

# German court reopens investigation of 1987 assassination of Uwe Barschel

by Rainer Apel

“Calvi, Palme, and Barschel, are only three notable figures on a long list of mysterious deaths which have occurred since the Malmö, Sweden office of Karl-Erik Schmitz was raided. The epidemic of Iran weapons trafficking-linked deaths continues. . . . Sooner or later, one of these cases will break wide open; and when it does, all of the trees in the forest will fall.”

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., in “The Uwe Barschel Case Is a Clue to the Palme Killing,” *EIR*, Nov. 6, 1987.

An announcement a few days before Christmas 1994 by Judge Heinrich Wille, the spokesman of the District Court of Lübeck, in the Baltic German state of Schleswig-Holstein, has had the effect of a bombshell on the nation. Wille declared on Dec. 21 that his court would reopen the case of Uwe Barschel, the German Christian Democrat and former governor of that state, who was found dead in a Geneva hotel room on Oct. 11, 1987.

The resumed investigation will start from new evidence made available to the court that indicates that Barschel did not commit a bizarre “suicide,” as has been claimed by most of the news media, investigators, and the political establishment for more than seven years now; but rather, that he was assassinated. This was a case of “murder committed by another person against Uwe Barschel,” Judge Wille said, leaving little doubt that the “suicide thesis,” which from a speculative viewpoint could not be ruled out entirely, could no longer be supported, given the new evidence now in the possession of the investigative judges.

Since October 1987, *EIR* has been a notable exception to the general media policy of covering Barschel’s death as a suicide. From its first coverage in the Oct. 23, 1987 issue, *EIR* has shown the absurdity of the suicide thesis, and has treated the Barschel case as an integral feature of the East-West arms-smuggling networks which were running arms into wartime Iran, among other places.

Barschel is known to have made a number of trips to Rostock in what was then communist East Germany, where he met with Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, an official of the East German secret police (Stasi) who served as East Germany’s deputy foreign trade minister. Schalck controlled

a trading company known as IMES, which had attracted attention when documents were seized by Swedish officials in a raid at the offices of a Swedish businessman in September 1985. This raid was part of a crackdown by Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme on Iranian arms deals. It is in the area of Palme’s actions against this arms network—which involved elements from the United States, Sweden, Israel, Great Britain, and the Soviet bloc—that one can situate the motive for the assassination of Palme in February 1986.

## North-Contra operation implicated

On the U.S. side, the Oliver North-Richard Secord arms-smuggling operation was directly integrated into the networks in which Barschel was in some way involved. It is amply documented, with respect to the case of the *Pia Vesta*—a Swedish-chartered vessel which was impounded by the Panamanian government in 1986 when it was found to be full of arms destined for the Nicaraguan Contras—that the North-Secord operation had directly purchased arms from IMES which were picked up in Rostock.

The reopening of the Barschel case therefore leads directly into a major East-West arms-trafficking operation running from the offices of Oliver North and George Bush in Washington, through London, Sweden, Rostock, and East Berlin, to Tel Aviv and Teheran.

## Forensic evidence

The day following Judge Wille’s Lübeck press conference, Klaus Klingner, the state justice minister, made clear in a radio interview on the national DLR station, that an independent forensic study compiled by Zurich toxicologist Hans Brandenberger leaves no doubt whatsoever that Uwe Barschel must have already been unconscious from sleeping pills some time before receiving the lethal dose of cyclobarbitol which caused his death, i.e., he had been killed by someone else *after* he had fallen asleep or had lost consciousness. Klingner categorically rejected other expert testimony supporting the suicide theory.

Klingner explained that the “new” evidence had been provided by “secret intelligence agencies,” and said that documentation exists of the fact that East Germany’s foreign

intelligence agency (HVA) had compiled dossiers about Barschel in the early 1980s, but that for some strange reason, no files could be located concerning his activities from the mid-1980s until his death. There are other hints from the international intelligence community, Klingner said, and he appealed to the news media, government agencies, and private persons to come forward with any further knowledge or information that might help shed light on the case.

The BND, Germany's foreign intelligence agency, confirmed on Dec. 21 that in mid-November it had provided the court in Lübeck with leads on the affair. This goes back to an order issued by the oversight authorities in the German government dating from early October, that the agencies release their secret knowledge about anything relating to the Barschel case. Following several days of spectacular revelations in *Bildzeitung*, Germany's leading mass tabloid, concerning the possible involvement of Israel's Mossad intelligence service in the assassination, several senior politicians in Bonn decided to break their seven-year silence and launch a new investigation. The *Bildzeitung* story, which was first floated in early October, was based on passages from a new book by Victor Ostrovsky, a former Mossad agent.

On Oct. 13, Bernd Schmidbauer, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's chief coordinator of secret intelligence affairs, said in Bonn: "Maybe Barschel was assassinated, after all." He declared that he had ordered a scanning of all existing old HVA files stored at the official German archive of former East German files (the "Gauck" agency, named after its present director). To date, Schmidbauer is the highest-ranking government official to have expressed himself on the affair. In response, many observers with accumulated critical knowledge of the entire Barschel affair, began to wonder whether some evidence might finally emerge from those files, which the official authorities had always insisted "contained nothing whatsoever."

Following Klingner's remarks on Dec. 21, the German news media began buzzing with new revelations about what had been provided, or "found," by the agencies. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* daily—which is of special interest, because throughout the postwar period, it has functioned as an unofficial government mouthpiece—wrote in a small but prominently placed report on page two of its Christmas Eve issue, that hints about "international arms deals" do play a role in the resumed Barschel investigation. "A former senior officer of the G.D.R. [East German] Ministry of State Security (MfS) has told the West German security agencies about voluminous arms and technology deals which, he said, were carried out with the help of the former G.D.R. hard currency merchant Schalck-Golodkowski and West German enterprises—potentially also including reputable firms in Schleswig-Holstein," the daily wrote.

"Other hints that the BND, among others, have obtained, relate to the evening of Oct. 10, 1987. On the following day . . . Barschel was found dead in a Geneva hotel room.

Barschel had arrived in Geneva on the afternoon of Oct. 10. It has not been clarified where he stayed in the course of that day, nor with whom he met. Various hints mention meetings among arms dealers with Iranian background that evening. Barschel is said to have attended such a meeting."

### The CIA telegram

In the same article, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* inserted yet another bombshell: "A telegram which is attributed to the Geneva station chief of the . . . CIA and which is said to have been intercepted and decoded by the Stasi (MfS), contains a report about such a meeting during the evening of Oct. 10 that was attended by five persons. One of them, who was given the codename of 'Perch,' is said to have categorically rejected any cooperation. 'Perch' is the English term for Barsch."

The *Bildzeitung* ran the same story two days later with a few additions, reported also on page two under the headline, "Barschel: CIA Agents Were Hanging around at the Death Hotel." The *Bildzeitung* article added that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* story was based on a report by the CIA, and that "CIA agents are said to have allegedly observed Uwe Barschel during his stay at the Beau Rivage hotel." The *Bildzeitung* added that the intercepted CIA telegram was addressed "to the center in Washington, D.C."

More information about this mysterious CIA telegram was made available in the media in the days after those two newspaper reports appeared. As reproduced in the *Berliner Zeitung*, the cable appears to have originated with U.S. military intelligence rather than the CIA, with markings showing it from "MATT" (the military attaché) at the U.S. Embassy in Bern, and sent to the ITAC (Intelligence Threat Analysis Center) at the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. The cable's text reads: "Jerry took Perch to Temple met with Lokal and Rabbi at 2130 Perch unyielding refuses coop rabbi ordered disposition alternative w asap advise no act//."

The press also revealed that an informant of the German BND (whose name or identity was not disclosed) had given testimony to the judges in Lübeck already in the summer of 1992, telling them that he had information that Barschel had indeed met in Geneva on Oct. 10 with several Iranian arms dealers, including a Rafiq d'Houst of the Revolutionary Guards and the son of the Ayatollah Khomeini, Ahmed Khomeini. Barschel rejected proposals made by the Iranians, and was therefore "eliminated" that same night, the BND informant told the judges in Lübeck more than two years ago.

The Lübeck court also announced that it wants to reopen the investigation into a second "Barschel affair": a mysterious plane crash near Lübeck on May 31, 1987, which killed two pilots and injured Barschel's bodyguard so seriously that he died in a hospital a few days after. Barschel himself survived the incident. Judge Wille said the investigation would look into the possibility of an "assassination attempt" involving Barschel's plane.