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Blood On The Snow: The Killing Of Olof Palme



Synopsis

The Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, a major figure in world politics and an ardent opponent of apartheid, was shot dead on the streets of Stockholm in February 1986. At the time of his death, Palme was deeply involved in Middle East diplomacy and was working under UN auspices to end the Iran-Iraq war. Across Scandinavia, Palme's killing had an impact similar to that of the Kennedy assassinations in the United States—and it ignited nearly as many conspiracy theories. Interest in the Palme slaying was most recently stirred by reports of the death of Christer Pettersson, who was tried for the murder twice, convicted the first time, and then acquitted on appeal. In his investigative account of Palme's still-unsolved murder, the historian Jan Bondeson meticulously recreates the assassination and its aftermath. Like the best works of crime fiction, this book puts the victim and his death into social context. Bondeson's work, however, is noteworthy for its dispassionate treatment of police incompetence: the police did not answer a witness's phone call reporting the murder just 45 seconds after it occurred, and further time was lost as the police sought to confirm that someone had actually been shot. When the police arrived on the scene, they did not even recognize the victim as the Prime Minister. This early confusion was emblematic of the errors that were to follow. Bondeson demolishes the various conspiracy theories that have been devised to make sense of the killing, before suggesting a convincing explanation of his own. A brilliant piece of investigative journalism, *Blood on the Snow* includes crime-scene photographs and reconstructions that have never before been published and offers a gripping narrative of a crime that shocked a continent.

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Customer Reviews

*** & 1/2 stars On February 28, 1986, Olof Palme, the Prime Minister of Sweden was gunned down in the streets of Stockholm while walking home, without any security details, from the movies. According to virtually all accounts Palme and his wife, Lisbet, were accosted by a gunman outside a paint store adjacent to an alley. Shortly thereafter shots were fired, Palme lay mortally wounded on the street and the gunman escaped down an alley and then up 89 steps leading to a road on a hill above the alley. When I heard the news here in the United States I was surprised, to say the least. As a product of the '60s I think I incorrectly associated assassinations (JFK, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy) and attempted assassinations (Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan) of political leaders as something that was unique to the United States. My surprise was nothing compared to the horror and shock of the people of Sweden. The murder has never been solved. Failed prosecutions haunted the Swedish police and exasperated the people of Sweden. Conspiracy theories and conspiracy theorists have grown and flourished and continue to thrive almost twenty years after the assassination. Jan Bondeson's interesting and entertaining "Blood on the Snow: The Killing of Olof Palme" provides a comprehensive examination of the murder and its aftermath. Bondeson begins the book with a brief overview of the life and political career of Olof Palme. Palme, although born to a wealthy upper-class family, became active in what may best be described as middle of the road socialists ruling party: the Social Democratic Party.

In a coincidence in a case that favors coincidences, I was just finishing this terrific book about this murder case when the news broke of the discovery of the weapon. In November 2006, the news is that the .357 Magnum has been found. Will there be a new chapter in this case? Blood on the Snow: The Killing of Olof Palme by Jan Bondeson is the first book in English to fully explore the case, the amazing details of the botched police response, and the "weird theories and urban legends" that have sprung from his death. It was written for American audience and compares the murder to the Kennedy assassination -- which, coincidentally, was today -- and calls the one man tried for the murder but later released for lack of evidence a "Swedish Lee Harvey Oswald." From the book: "Once or twice a year, the Swedish public is reminded of the existence of [a special] task force when the newspapers pick up rumors about the whereabouts of the murder weapon, or when some journalist decides to rehash the old police conspiracy... The murder of Olof Palme is fast acquiring the status of a historical mystery.... Before long, its status will be similar to that of the hunt for the

elusive Jack the Ripper, and various people will propose novel suggestions as to who killed the prime minister, safe in the knowledge that the mystery will never be solved."Perhaps not, to judge by today's news!The Swedish media comes off poorly in this book; the news reached America, the UK and Japan before it reached the state tv or radio stations in Sweden. "Like a nation of cuckolded husbands," the author says, "the Swedes were the last to know." The police work was laughable; they literally kept their dogs leashed.

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