

Minister's office, 10 Downing Street, is convinced that the information about Robinson and Mandelson was leaked to reporters by Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown's press secretary, Charlie Whelan. London is awash with rumors, that Whelan's head will be the next to fall. But, on Dec. 29, the *Financial Times* reported that Brown is adamant about keeping Whelan on the job. The paper commented: "Mr. Whelan's survival will be a test of political strength between the Prime Minister and his Chancellor, and threatens to further destabilize the administration. . . . With . . . bad blood building between the Prime Minister and the Treasury, the prospect of the government being damaged by further feuding is growing."

Aside from this byzantine feuding, Brown himself is being touched by the scandals at the end of 1998. He and Robinson have always been close, and there are numerous reports that Robinson's largesse also went to Brown, for his offices and possibly other purposes, in the period before Labour came to power.

The case of Geoffrey Robinson opens up a can of worms. He is often referred to as the "bankroller of New Labour." He now owns the main Labour-linked weekly magazine, *New Statesman*, which he bought a couple of years ago when it was financially ailing. He finances a Labour think-tank, the Smith Political Economy Unit, named after the late Labour leader, John Smith. He opened his Tuscan villa in Italy, for vacations by the Blair family, in 1996 and 1997. Similarly, his vacation home in Cannes, France, has been available to Brown and his family. Robinson's penthouse suite at the Grosvenor Hotel in London is regularly used for brainstorming and other activities by Brown aides.

Elements of Robinson's financial empire are murky. He has a hedge-fund-type firm registered offshore in the Guernsey Islands, named the Orion Trust. When he became Paymaster-General, he neglected to itemize the dealings of Orion, causing an outburst of controversy, the which he had to calm down by apologizing before the British Parliament. In 1987, he became involved with the wheeler-dealer Robert Maxwell, who later died under mysterious circumstances, and whose body was found floating near his yacht, off the Canary Islands. Robinson's Transtec engineering firm and Maxwell's Hollis PLC engineering firm had a number of intricate dealings, which terminated soon before Maxwell's death.

Both the Maxwell and Robinson financial empires have recently been under investigation by the Department and Trade Industry (DTI). However, since the minister in charge of DTI, until Dec. 23, was Peter Mandelson, one suspects that the investigation was something less than vigorous. But, in the new atmosphere at year's end, a great deal of dirt about Robinson and his shady operations can be expected to come to light.

Tony Blair has a lot to think about, while on his New Year's vacation in the Seychelles.

Blair's Fortress Europe decouples from U.S.A.

by Tore Fredin

"We Want to Be Close to NATO" was the headline of an article jointly written by Finland's Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen and Sweden's Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, in Sweden's largest daily newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, on Dec. 5. That two Social Democratic ministers from these countries openly state a pro-NATO policy is an astounding development, because a policy of neutrality has been the trademark for both the Swedish and Finnish Social Democratic parties, particularly since the end of World War II.

It has become clear, since the fall of communism in the Soviet Union in 1991, that Finland and Sweden are reorienting their security and military policies; but until now, this has been occurring within the framework of continued neutrality. In the mid-1990s, both countries joined the Western European Union (WEU) as observers, and became members of the West European Armaments Group (WEAG). This, in reality, meant that neutrality is a thing of the past, because both countries' military production and military procurement would be coordinated by WEAG. Nevertheless, the official line was maintained that the new alliance didn't violate neutrality.

The question is, why are these pretensions now being dropped? One reason is the Amsterdam Treaty, which will go into effect in 1999, and which changes the status for Finland and Sweden as passive observers within the WEU. Now, if those countries take part in military operations carried out by the WEU, they will also be involved in the planning and decision-making process. This means, write Halonen and Lindh, "close cooperation with NATO on a policy level." Here, they are explicitly referring to the call of British Prime Minister Tony Blair for a militarily stronger Europe, in order to give some backbone to the European Union's (EU) foreign policy. Blair wants the Europeans to decide independently on using NATO's military and logistical capacity. This demand has been aired by oligarchical circles within EU/WEU. Blair's call is supported by the authors, who also throw some light on British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's recent statements about a "NATO with two pillars." This policy also fits hand-in-glove with the Socialist International's drive for a supranational "red-green" European Union.

Military-industrial aspects

The concern for European defense also has a more immediate reason, particularly for the Swedes. Leading industrial and financial groups have allied themselves with British interests, such as the group around the Swedish military-industrial complex, controlled by the Wallenberg family. Several years back, this group began a program of intimate military-industrial cooperation with British Aerospace, to market the Swedish Gripen aircraft, which is produced by the Wallenberg-controlled SAAB. It was a joint operation by the British and Swedes, who, in a tough international competition, secured the sales of 30 planes to South Africa for 15 billion Swedish kroner, which is about \$2 billion. A large part of the deal is a pledge, mainly by Wallenberg-related companies, for huge industrial and technological development projects in South Africa. Total investment plans are for Skr 50 billion (a bit more than \$8 billion). Representatives from JAS are calculating that in the next 20 years there will be a market for 2,000 new military aircraft, of which Gripen intends to take a fifth, or 400 planes.

For the last year, several important Wallenberg-related industrial companies have either merged with British companies, such as the biomedical firm ASTRA, or moved their headquarters to London, such as the electronics firm Ericsson. Other companies which have been bought up by the British are Avesta steel and, just recently, PLM. It looks as if a large part of the Swedish elite is putting its eggs into one basket with the British. The linkup is also very obvious in Stockholm's tailing British policy toward the European Monetary Union. Now, when the British Labour Party is changing its EMU policy and considering EMU membership earlier than the year 2002, the Swedish Social Democrats are following suit.

The orientation toward Europe in general, and the British in particular, feeds a policy trend of decoupling from the Americans. Anti-Americanism has been prominent in recent exposés of the Social Democratic-run intelligence agency called IB, which used to carry out covert operations against communists working in sensitive high-technology, defense-related industries.

The latest investigation was carried out by a group of parliamentarians, who stated that the IB was created in the late 1950s, at American request, as part of the Cold War policy, to prevent industrial espionage by the Soviets. Anti-American sentiments are reinforced by the revelation that material gathered by IB was delivered to U.S. immigration authorities.

Military, security, and technological cooperation between Sweden and the United States during the Cold War is not news, but what is important now, is how it is being played. Most telling are two articles in the conservative newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* on Dec. 5 and 6, by Ola Tunander. He gives an overview of all the dirty undercover

operations that U.S. intelligence agencies have conducted in Europe: how James Jesus Angelton, Allen Dulles, and William Casey at the end of World War II, protected both Nazis, such as Otto Skorzeny, and Fascists, such as Valerio Borghese, for the future struggle against communists. Tunander shows further how the "stay-behind" network orchestrated several destabilizations of Italy, up to the murder of Christian Democratic leader Aldo Moro; how the CIA worked with the Propaganda-2 masonic lodge; how Allen Dulles's man in Germany, Reinhard Gehlen, who had been Hitler's chief for eastern espionage, became chief of West Germany's BND intelligence agency, etc.

Tunander puts all the blame on the Americans, and does not devote even a single word to the British role. The effect of both his articles and the official IB investigation—which have official backing—is to burn the bridges to the Americans. *Svenska Dagbladet*, where Tunander's articles appeared, is considered to be Wallenberg's mouthpiece. The half-century-old alliance between the Wallenberg grouping and the Social Democrats is once again moving in to determine policy in Sweden. This time, it aims to officially dump neutrality and "go European," while also dragging Finland out of its military collaboration with the United States.

DO YOU KNOW

- that the American Revolution was fought against British "free trade" economics?
- that Washington and Franklin championed Big Government?
- that the Founding Fathers promoted partnership between private industry and central government?

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The Political Economy of the American Revolution

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