

## Northern Flank by A. Borealis

### Neutrality as cowardice

*A former Swedish trade union leader debunks the myth of neutrality, and calls for Sweden to join the West.*

**I**n an interview to the June 1985 issue of *Das Reichsbanner*, the magazine of the German resistance fighters' organization, the former chairman of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, Hans Ericson, attacked the notion of Swedish neutrality as cowardice.

Interviewer Franz Hron, a member of the national executive of the *Reichsbanner* organization, asked Ericson why Sweden closed its borders to many of Hitler's fleeing enemies in 1938, after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Was it because the spirit of solidarity with the victims of the Hitler regime had not yet been awakened?

"No, I don't think that it was a question of solidarity," Ericson replied. "The Social Democratic Party of Sweden at the time worked above all against the communists. There was a very clear campaign against the communists, but none against the fascists. Vis-à-vis Hitler and the Nazis they restrained themselves, and I can see a parallel in reverse to the situation today, in which Palme won't support the Polish opposition. . . . He is afraid, because he doesn't want to get into trouble with the Soviets. That is connected to the question of neutrality, which in Sweden also has come to be known as cowardice. People don't take a clear stand, and at that time they didn't want to have Hitler as an enemy. I also think that they didn't want to jeopardize the economic relations to the Hitler regime."

Ericson stressed that "Sweden and the Social Democratic coalition gov-

ernment had gone really far in cooperating with Hitler. German troops, for example, could pass through Sweden from Norway to Germany. When that became known, there was a lot of resistance. In 1943, after Stalingrad, the whole direction in Sweden changed. Now people were against Hitler, and after 1943 there were no longer lots of active Nazis. Many, who were known as Nazis, suddenly didn't want to hear anything about it anymore.

"Nobody had really analyzed the situation. It was never realized, for instance, that there was cooperation of the Nazis with the communists. The Swedes really wanted neither the Soviets nor the Nazis as enemies. Later, in 1945, the government even sent refugees from the Baltic states back to the Russians. That was a heavy moral burden to carry for the Swedish Social Democracy."

Pointing out that the more committed people were to national socialism or communism, the more fanatically anti-American they are, Hron asked "when the process started in Sweden that swung Olof Palme into the anti-American camp?"

"Until 1968, it was quite clear that the Social Democrats were against communism," Ericson said. "But from the time of the student revolts all over Europe, the intellectual circles above all believed in the socialized society, that everything should be nationalized, and that communism and socialism would be better than capitalism. At that time, Palme took part in demonstrations against the U.S. and the

Vietnam war. That was the start of the problems between Sweden and the United States."

Asked about the prospects for the Swedish elections, and the danger that a people so burdened by heavy taxation could be manipulated by some political swindler or demagogue, Ericson admitted that "the Swedes would like a strong leader. We are now in an election campaign. In September, there will be elections, and it is going to be a hard fight. Palme needs all the votes he can get. He has himself admitted, that Sweden is likely to vote for the non-socialist opposition. At the same time, Palme has said, that if the conservative opposition wins, there will be strikes and demonstrations."

The *Reichsbanner* leader's last question took up the issue of whether it will be possible to make people in Sweden understand, that no country left alone can survive today, and that an alliance like NATO is needed to defend the Free World.

Ericson noted that "for 175 years, Sweden could stay out of any and all wars, and therefore all political parties want Sweden to remain neutral. But if you advocate such a policy of neutrality, then you need at the same time a very, very strong defense capability. The Social Democrats and the government, however, in recent years have destroyed our defenses.

"The Soviet Union is exploiting this situation, and is trying, with a lot of pressure, to turn Sweden into a new Finland. That's the problem. That is no neutrality. The taxes in Sweden are already so high, that you cannot simply say: Let's get even more funds, through taxation, for defense. Therefore, there is only one alternative, and that is signing a treaty with NATO. Because if something were to happen now, then it is clear, that NATO would not help us."