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Interview: Per Engdahl

Fascist leader discusses his links to Swedish socialists

The following interview was conducted with Per Engdahl, leader of the Swedish fascist party, the New Swedish Movement, in Stockholm May 1 by *EIR* correspondent William Jones. Engdahl led the pro-Hitler party throughout World War II, and was an honored guest in both Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy during the war. He was an intimate associate of Mussolini's foreign minister Ciano, and of Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg. Engdahl maintained his ties with the fascists after the war through Mussolini's widow, and in the early 1950s hosted the post-war international fascist networks at Malmö, Sweden (see *EIR*, April 20).

Engdahl's remarks about Socialist International leader Olof Palme are extraordinarily candid. Like Mussolini, Oswald Mosley, and others, Palme has a pattern of left-right affinity. Palme's association with Engdahl is also interesting in light of Palme's unprecedented appearance on a nationwide television program in Sweden April 14 to denounce Kerstin Tegin-Gaddy, who is Chairman of the European Labor Party (EAP) in Sweden, as leader of a "tiny fascist-like sect." The EAP was founded by co-thinkers of *EIR* Contributing Editor Lyndon LaRouche. Tegin-Gaddy immediately challenged Palme to a public debate on the issue of whose policies are fascist—the EAP's or Palme's (see *EIR*, May 4). Palme has yet to respond to the challenge.

Jones: You have on various occasions expressed a great admiration for the Swedish Social Democracy in

your writings and speeches. Isn't it somewhat ironic that you, the leader of a fascist organization [Nysvenska Rorelsen—the New Swedish Movement] would find yourself in agreement with Social Democratic policy on so many points?

Engdahl: Not at all. We've always had a much easier time getting along with the socialists than with the conservatives. We've got a lot more in [common] with them. The stab in the back for us has always come from the right: Stauffenburg in Nazi Germany; Badoglio in Italy; Rega destroyed Peronism in Argentina. Our major fights have always been with the conservatives. They have always betrayed us. The Swedish social-democratic workers movement, on the other hand, is a trustworthy ally.

Jones: How do you account for this affinity between your ideology and that of the social democrats?

Engdahl: There has always been a strong corporatist strain with the social democracy. Before the Second World War, when I was in Uppsala, I participated in a debate where Alf Ahlberg, the social-democratic historian, was also present. After the debate, I received a postcard from Ahlberg where he expressed the hope that a social democracy . . . might, together with our movement, be able to accomplish a thorough reform of Swedish society.

During the war, I wrote a series of articles under the title "Hitler as Model," where I compared the social-democratic economic program with Hitler's program from the 1930s. The similarities between the two [programs] were overwhelming. Ernst Wigforss, the social-democrat-

ic Minister of Finance, was impressed. I later had discussions with Wigforss on economic policy. He was aware of the danger of the development of a state bureaucracy as involvement in industrial activity increased. He proposed working out a model, where a corporatist society could be established at the same time that we would keep the state out of the picture.

The managing director of each firm would be the boss, and the firm would be owned by the employees. Sometimes Wigforss wondered which one of us was most radical—he or I.

Jones: Is your movement still involved in international politics?

Engdahl: Our major international contacts are with the MSI [a neofascist party] in Italy. We had contacts with the Ordine Nuovo group, but now they have been banned in Italy. Through the MSI we have contacts with the Lebanese Falangists. In 1978, I was in Italy speaking at an MSI rally. At one meeting in Catania, the police estimated that there were 20,000 people present. Almirante [head of the MSI] was there as well as Blas Piñar from Spain.

Jones: You were also very instrumental in setting up what is known as the Malmö International.

Engdahl: We had a meeting in Malmö in 1952, where we established a commission, of which I was the head. . . . In those days, Malmö was one of the few places where we could see old SS generals mingling with fascists from the French Resistance movement. There were, however, some difficulties getting visas for some of the people. I spoke with the Swedish Prime Minister, Tage Erlander [who groomed Olof Palme to succeed him as Prime Minister in the 1960s. Ragnar Edenman, head of the New Swedish Movement, arranged Palme's appointment to the post of Education Minister—W.J.]. Erlander told me to submit the names of the delegates and he would try to fix these visas. He advised me, however, not to invite Oswald Mosley. . . .

Jones: What do you think of the present leader of the social democracy, Olof Palme?

Engdahl: Highly intelligent. This poor country has a difficult time in appreciating a person like Palme. Palme has come up with a lot of good proposals, but he's not especially creative. His proposals are for the most part based on already well-known ideas.

Jones: Have you been in touch with Palme personally?

Engdahl: Indeed I have. The first time, I discussed education with him, when he was Minister of Education in the late 1960s. I was sitting in the waiting room, when he to my surprise rushed out and greeted me warmly. This was quite unusual behavior, for a member of the govern-

ment to act this way toward someone like me. Palme expressed interest in many of the ideas of the New Swedish Movement. . . . I explained to him how the difference between a democracy and a fascist society was merely a difference in quantity, rather than quality. When our discussion was over, and as I was about to leave, Palme shocked me by taking my coat from his assistant and helping me on with it himself.

Some days later, I received a call from one of our people in Lund, who had attended a meeting where Palme spoke to some students. He asked me if I had spoken to Palme recently, as many of the things Palme said seemed to come directly from the arguments I used. Since that time, however, Palme has been somewhat stand-offish when I met him at a press conferences and the like.

Jones: Do you think that wage-earners' funds [to be used to buy up majority shares in industrial corporations] would be a step toward your corporatist ideal?

Engdahl: It could be, depending on how it is developed. We were actually the first to introduce the idea of funds in Sweden in the early 1950s. At that time the LO, the trade-union organization, would not accept the idea. Now they are for funds.

Then there is the question of how all of this will be financed. We don't like the idea of simply printing up more money and pumping it into the system. That would create inflation. What they ought to do is to create a form of what I call investment checks, bills of credit to be issued for investment purposes only.

Jones: Something like Hjalmar Schacht [Hitler's Finance Minister—ed.] Mefo bills?

Engdahl: Yes, precisely, Mefo bills. This would put a limit on monetary inflation. After delivery of the capital goods, the supplier could then turn the bills in for cash. But I think that Palme would be wise to go easy with the fund proposals before the elections. It could undermine his chances of getting back into power.

Jones: What do you think of the social-democratic crisis program?

Engdahl: It's the best thing they have come out with yet. Relief work, road-building, bridge-building: that kind of thing. Why, for Christ's sake, it's Hitler's program—and they don't even know it. This is the stuff to get industry on their side, and that is what they need.

Jones: What about the greenies?

Engdahl: We can't just blindly burn up our resources in the way we are doing now. Nuclear energy is no answer either, although I am not entirely against it. I am in complete sympathy with the environmentalist movement.