

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Press Department

Unofficial translation

Prime Minister Olof Palme's Speech at the Conference of the
Swedish Union of Social Democratic Women on February 20, 1976

It is a very impressive programme the Swedish Union of Social Democratic Women has arranged for this conference. Experts will be speaking on the principal elements of Swedish foreign policy. This gives me a certain liberty of approach and frees me of the necessity to deal with any specific aspect in extenso. I shall primarily discuss some ideological aspects, a few of which have relevance to the meeting of social democratic party leaders in Helsingör last month.

The other day, "Svenska Dagbladet" published a heartrending article about Sweden's poor performance at the Olympic Games in Innsbruck. After a few gloomy reflections on the investments in national prestige made by the dictatorship countries and the significance of commercial interests, the author made his way with the sure step of a water-diviner to the subject of party politics. The equality policy of the Social Democrats was put in the pillory. It is not enough to produce second-raters. Somebody must mount the victors' stand, the author declared.

But fear not, O Svenska Dagblad, be of good cheer!

The Financial Times recently assembled a panel of expert economists to evaluate the economic policies of various countries and choose the country which had pursued the most successful economic policy in 1975. And who do you think got the gold medal? Right, no other than Gunnar Emanuel Sträng. So Svenska Dagbladet can proudly lift its face unto the hills and cry: At last a Swede stands highest on the victors' stand!

Now it must be said in all fairness that this is the result of teamplay, a collective performance by the Swedish community and of its workers, and in the true ecumenical spirit I should add: Give a little medal to Helén too. For he was in on things at Haga in the good old days.

Now there is another moral to be drawn from this story. We try to pursue an independent policy in order to maintain full employment and improve well-being. At a time of deep international crisis we have succeeded fairly well. But we must not for a moment imagine we can shape our society regardless of the rest of the world.

At a discussion in Värmland the other day on the renewal of working life, a businessman pointed out that there is a delegate absent from our round-table discussions of how we are to democratize economic life. That delegate is the world market; the often tough marketplace where we must sell half of our industrial production in order to develop our society. On that point I agree with him, without reservation. If people beyond our borders are poor and out of work so that they cannot afford to buy our products, if building for the future is checked so that demand falls for our machinery, our iron ore, our wood products and our building materials, this will inevitably also affect us. The day we chose - and chose wisely - to base our economy on an extensive and open trade with other countries, then we also took a step out into the world, to a direct dependence on what happens beyond our borders.

This dependence becomes even more pronounced in the crucial questions of war and peace. We have chosen to pursue a policy of non-participation in alliances in peacetime aimed at neutrality in the event of war. This has been successful for over 160 years. But it must never involve isolation and a desire to take cover from the storms raging in the world. The policy we choose must be credible, it must inspire respect in the rest of the world.

This requires that we take an active part in efforts for peace and détente everywhere we can make a constructive contribution. We must work in the United Nations and take part in peace-keeping operations; do our part in the fields of disarmament and development co-operation. We must play a role in drawing up a new international economic order and in the many branches of international co-operation that are a feature of our present-day world.

Sweden has always taken it for granted that we should give our vigorous support to efforts for peace and détente in Europe. We also assert that the Swedish policy of neutrality has been a stabilizing factor in Northern Europe and thus also in peace-keeping on our continent. When seen in the light of history, the past year may stand out as a memorable year in postwar Europe. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe was concluded in Helsinki last August. The Final Act adopted by the Conference aims to secure peace and détente in our part of the world. The Act is not a binding document under international law, nor has it changed the map of Europe. But it is a confirmation of postwar reality and it is the nearest we can get to a formal peace treaty thirty years after the end of the Second World War.

The 'ostpolitik' of the West German Government did much to pave the way for détente and to promote reconciliation between the peoples of Europe. A very important link in this context was the treaty concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland last summer. This was a concrete expression of the spirit of Helsinki. It reflected reconciliation after unspeakable suffering and had a deep human dimension. It would be deplorable for these two countries and for the whole of Europe if this far-sighted and statesman-like treaty should be brought to nothing by narrow-minded internal interests in the Federal Republic.

The East, the West, the neutral states and non-aligned states expressed their agreement in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on a number of principles to govern their relations.

It was the product of long and laborious efforts.

The Final Act must be seen as a whole. Nevertheless, we should not disregard the elements that go to make it a balanced entity. Therefore, no field may be left out or be regarded as less essential than another. Therefore, Sweden is particularly gratified that the protection of human rights has been accepted as a norm on equal footing with other principles governing international relations. This gives the outcome of the Helsinki negotiations a human dimension and makes it comprehensible to the citizens of our countries.

This covers the question of the reunion of families as well as travel across frontiers. We are disappointed to note that it is difficult to get work in this field under way. It must be promoted and speeded up.

Violations of human rights constitute departures from the policy of détente. This attitude is also entirely in agreement with the opinion long held by the Swedish Government: that oppression, lack of freedom and injustice contain the seeds of social and political tensions.

Those who make no protest against the spread of repression, terror, torture, lack of freedom and other violations of human rights ultimately help to undermine peace. We have always regarded it as our duty to defend human rights and freedoms. We censure such violations wherever they are committed - in Vietnam, Chile, Greece, Spain and Portugal, and other countries where the United States directly or indirectly has helped to keep a dictatorship alive. We have harshly criticized the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the lack of freedom there.

Information on the persecution of individuals in Eastern Europe received during the past few months has spoken of camps for political prisoners and other methods for silencing dissidents.

We cannot but oppose methods of this kind. They are in conflict with elementary humanitarian principles, which are also reflected in the Helsinki document.

Our criticism of various events and situations in no way signifies a desire for confrontation, nor animosity towards any state, great or small, nor does it signify anti-Americanism or anti-Sovietism. We are always prepared to have contact and talks with those whom we may criticise on different points. We understand and respect the fact that every nation must find its own way to a better society, that different social and economic systems must learn to live with one another and find ways to keep in touch and co-operate in peace. We wholeheartedly support détente and want to make our contribution to deepening co-operation between the peoples of Europe. One aim for which we work is that political détente will be followed by military disarmament.

At the same time, we maintain that we have the right to speak our mind and state our views on essential issues. We are strongly in favour of a freer and more open debate in the present climate of détente on fundamental political and ideological questions. The principle of non-intervention must not be allowed to stifle the debate. The will to preserve peace and establish constructive co-operation must not obstruct an open and more discerning debate than was possible during the implacable era of the Cold War.

The present situation in Europe is full of paradoxes. Tension between the nations has relaxed but tension within nations is growing.

In the industrial countries of the West we are now going through the deepest economic crisis since the Thirties. In country after country we see paralyzing and almost unbelievable unemployment figures. At the same time, inflation is spiralling faster than since the Korea crisis.

Today, about 17 million people are out of work in the industrialized world. Counting members of their families, maybe 40 million people are the direct victims of unemploy-

ment. In the European Community alone there are about 2 million jobless under 25 years of age. In individual member states, statistics show that unemployment among young people is at terrifying levels of 300,000, 400,000 sometimes nearly 500,000. The distance between employment security and unemployment insecurity is getting less and less. A sense of helplessness and insecurity is gnawing right through the well-being of the communities of the industrial world.

The ideological consequences can be devastating. I regard full employment as the greatest economic and social advance of the postwar period. But in today's difficult situation we are beginning to hear rising murmurs that a fairly high level of unemployment is perhaps inevitable, that unemployment is perhaps not such an evil but may have certain advantages, that anyway people do have unemployment assistance, and so on. This reflects an ideological ^{resignation} that can mean absolute disaster, both for the vitality of nations and for the hopes for the future of individuals.

This is nothing new. We need not look far back in history to see how insecurity paved the way for the strong men and the false allurements of simple solutions.

In the Twenties, democracy was at its lowest ebb in many countries. Unemployment, political division and parliamentary weakness bowled over Europe's democracies like skittles. For some, democracy became the way out for the weak, doomed to abuse or defeat. Adolf Hitler wrote in "Mein Kampf":

"Democracy, as it is practiced in Western Europe today, is the forerunner of Marxism. Democracy is the medium where the bacteria of the Marxist plague can grow and spread."

Today in Chile, General Pinochet says he is looking for "a new democratic formula, as traditional democracy has everywhere been infiltrated by Marxist-Leninists".

Fortunately there are not many dyed-in-the-wool fascists about nowadays.

But even among democrats a pessimistic debate has started at the international level about the future of democracy.

The American professor, Daniel Moynihan, better known as the former American Ambassador to the United Nations, stated in a recently published article that American democracy is languishing. There was a time when the whole world regarded the American Constitution as a model. That is a thing of the past. Moynihan draws the conclusion that democracy is a past phase in history, just as much ^{an}/anachronism as the monarchy was in the 19th century. It is unable to solve the problems of the future. It may survive in a few isolated and distinctive places in "a handful of North Atlantic countries".

Pessimism of another kind emerges in the book "The Crisis of Democracy" written by a trio consisting of a Japanese, an American and a Frenchman. One of the things the authors are worried about is that democracy may become too vigorous, that too much may be required of it.

In their opinion, a number of conflicting interests are being pushed harder and harder, while the cohesion of political parties has weakened. Democracy has got out of hand, that is to say, it is practically impossible to govern.

One of the authors says that a certain measure of apathy and indifference in some sections of the population seems to be a requisite for an effective democracy.

The ranks of the pessimists can be completed by the Englishman Robert Moss, who has written a book entitled "The Collapse of Democracy", which has created a great stir

in the Anglo-Saxon world. He thinks that if democracy is to survive it must be protected by almost anti-democratic methods. A community which is, in principle, an open society may temporarily have to resort to dictatorial methods in "self defence", such as controlling the mass media, dismissing radical teachers, taking action against trade unions, etc. In an earlier book he has done his best to "explain" the Chilean junta's overthrow of Allende.

One thing all the pessimists have in common is that for various reasons they see a danger in extending democracy's sphere of influence, in deepening democracy. They say very little about social evils and the necessity of pursuing an active policy in order to get out of the crisis. But, on the other hand, they are interested in various ways of restricting and narrowing the effective power of democracy.

It is not to be wondered at that they are normally known as representing something called "the new conservatism". There is no doubt that here and there conservative forces have begun to see their chance. They are spreading "the gospel of inequality" as though social equality was the root of problems and as though the establishment of a class society would improve the situation. They advocate a return to an out-and-out capitalism and try to shut their eyes to the fact that the present crisis is essentially an outcrop of the crisis of capitalism.

And they are looking for scapegoats. To avoid having to talk about unemployment and poverty and people's sense of helplessness, they are fabricating the red peril. They are painting the picture of communists infiltrating government offices and building Muscovite bridgeheads in Western Europe. Therefore, Europe must be vaccinated against the red plague. Democracy must hit back. So the spirit of confrontation and suspicion is growing and there is a risk that it will create tension within and between nations.

But what is actually happening? There is little doubt that capitalism is in a state of deep crisis. That is obvious

from unemployment figures.

According to the communist texts we should now be in a revolutionary situation, which should promote the collapse and the violent take-over of power which, according to these same texts, is inevitable.

But what are the revolutionaries up to? Well, the advance guard of revolution in Europe is feverishly occupied with renouncing revolution so that it can get on with vigorously proclaiming its democratic and reformistic disposition.

This is another of today's paradoxes. In a situation which, according to their fathers in the faith, would benefit world revolution, the communist parties are now up to their eyes in something of a political and ideological crisis.

What is the reason for this?

For thirty years or so the communist parties in Western Europe have been living in a kind of political ghetto, even in Southern Europe where they have been strong. In spite of their good organization, their discipline and steady purpose, their influence has been limited. The Stalinist heritage has lived on in the majority, the severe discipline has kept more people outside the party than inside, the liturgical repetition of the dogmas has seemed foreign and fanatical, elitist doctrine has not encouraged involvement nor enriched debate. The communists have been at their strongest as forbidden parties in underground activities, where they have shown admirable heroism, or in times of crisis when the establishment and the political opposition have been in disarray. In peacetime they flourish best in societies with rigid class distinctions.

In those countries where the communists have assembled a large section of the working class, they have never really been able to exploit their strength. Therefore, they have become increasingly doubtful about the efficiency of their

tactics, increasingly aware that they must adjust to their surroundings. So when the Soviet Union resorted to force, in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968, not only were they having doubts about tactics but they also started to question and disassociate themselves from their ideological centre.

So what we have witnessed in the leading communist parties in Southern Europe is an attempt to break out of isolation, to become more attractive to groups outside their own ranks and to gain credibility as democratic parties. This is particularly true of the parties in Italy, Spain and France.

If they want to attain these goals, however, they find themselves in a head-on collision with certain fundamental elements of their own ideology, a situation which is in itself a sign of the strength of democracy and national independence.

First, we have the principle of proletarian internationalism. The fact is that after this was presented as a doctrine in Czechoslovakia in 1968 communists could no longer profess an ideological-political dependence on Moscow and win support in Western Europe. This process had already been started in Eastern Europe by Tito during the Forties and in Italy in the mid-Sixties by the communist leader, Togliatti. Having once questioned this dependence, growing criticism was inevitable. Dubcek's overthrow was greeted with general disapprobation, even if it varied in force. The Spanish communist party has gone farthest in this respect, by its Secretary-General demanding that "comrade Dubcek" should also be invited to the planned meeting of European communist parties.

But even the two large parties in the West have gone far in accentuating their own profiles. The Italian communist leader, Berlinguer, professes his loyalty to Italy's NATO commitments, even if he maintains that Europe would manage better without either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. In France, the communists recently launched a harsh attack on the existence of camps for

political prisoners in the Soviet Union and against the trials of dissidents.

There can be no doubt that in their attempts to gain credibility in the eyes of West European public opinion, the communists are being forced to take drastic steps of this kind. This cannot but create friction with the comrades in Moscow, thus also shaking the foundations of proletarian internationalism.

In the second place, the communists must question the dictatorship of the proletariat, a dogma that is hardly likely to attract the big groups of voters, and is in direct conflict with the aspirations of the Latin communist parties to form a broad democratic front. In France, the communists are co-operating with the socialists in the Union of the Left. In Spain they are part of an anti-fascist front, which also includes some non-socialist groups, and in Italy their aim is the "historic compromise", i.e. an organized governmental co-operation with the large Christian Democratic Party.

The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat also clashes with the desire to present themselves to the electorate as a democratic alternative. They now profess adherence to political pluralism, government by the majority and parliamentarism, absolute respect for the will of the popular majority in general elections etc. Seen in the context of these aspirations their political message sometimes seems almost to be aimed at preserving the status quo.

Professing democracy also necessitates a renouncement of the belief in revolutionary development in Western Europe and the acceptance of the reformist course. Criticism of those who have doubts about reformism is also harsh. Listen for example to Giancarlo Pajetta, member of the Italian Central Committee. His words could well be addressed to our own Swedish communists: "Only small groups, which are satisfied with living on the fringe

of history, or doctrinaire schoolmasters, who have not yet understood the new factors of our time and do not realize that we must act accordingly if we want to be genuine revolutionaries, can talk about revisionism and reformism in the sense that they imply the repudiation of socialism".

So the dictatorship of the proletariat is deleted from the texts and dismissed into history.

As far as I can see South European communists are approaching a point where they will soon have to start discussing a third fundamental principle of communism - democratic centralism. Can they, in their efforts to present themselves as democratic, still cling to a principle which is in direct conflict with other tendencies in Western industrial societies? I refer to the decentralization of power and the exercise of influence at all levels of society. Can they any longer assert the Leninist principle of the omniscient and omnipotent avant-garde which in its wisdom will lead the people on the right road? I think not. Therefore, they must also question this principle.

This is not dry theory. These three principles are all fundamental to communist ideology. It is around these three principles that the battle between social democracy and communism has been fiercest decade after decade. This is where the crucial difference lies.

Many people feel that this evolution means that the whole Marxist-Leninist creed and its consequent symbolic action is at issue. We witness the sculptured busts being removed from conference tables. We see how the clenched fist is relaxing into an inviting handshake. The Internationale's battle call is being replaced by the national anthem. The Marxist Mecca is fading into the distance.

It is not to be wondered at that this leads to great inner tensions in the parties at the same time as relations with

sister parties in Eastern Europe are strained.

Now the question arises: Is this a real change of heart or is it purely and simply tactics laid over an unchanged ideology? We cannot tell. The future alone holds the answer.

But the debate around this theme is full of interesting variations. Some maintain that it is a tactical facelift for the purpose of getting into power. Should this happen democracy is no more. The only course, therefore, is to take a tough and implacable line, accept no form of co-operation, keep all communists out of governments.

Developments in Southern Europe are interpreted by some as a diabolic plan worked out in Moscow. The communists are assuming a democratic disguise in order to take power. After that, country after country will fall like dominoes into the hands of dictatorship.

But it now looks as if the communist party in Moscow is not too willing to play this imagined game. It has stiffened its ideological posture. A number of articles elaborate on the gospel of proletarian nationalism, the inevitability of the class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat and other ideological orthodoxy.

Ideological tensions are also reflected in the delay in convening the conference of European communist parties. Negotiations and meetings have been held for nearly two years without any agreement being reached on where the conference is to take place or on the wording of the resolution which is drawn up in advance. There is undeniably a great deal in what the Spanish communist leader Carillo says, when he points out that the social democrats hold meeting after meeting "while we communists are not even capable of holding a European conference".

Possibly the leaders in the Kremlin also embrace a domino theory. What would happen if the ideological disintegration in the West European communist parties spread to Eastern

Europe and notions of a communism with a human face were once again to gain ground in these countries?

The greatest challenge to the position of the Soviet communist party would then not come from the bourgeoisie nor from social democracy in Western Europe but from its own ideological fraternity.

Actually it is a fascinating thought: Two infinitely strong super-powers each pondering over its set of dominoes, with the pieces set up so that the other can see ^{them} fearing the change in the status quo which may emerge from the ideological struggle and the demands of the people.

In a way, we must have some sympathy for them in their quandary. The delicately constructed balance of power is for them a guarantee for peace. Change can have unforeseeable and perhaps undesirable consequences. The clearly demarcated spheres of interest, the simple ideological orthodoxy has undeniable advantages for them. It feels almost unfair to criticize them. At the same time, it shows how frail the balance of power must be in a phase when the winds of change are sweeping through the nations.

What, then, is the attitude of social democracy to this process?

This was one of the subjects we discussed at the meeting of the Social Democratic Party Leaders in Helsingör last month.

It is a question of vital importance to many fellow social democrats on the continent, and that is why I have dealt with it fairly exhaustively today.

However, may I first digress somewhat to comment on the Swedish communist party. It feels almost ill-mannered to add more fuel to the fire and rub more salt into the wound, but I have to complete the picture.

Our experience of the communists is that they have been dividers. They are in themselves a divided group. It is almost impossible to find out what the present strife is all about. But when the party leader depicts the Left-Party Communists as "the tool of the Swedish working class in its struggle for socialism" it is not exactly Thor's hammer he is putting into the hands of the Swedish worker!

Someone has said that the Left-Party Communists are in a state of permanent crisis when it comes to their programme. Since the end of the Second World War, five party programmes have been adopted. They are still searching feverishly for a programme geared to the Swedish reality and which at the ^{time} ~~same~~ preserves the Leninist heritage.

Remarkably enough, Swedish communists have kept aloof from the process now taking place in Europe. When the French and Italian communists talk of strengthening parliamentary democracy, the Left Party Communists say in their programme that "parliament is the powerhouse of the bourgeois society". Instead a "central representative assembly of the people" is to replace the present Riksdag. Further, a "revolutionary government" is to be established.

The communist party programme also rejects the "illusion" of "the reformist course". It is instead "state-monopoly capitalism" that profits from "the strong position held by reformism".

When ^{the} ~~social~~ democrats reached agreements on the economy at Haga, agreements that were important to the economy but ideologically fairly neutral, the Left-Party Communists did not spare the sneers. But at the same time they say that they support the efforts of their Italian comrades to form a government with a party that is almost conservative. So we note that ^{class} ~~treachery~~ at Haga becomes wise politics in Rome.

Nor are the communists particularly nationalistic. Few wage-earners recognize the communists' infamous description of Sweden as "a small but hungry imperialistic state".

Their stand on foreign affairs is also vague. In Portugal, the Left Party Communists have given their support to Cunhal's communist party and condemned the socialists. This is in direct contrast to their fellow communists in Spain and Italy, who have unequivocally disassociated themselves from Cunhal's politics and are trying to maintain good relations with Mario Soares.

When commenting on Czechoslovakia the Swedish communists say that the situation there is being "normalized". Do they mean that the situation in Czechoslovakia has improved since the Dubcek period? Or do they mean quite simply that conditions in Czechoslovakia are normal for a communist regime?

In Sweden the communists are grappling with the problems of the sect and the sects. Whereas communists in Southern Europe are trying to broaden their sphere, here in Sweden the communists' ideological platform is getting narrower and narrower, the theoretical frame smaller and smaller.

In Southern Europe the situation is quite different. Throughout the postwar period the communist parties there have been large, well organized and have won the support of a large section of the working class in elections. Various reasons are given for this. Some point to the dominant role of the Roman Catholic church. The socialists have been squeezed between "the two churches", - communism and catholicism. In Italy the communists are much stronger than the socialists. But the socialists are stronger in Portugal and probably also in Spain. In recent years the socialists in France have become the majority left-wing party for the first time. Hundreds of thousands of French workers who before voted communist have now gone over to the socialists.

In practice, the strength and isolation of the communist parties have constituted a guarantee for the political dominance of the conservative forces in these countries, and ^(is) one reason why they have lagged behind social progress in essential respects. This is a basic political fact of which the communists must also be well aware.

The relationship between social democracy and communism must be judged on the basis of conditions in each country. Obviously, the situation is quite different in countries where communists organize a substantial part of the working class.

Therefore, social democrats in each country must themselves decide what stand they take. Lecturing serves no purpose. This view was emphasized ^{the meetings of} at the Socialist International in 1972 and 1974 and was also confirmed this year at Helsingör.

The aim of European social democracy must be to reach the working class as a whole, to give it its rightful place in the democratic process and to harness its power for the social, economic and democratic transformation of society.

I find it difficult to understand those who have nothing but distrust for the ideological reassessments going on in communist parties. It must be a benefit if these parties start professing their belief in democratic rights and freedoms, if they desire to defend fundamental human rights, if they begin to realize the strength reformism has to change society.

Were it to go so far as that they in deed as well as in word live up to their proclamations of "no democracy without socialism. no socialism without democracy", then they have accepted not only Rosa Luxemburg's basic doctrine on socialism but also the fundamental values of the Socialist International.

Should that happen, then we have no reason to relapse into the accents of the Cold War or to launch into any kind of crusade of the type reactionary forces are always ready to organize. We can, instead, take part in an open ideological debate unfettered by dogma.

Actually, it is a question of self-confidence. Because basically, ^{this} development proves the attraction and strength of democratic socialism. It is the people's demand for a living democracy, for national independence and social justice that is breaking through.

Communism or capitalism no longer represent a dream of freedom for the peoples of Europe. The proximity to the states of Eastern Europe and experience of the capitalist-sustained dictatorships in Greece, Portugal and Spain have made people immune to repressive régimes.

How can communism attract those who want to have a say in decisions affecting their workplaces, who want to develop local autonomy, want to broaden their sphere of activity and get more and more people involved in political life?

And how can capitalism attract those who want to replace the injustices of the industrial society with economic democracy, the rapacity of the market forces with solidarity and a healthy environment, for those who see how repressive régimes draw their strength from multinational corporations, how capitalism opposes the struggle for liberation from colonial rule?

Democratic socialism is the main upholder of aspirations for freedom. Democratic socialism is a freedom movement based upon people's longing for freedom and their desire to be involved in shaping their own future.

Social democracy is today the strongest political force in Western Europe. We have more members, more votes, more members of parliament and more ministers of government than ever before.

But our task is a difficult one.

We must adamantly and patiently advance the positions of democracy. Against oppression and persecution. In defence of human rights.

In the past year in Portugal, the united and firm rallying of European social democracy around democratic principles has been a source of great encouragement. It is equally important that we support democracy in Spain. There, the forces of democracy are showing great patience in the delicate but inevitable transition to democracy. Demands for political freedom, the release of political prisoners, the right of association can in the long run not be checked. But it is quite clear that there is a limit to how long the democratic forces can wait.

But it is not enough to defend formal rights. Democracy must be extended and deepened. In answer to the reactionary forces that speak of narrowing and limiting democracy we must firmly say: give the people more power, bring democracy into the workplaces, let the citizens take responsibility. Then together and united we can create a better future.

We must not for a moment under-rate the right-wing forces throughout Europe that want to exploit the present crisis and people's feeling of helplessness so that they can turn the clock back, once again broaden the gulfs, re-establish rigid class distinctions, leave the people at the mercy of the market forces and the money magnates. The task of social democracy is to take up the cudgels against these reactionary forces, never let up on its far-sighted efforts to found society on social justice.

Democracy and solidarity are the only instruments we can use to find the way out of the economic crisis, defend the right to employment, meet the demand for a humane working

life, create security and fellowship and a good living environment.

No one country has the strength to do this - alone. It requires the united strength of a labour movement, which thanks to the values it has in common can function internationally.

Only when we make headway in these efforts shall we be able to make a constructive contribution to solving the major international problems: the fight against poverty, a reasonable and just distribution of global resources, the struggle against the colossal wastefulness of the arms race - all those issues which other speakers will be dealing with at this conference.

Basically, it is a matter of keeping the idea of solidarity alive, and of imbuing it with real content. International solidarity demands that we make determined efforts to get rid of the social and economic injustices in our own country. Social security and economic strength in Sweden lays the foundation for an active and far-sighted policy to promote international peace and solidarity.

The strength of the labour movement lies in its realization of the indissoluble link between working for solidarity at home and at the international level in order to create a better and more equitable future for all peoples.

This conference "Sweden in the World" is part of those efforts.