
Sweden

The 'LaRouche factor' fuels pro-nuclear turn

by Michael Ericson and
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Sweden is being turned upside down around the fight over its nuclear power plants. The small but politically significant European Labor Party (EAP), affiliated with Lyndon LaRouche, is at the center of this turmoil, a fact which has been vehemently and repeatedly recognized by Olof Johansson, the leader of the shrinking, non-socialist Center Party. At the beginning of the year, Johansson and Prime Minister Goeran Persson struck a deal, in the false hope that they would increase their popularity before the national elections in autumn 1998, and secure a coalition government. At the center of the deal is the policy of closing two nuclear power plants — one before the elections, and the other after.

The EAP attacked Johansson (also known as “Tok-Olle,” or “Weird Olle”), under the slogan “Build More Nuclear Power Plants—Dismantle Weird Olle,” and the campaign indeed had an amazingly big effect. Johansson, who also came under pressure from within his own party for his “collaboration” with the “socialists,” started whining: “They [the EAP] called me Weird Olle already back in the 1970s.” A campaign sticker with the same title has become the common denominator among people who are putting up a fight for Sweden as an industrial society.

‘I am not allowed to say’

The EAP’s role in the nuclear debate was demonstrated most vividly in a national TV broadcast on Oct. 12. A TV program had organized a debate among Johansson, some regional Center Party leaders, and the usual gaggle of journalist commentators. One journalist, from *Svenska Dagbladet*, commented that it was a bad excuse to blame the low poll results for his party on “conspiracies.” “Weird Olle” exclaimed, “But it is these damned EAPers.” He then hesitated and continued in lower voice, turning a little to the side, “But that, I am not allowed to say.”

“Why are you not allowed to say that?” the program host asked.

Johansson continued: “I have been told over and over again not to do that, because then the EAPers will get a golden star in the book or be praised to heaven. Wherever I am, they

are there like a tail. Then you see Ny Demokrati [a small populist party] demonstrating outside the Parliament, with the same stickers and T-shirts.”

“But the worst is,” Johansson stated with a dramatic pause, “when you see Moderate [Conservative Party] parliamentarians inside the parliament with the same stickers.”

His statement created total shock and silence in the studio, until everyone started to babble at once. For whatever reason, Johansson had publicly admitted the existence of a heavy information blackout against the EAP and what it is affiliated with: the LaRouche movement internationally.

The real issues

What “Weird Olle” was referring to, was the orchestration of the fateful nuclear referendum in 1980. At that time, the population was brainwashed to choose among three possible time schedules, all stating that the nuclear energy plants should be closed down, the question was only at what pace. The EAP at that time exposed the referendum as a fraud, because there was no possibility to vote *for* the continued use of nuclear energy.

At this time, the EAP is stating that it was right in 1980 — that mankind needs development, that it needs LaRouche’s design for a new world economic order, and that the role of nuclear energy is key in modern industrial society — and, that it is right today: Mankind needs nuclear energy more than ever.

Currently, Sweden has 12 operating nuclear power plants at four different sites, which are delivering 50% of the electricity that the country needs. The Social Democrats, who are a minority government, cannot decide anything in the parliament without additional votes from members of other parties. Prime Minister Persson, a loudmouth and opportunist who at one point decided to back the policies of Prince Philip and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), announced at the beginning of the year that Sweden must now become a model country internationally for an “ecological and sustainable economy for the future.” Sweden, he said, must produce “100,000 new green jobs” (by such means as returning to the use of firewood as a fuel, and replacing all the toilets in the country with new ones that will separate urine from feces, in order to reduce the amount of nitrates released into the sewer system) and must close at least two nuclear power plants in 1998.

National elections are scheduled to take place in autumn 1998. As this policy was announced, Persson and his advisers hoped to win new support from green-leaning young voters, as Center Party leader Johansson did. In retrospect, their calculation seems to have been based on completely false assumptions. Maybe some young voters have been fooled, not knowing better. The Social Democrats remain at around 32% in the polls, but they are continuing to disintegrate, even though at a less dramatic rate than the Center Party. The Center Party, which was weakened even before the decision to

support the Social Democrats, has lost massively, falling below the 4% threshold—meaning that they would not get any seats in the future parliament. On top of this, the party leadership is plagued by scandals. There are two leading figures who could possibly replace Johansson. The first, Andreas Carlgren, two years ago confessed to being a homosexual (and anthroposoph). The other, Lennart Daleus, recently was exposed as being an ardent nudist. The Center Party clearly has its problems.

Bill to close plants losing support

At the center of the heated fight is a government bill, for which the Social Democrats got the support of the Center Party at the beginning of the year. The bill stipulates that the government can, any time it wishes, withdraw the right of the owners of a nuclear power plant to run it, if the owners are reimbursed for their losses. Before the parliament was to have voted on this bill, it was sent out to various institutions for consideration, including the universities. Members of the parties which were not part of the deal could also submit their own motions. Something unheard of has happened: Stockholm University sent back the bill, commenting that it has to be seen as an attempt to settle a dispute between two parties, the state being one of the parties. Such a procedure is unlawful, the university stated.

As if this were not enough, the Moderate Party, led by Carl Bildt, finally ended its refusal to take a stand in this conflict. At the beginning of October, the party, which six months ago became the largest national party and is steadily growing, stated that if it were to win the election next year, it would turn the Barsebaeck nuclear power plant back on, should the combined forces of the Social Democrats and the Center Party close it down next summer, before the elections. Two other non-socialist parties have announced that they are going to turn the government bill down, thereby supporting the moderates in a flanking maneuver.

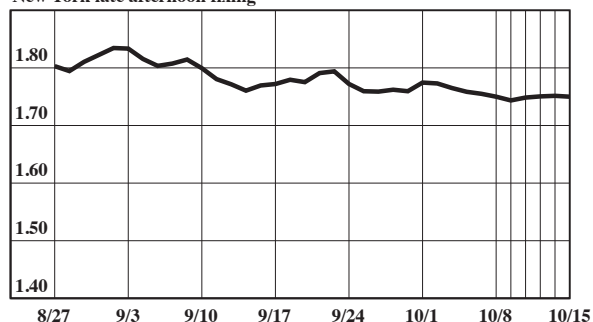
That 70% to 80% of the population, in poll after poll, is showing some sense of reality, by stating that the nuclear power plants should not be closed down prematurely, has not had any visible impact on the prime minister. That a combination of trade unions and industrialists, mainly those connected to the export sector, have repeatedly pointed to the national interests involved in keeping Sweden's electricity prices low, has not had any impact on the prime minister, who seems to have pushed the self-destruct button without even being able to realize it.

The most outspoken support for nuclear energy is coming from southern Sweden, from the greater Malmö area. The region has been bubbling with enthusiasm and hope since early spring, when the first foundations of the 15-kilometer-long bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen were put in place. The bridge, which will give a significant economic boost to the region, is scheduled to be ready for operation in the year 2000.

Currency Rates

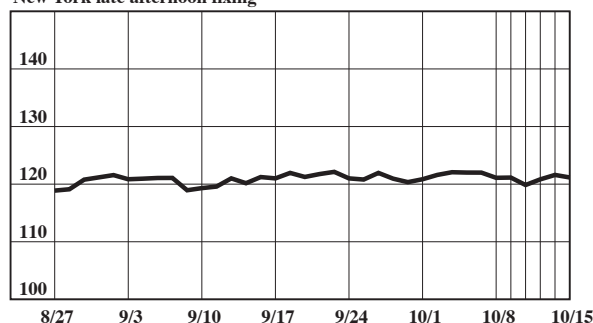
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



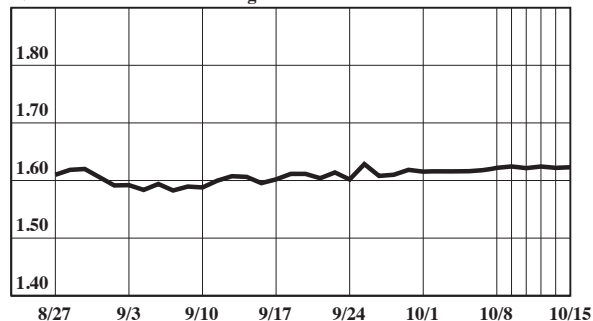
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

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