

Did the KGB kill Palme?

1989 was the year of utter failure of Sweden's political establishment in attempting to finally close the Olof Palme murder case. It was also the year of vindication of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and his associates' warnings of possible Soviet authorship of the assassination of the Swedish prime minister. While early efforts to pin the blame for the 1986 Palme murder on the associates of LaRouche failed miserably from a purely legal standpoint, the massive campaign of villification of and disinformation about, LaRouche contributed significantly to shaping the political preconditions for LaRouche to be framed up and railroaded in Judge Bryan's infamous rocket-docket in Alexandria, Virginia.

After failing to link LaRouche's Swedish associates to the Palme murder, a grand attempt was staged to close further embarrassing investigations into the case by sending an alleged lone assassin, a common criminal, to life-long imprisonment. On July 27, 1989, Christer Pettersson was convicted on the basis of testimony given by Palme's widow Lisbet. Within less than a month, on Aug. 24, Sweden's largest-circulation daily, *Expressen*, spear-headed revelations that the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachov had foreknowledge of, and probably itself instigated, the assassination. The exposé was based on the Swedish Security Police's electronic bugging of a Soviet diplomat and intelligence agent stationed in Stockholm at the time of the murder.

After little more than another month, on Oct. 12, unanimous Stockholm Court of Appeals summarily ordered Pettersson released, for lack of evidence. While reviewing the evidence of Soviet involvement in the Palme murder was not the task of the appeals court, blunt demands issued publicly by Moscow's Ambassador Boris Pankin, repeatedly challenging the Swedish government to officially apologize for the press exposés of Moscow's role, did have an effect in blocking further pursuit of the Soviet track in the murder investigation.

Although not going so far as to officially apologize for the press revelations, the Swedish government reached a new all-time low in submissiveness to Moscow's imperial policy. During a November visit in the U.S.S.R., Foreign Minister Sten Andersson caused a furor at home, as well as in the Baltic states, by insisting that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are not occupied by Moscow. Visiting Prague on Nov. 24 to award the Olof Palme Prize to Vaclav Havel—barring another heavy-handed Soviet intervention, the likely next President of Czechoslovakia—Andersson during the awarding ceremony was treated to the following passage of Havel's address:

"I thank you for coming to me. During these dramatic days, when our history is being determined, I could not, even for an hour, leave my people. We are after all de facto, if not de jure, an occupied country—as well as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania." An irony, that so many years after Palme's famous denunciation of Husak's post-Dubcek puppet regime as "the creatures of dictatorship," Sweden's foreign minister had to be rebuffed by the foremost representative of Czech democracy.

deserting its state, was becoming more and more realistic.

The SED had to collapse under such conditions, despite stubborn tactical resistance and playing for time. One of the developments that accelerated the decline of the SED, was the loss of one-third of its membership of 2.3 million between late September and early December. Mostly workers returned their party cards in protest of the SED's policy.

Workers in numerous industrial combines of the G.D.R. threatened a labor walk-out, forcing the SED to disarm the 400,000 Kampfgruppen militia in the factories. Leaving arms in the hands of ever-less reliable workers' militias, seemed too risky for the SED: Who would guarantee that they wouldn't turn these arms against the party in a broad social-political conflict? Unlike June 1953, when several million unarmed workers rose up against the SED regime and were gunned down by Soviet tanks, the threat of a labor strike in October-November 1989 was far more lethal to the regime.

The collapse of the communist regime in neighboring Czechoslovakia, under a well-organized, countrywide warning labor strike in late November, was the handwriting on the wall for the SED in East Germany.

In tandem with the increasing mass protest in the streets of basically every single East German city, the big ones as well as the small, warning strikes of calcium-mine and transport workers, the threat of strike in the utility sectors of the southeastern region of the Lausitz, the entire SED system was forced into disintegration.

On Oct. 18, SED leader Erich Honecker was replaced by Egon Krenz with the perspective of "straightening things out" in a matter of a few weeks. A new Politburo was formed, but only a week later, one-third of the Politburo was forced out through mass protests. The SED-led government had to be dumped; a new government was hastily put together under longtime SED Central Committee member Hans Modrow,