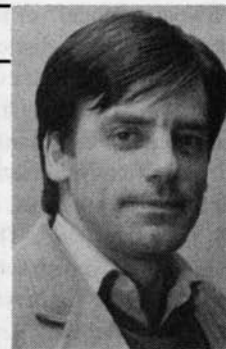

Interview: Michael Ericson



Sweden risks becoming Soviet-style dictatorship

Michael Ericson, chairman of the European Labor Party (EAP) in Sweden, was interviewed by Nora Hamerman on Aug. 29.

EIR: Can you say something about the nature of the parliamentary elections on Sept. 18? What is at stake for Sweden and Europe?

Ericson: Sweden in the coming years must be able to cope with the threat of a surprise Russian military attack, an industrial collapse, and a fast-spreading cultural pessimism. The fate of the nation is at stake in these elections.

Nothing of the sort is reflected in the media's coverage of the election fight so far. Actually, we don't have an election *fight*, we have what the media call an election *activity*. The political party structure of Sweden has collapsed, and the parties, in the most disgusting way, are now only fighting, like the Titanic passengers, to secure the best deck chairs from which to watch the devastation of the nation.

The only things that have been discussed so far are, first, "who did what at what time" in different political scandals surfacing like mushrooms as part of the election *activity*, and second, how to save the "sick and dying seals" in the Atlantic Ocean, which everyone outside the European Labor Party seems to agree is the hottest question in this election.

Most of the "Dallas"-like scandals are aimed against the Social Democratic Party leadership, but they are not actually designed to kick the ruling Social Democrats out of power. The aim is to make Finance Minister Kjell Olof Feldt the new czar of the Social Democratic Party. The other joint aim is, for the first time in Sweden, to get the Greenies into the parliament. There, of course, they will help to ram through Finance Minister Feldt's vicious austerity policies—including, for example, the destruction of what little is left of the country's defense forces.

EIR: And how do you intervene in this election?

Ericson: The task for us is to free Sweden from this degrading "dirty game" that the other political parties are trying to impose. We opened the attack on Feldt during May Day demonstrations, with a leaflet headlined, "Kjell Olof Feldt Acts Like the Financial Oligarchy: He Will Wet His Pants As Long As His Suspenders Can Take It." We pinpointed

how he, after having stolen one month's wages per year in preparation for "dealing" with the October 1987 crash, is only preparing more of the same kind of brutal austerity now, as a second crash approaches.

We have just upgraded our fight to get Sweden to join NATO by releasing a new pamphlet, "The Russian War Machine on a Global Offensive," which uncovers the real intent of Gorbachov's *perestroika* and *glasnost* campaigns. The pamphlet documents the Russian effort to combine radio frequency weapons and a *spetsnaz* [special forces] strategy to give them the capability to occupy Sweden after a surprise attack. We are the only party demanding Swedish membership in NATO, but with Russian submarine intrusions discovered every year since the late 1970s, and the enormous Russian military bases on the Kola Peninsula only 150 kilometers from the Swedish border, this is a real political issue. Swedes take a lot of interest in it.

Can we turn the election around? I don't think so, not the elections this time, but perhaps the people. When you are out campaigning, you are immediately reminded of the situation before the last national elections in 1985. There was total contempt for Prime Minister Olof Palme and his policies. Despite that, Palme succeeded, mostly through his control over the non-socialist press, in winning the election by the smallest margin, which provoked an uproar. When their hopes for a change didn't materialize, people started to act, and in a couple of months, Sweden had an officers' revolt, a workers' revolt, and a farmers' revolt gaining momentum day by day. In the middle of these revolts, Palme was killed [Feb. 28, 1986], which in a sense put the lid back on. The trauma of having the prime minister killed in the open streets of Stockholm took over. But the thing to keep in mind is that Palme never became a martyr in the eyes of the Swedes. Too much of his dirty politics was disclosed during the police investigations of the murder, and the reasons for these revolts haven't been dealt with during the two years since the shooting.

EIR: In South America, a businessman told me that the success of the Reagan-Gorbachov peace process would mean that the two superpowers would stop the arms race, and East and West would shift in the direction of both adopting the

“Swedish model” of society. As a Swede, do you think this perspective is realistic, and what do you think such a world would look like if it ever came about?

Ericson: The Reagan-Gorbachov peace process should be compared to the Chamberlain-Hitler “peace process” in 1938: It will, if not reversed, lead to world war. But, of course, I am fully aware of the efforts to export the “Swedish model” all over the world. The reality is that all the talk about the “peaceful Swedish labor market,” the “low unemployment rate,” and the “understanding trade unions” is as untrue as all the talk about the “Reagan-Gorbachov peace process.” The “Swedish model” is not anything new. It is not that the Soviet Union is developing toward a “Swedish model” under Gorbachov. It is the other way around. It has been Sweden which is on its way to being transformed into a Soviet-style dictatorship under Palme. This was done with what sometimes has been called a “democratic face,” but many Swedes fought it, and are still fighting it, under the slogan of stopping “Sovietization” of their country.

This characterization applies to the dismantling of the law and replacing that with the arbitrary rule of the new Soviet-style “nomenklatura” Palme built up around him. It applies to the anti-industrial and anti-growth policies that led to the decision to dismantle the pride of industrial Sweden: its own developed nuclear industry. It applies to the cultural policy of Olof Palme to decouple Sweden from its Western ties and replace them with a “new affinity to Sofia, Prague, and Budapest,” to use his own words. It applies to the very deep social and economic repression of the country. In short, it would be a horror show for any country to import the “Swedish model,” and it would be a tragic thing to do at the time when the Swedes are beginning to revolt against that “model.”

EIR: Please describe the policy of the Social Democratic regime toward children and the family.

Ericson: That’s one of the real horrors of what has happened in Sweden under Palme’s dictatorial rule, and also one of the things people have revolted against. The desperation among parents has been so great that they have gone to the European court in Strasbourg to try to get their children back from what the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* called “The Children’s Gulag of Sweden.”

There is a very simple principle behind it, even if it may be hard to think that this could happen in a civilized country. Schiller, in his writings on ancient Sparta, says that one of the major features of a dictatorship is to take the right to bring up children away from the parents. The children are owned by the state, not by the parents. That’s the principle. That is the principle behind the Soviet “collective upbringing.” That was the principle behind the Nazi policy, including their awful policy of using children as informers against their own parents. That is the principle behind Swedish family policy during Palme’s rule.

There are many “advantages” to be gained for a dictatorship by such a policy: for example, a terrorized citizenry, with a deep mutual mistrust, a powerful tool to punish “dissidents” and political opponents (several cases are documented in Sweden), and a new generation that has lost its identity. It is something that is thought to be a precondition for “creating a new human being,” the trademark of all totalitarian ideologies.

In Sweden, that policy wasn’t introduced overnight or by a stroke of the pen. Rather, the policy was introduced piece by piece over a couple of years. First you introduced not only laws, but a whole social apparatus to “fight child abuse in the homes,” as the main vehicle by which the force of the police and court system could be used to take children away from their parents on the flimsiest grounds. This was done on such a scale that at its worst we had, in a population of 8 million with a very low fertility rate, over 25,000 children in forced custody, either in foster homes or in institutions. You could see a situation a few years down the road where every Swede would know somebody close to them, who had had their children stolen by the state on a totally unjust basis.

EIR: What is the opposition to the present regime?

Ericson: In the Sweden of today, “the present regime” does not exist. After Palme, there came a political vacuum that hasn’t been filled yet. The Social Democratic government under Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson consists of Palme’s old gang, but they have become a leaderless gang, because none of them has wanted to jump fully into his shoes. There is an effort of the inner circles to try to force Finance Minister Kjell Olof Feldt to do just that, but not until after the elections.

The opposition to the policies of Palme came from the people of Sweden, not the powerbrokers. Therefore, it never existed as an organized political force, but only as groups and individuals in all political parties, including the Social Democratic Party. Not until these forces have come together as a joint programmatic political force will there be a real alternative for Sweden. We in the EAP have set ourselves the task of giving that opposition the programmatic platform it needs. We are also to a great extent recognized as the only political force able to do so. The question for many in the old opposition to Palme is that it always used to think in terms of action groups focused on stopping different particular points of horror in the policies of Palme, not in terms of creating a political force able to govern.

You can already see promising signs of how the Swedes ideologically are starting to recover. Despite all the parliamentary parties discussing when and how Sweden’s nuclear reactors should be dismantled, the last opinion poll showed that almost a full 50% of the Swedish population now wants the reactors to be kept in operation even after the year 2010, the deadline for their shutdown in the infamous 1980 referendum.