

Interview: Kerstin Tegin-Gaddy



A tale of Sweden's '1984' state, a conservative paper, and Moscow

Kerstin Tegin Gaddy, the secretary-general of the European Labor Party in Sweden, was asked by EIR's Stockholm correspondent on April 12 why her party was recently catapulted into the headlines. Here is her reply:

On Easter eve and Easter, the banner headlines in the biggest conservative newspaper in Sweden, *Svenska Dagbladet*, claimed that the European Labor Party (EAP) had forged signatures to become a registered party. In many respects it does indeed seem strange that this "news" would have overshadowed everything else going on in the rest of the world that Easter weekend. It became even stranger when it was revealed that the entire story was a total fabrication by the paper: The EAP had not forged a single signature!

The background to the Big Lie of *Svenska Dagbladet* is the following. On Feb. 15, the EAP in Sweden submitted signatures of 1,850 party members who endorsed an application by the party to become a nationally registered party. The requirement for becoming a nationally registered party is a list of endorsements of 1,500 party members. Each party member's signature also had to be accompanied by the member's so-called civic registration number, the number assigned each Swede at birth under a notorious system that permits an incredible degree of integrated computer files that store up vast amounts of information about each individual. This entire system has been much criticized recently, especially by conservatives, as the epitome of the Swedish "1984" society.

After the last Swedish national elections in 1982, when Social Democrat Olof Palme returned to power after an interlude of six years, his government passed a law requiring all new parties which wanted to register for elections to submit 1500 names, signatures, and civic registration numbers—and that this information would be made public!

We in our party of course regarded this law as totally outrageous. We are aware in particular that such a file of our party members would be used not only by enemies of the EAP, but also by others who would use such information in an illegal way. But having no choice, we conducted a huge membership recruitment campaign during last fall and win-

ter, giving us in the end 1,850 members who were prepared to make this personal information public, despite the risks.

After one month of scrutiny by the national tax board, which is the elections authority in Sweden, it was officially announced that the EAP had met the requirements to become a registered party. In addition to a well deserved celebration by our own members, the EAP held a press conference, both to announce the success of the registration campaign and to present our strategy and program for the elections coming up in mid-September.

***Svenska Dagbladet's* terror campaign**

The newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* did not show up at the press conference. Instead, the paper sent one of its journalists, Willy Silberstein, to spend two full days at the national tax board copying the names and civic registration numbers of the EAP members. Silberstein fed these numbers into a computer and got the members' home addresses and telephone numbers. He proceeded to call as many of them as he

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could, interrogating them in the most vicious and hostile way about their party affiliation. As reported by EAP members to the party office, Silberstein typically began each call by saying: "A lot of people that I have called deny that they are really members of the EAP. What about you?"

This, of course, was experienced as total terror by some of the people who were called. This is due in part to the fact that *Svenska Dagbladet*, one of Sweden's big national daily newspapers, had written a huge slander article about the EAP only six months ago, authored by this same Willy Silberstein. Out of the 1,850 members, Silberstein found a handful who distanced themselves from the EAP, apparently out of pure terror of being identified in the media as members of the party that *Svenska Dagbladet* was viciously attacking. The "evidence" of these few individuals was then used by Silberstein to forge the lie that the EAP had falsified their signatures.

The EAP headquarters was informed about this telephone terror campaign by Silberstein, and party officials demanded of the responsible *Svenska Dagbladet* editors that this activity cease. Silberstein's immediate superior, Lennart Persson, tried to cover up for the illegal activities of his underling by simply stating that the information in the EAP application was public.

The EAP informed Persson that the very law that was forcing the EAP to make its party membership public was going to be rescinded by a vote in Parliament the next week. As *Svenska Dagbladet* and other media had already reported, Minister of Justice Sten Wickbom had submitted a government bill to the Riksdag on this very point. Not only the Social Democratic Party, but all of the other parties and expert bodies consulted on this proposal had agreed that the law was in fact a serious violation of personal integrity and a threat to the principle of the secret ballot in elections.

Indeed, on April 10, only days after *Svenska Dagbladet's* fantastic operation, the Riksdag voted to abolish the law. This means that the EAP will be the only party in the history of Sweden that will have been required to make public its membership list, including civic registration numbers!

Meanwhile, *Svenska Dagbladet* has continued its unethical and essentially illegal actions by refusing to publish the truth about the change in the law or even to allow the EAP the right to reply to the paper's original lies.

The EAP's counter-measures

The EAP itself has taken a number of counter-measures. Formal charges have been filed against Willy Silberstein for having threatened individual EAP members and for violation of the Swedish Computer Act. A complaint has been filed against the paper with the Swedish press supervisory board for not allowing the EAP the right of reply, and a complaint has been entered against Silberstein with the ethics board of the Swedish Federation of Journalists.

However, the main question remains unanswered: Why did *Svenska Dagbladet* consider it so important to stop the

EAP in the first place? The obvious intent of the articles and telephone calls was to get people to leave the EAP. Yet the size of the party can hardly be the issue. The real issue is the EAP's program and its ability to shape the political debate as a whole, with one particular programmatic point overshadowing all the others in this respect. The EAP is the only party in Sweden—and now the only party running for the national elections—which favors Swedish membership in NATO! It has long been suspected that the Swedish oligarchy, which runs *Svenska Dagbladet*, has had some sort of deal with the Soviets for a kind of "Finlandization" of Sweden. Their attempts to stop the only pro-NATO party in Sweden would seem to be a confirmation of this deal.

Yet, if the oligarchs of *Svenska Dagbladet* counted on being able to stop the pro-NATO campaign by this latest operation against the EAP, they have seriously miscalculated. Instead of slowing down the EAP, they have produced the opposite effect. The EAP's membership is more activated than ever to push that campaign, having been shown by *Svenska Dagbladet* how important it is. Invitations have poured in to the EAP headquarters from all over Sweden to bring the campaign to every corner of the nation.

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