

# 'Whitewash' claim in espionage inquiry

From MARK GOLDSMITH, Stockholm, Dec. 6

Two editors of a leftwing magazine, who have accused the Government of conducting illegal espionage activities in violation of Swedish neutrality, have raised a major political storm here.

The journalists, Peter Bratt and Jan Guillou, and a former intelligence agent, are being held in custody on suspicion of spying on the Government and publishing intelligence secrets which have endangered the national security.

In May in the first of a series of articles in the magazine, *Folket i Bild-Kulturfront*, Bratt and Guillou revealed the existence of a secret intelligence agency known as Information Bureau (IB) which it said was collaborating with American, British, and Israeli agents. The Government firmly denied the charges but no action was taken.

The magazine then described IB operations. It said the agency had carried out espionage activities against the Arabs, engineered a break-in at

the Egyptian Embassy in Stockholm in 1970, and spied on and kept lists of names of thousands of left-wing activists and trade unionists in Sweden. The Government issued another denial but still no action was taken against the magazine.

In an attempt to embarrass the Government into appointing a special commission to examine the charges, Bratt and Guillou ran a story on IB agents which included their names, pictures, and home addresses. They said IB agents had carried out espionage activities in Finland, and published a list of countries whose codes had allegedly been cracked by IB agents. They promised even more spectacular revelations if the Government did not act.

Six weeks ago the Government did act. Police swooped on the magazine's offices, confiscated documents, and arrested Bratt and Guillou, a photographer, and a former IB agent, Haakan Isacson, who

was suspected of leaking secrets.

The police raid raised protests that continue to grow in intensity, cutting across party lines. Earlier this week the first report on the workings of the IB was presented by the parliamentary defence committee. The committee cleared the agency of charges that it had kept lists on political activists and compromised Swedish neutrality by collaborating with Western spy organisations. It also emphasised the importance of maintaining an intelligence network for national security reasons.

Left-wingers have called the investigation a whitewash, arguing that the committee could hardly produce an unbiased and thorough report.

It now appears that the Prime Minister, Mr Olof Palme, is giving way to demands that a five-party commission, including the Communists, should be appointed to study the affair

early next year. But his troubles are far from over.

On Tuesday a Conservative Party member of the defence committee said his party would propose that a more extensive inquiry into the IB affair should be launched to investigate charges that the agency had been used by the Social Democrats to spy on their political opposition.

The incident could not have come at a worse time for Mr Palme whose Social Democratic Government has still not recovered from a major setback in the recent dead heat elections.

This week, while the Foreign Minister, Mr Spen Andersson, was in Helsinki assuring the Finns that Sweden had never spied on Finland or on Russia from Finnish soil, Mr Palme was assuring the people and the press that if investigation showed there was inadequate democratic control of intelligence activity, or if laws regarding press freedom needed strengthening, he would see to it.