér's insistence on cultivating some tiny bit of suspicion against Viktor Gunnarsson, the original suspect, who was released on March 19. Holmér has had Gunnarsson cooperate in innumerable—and increasingly meaningless—encounters with alleged witnesses, to establish whether Gunnarsson was on the scene of the crime.

In early March, a KGB-tainted circle of journalists was tipped off by Swedish police sources to exploit Gunnarsson's arrest for a series of wild libels against the European Labor Party (ELP), based on reports that Gunnarsson, carrying all the characteristics of an agent provocateur, had briefly surfaced in the periphery of the ELP in 1984. The libels were halted upon Gunnarsson's release, after Svensson had determined that evidence was lacking even to keep him in custody.

On April 28, no fewer than 22 new encounters of Gunnarsson with "witnesses" began, after reluctant approval by Svensson—with no results. Two days later, Svensson's superior Sjöberg, after government intervention, overruled Svensson, approving another 28 encounters. This blatant interference provoked an uproar. The vice chairman of the parliament's Constitutional Committee, Anders

Björck, announced that the justice minister will be called before the committee to explain himself. Several police officials openly regard the Gunnarsson investigation as a red herring: "The more we dig into [the Gunnarsson track], the more suspicion has weakened." Added another: "But Holmér clings on to [Gunnarsson] like a shipwrecked man to a life raft."

"Several of the most seasoned police officials accuse Holmér of directing the work like a dictator, that he is paralyzing initiatives . . . and that he is more of a liability than an asset to the investigation," *Expressen* wrote on May 9. "I cannot cooperate with an amateur. There is no longer any reason for me to talk to the Police Chief," one SÄPO official stated.

SÄPO rage over government meddling was fueled as Foreign Minister Sten Andersson publicly rebuked the security police for leaking the story of five Czech spies, expelled on April 30, and brazenly denied their spying for the Soviet KGB—ignoring how the spies from Czechoslovakia, a landlocked country, targeted the Swedish Navy's new anti-submarine torpedo, Swedish port entrances, and locations along the Swedish coast suitable for amphibious landing parties.

Some sources say the decision to bust the Czech spies originated outside Sweden, with SÄPO cooperation, to counteract KGB disinformation around the Palme case. Inadvertently implying such a connection, the insider column of the Social-Democratic *Aftonbladet* on May 10 raved against the conspiratorial politicizing of SÄPO behind the Czech expulsion: "Maybe time has come for a SÄPO-SÄPO, a security police to check the security police? . . . Maybe in this context, there is a retirement post for Holmér, after he has finally failed to solve the bloodiest SÄPO blunder ever."