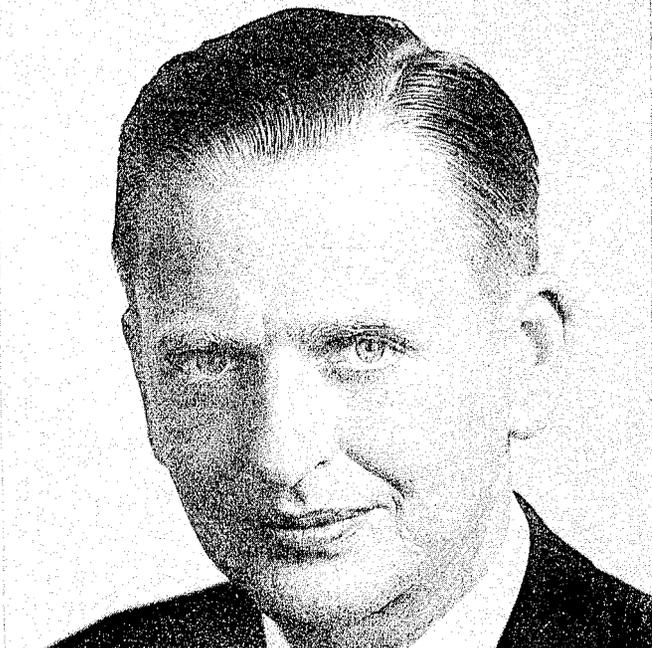


Olof Palme

was born January 30th, 1927. Secretary to the Prime Minister 1954. Minister without portfolio 1963—65. Minister of Communication 1965—67. Minister of Education 1967—69. He was elected Leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party after Tage Erlander at the Party Congress in 1969.

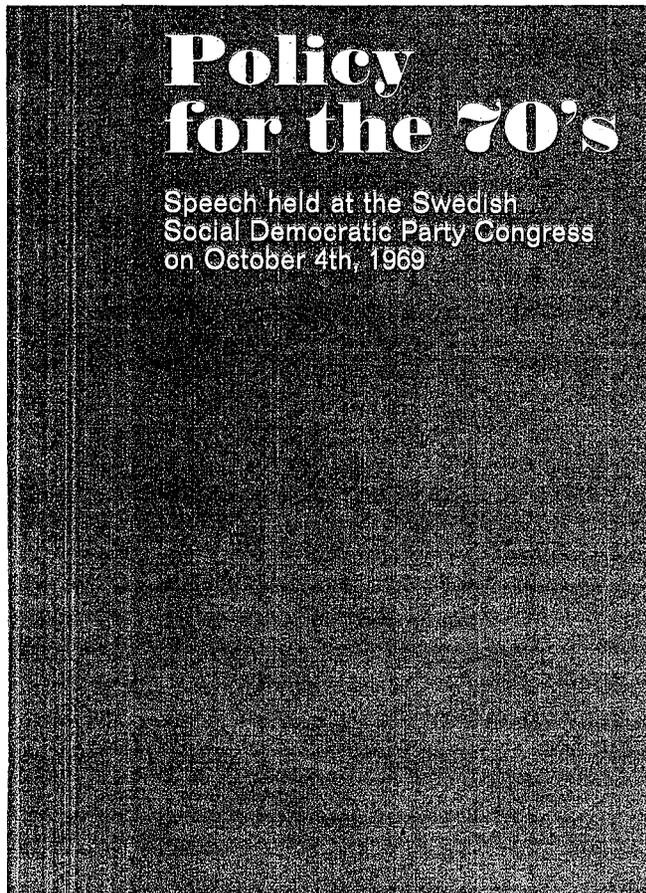
This speech was delivered as a conclusion to the Party Congress on October 4th, 1969.



Olof Palme

Policy for the 70's

Speech held at the Swedish
Social Democratic Party Congress
on October 4th, 1969



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Policy

for the 70's

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I

Lately I have often been asked: What parts of the Swedish Social Democratic politics will be radically changed under a new Chairman of the Party?

I can now answer the question by pointing out that it is wrongly put. Social Democracy is a popular movement which never has and never will let itself be directed by individuals. To those who ask how our policy will be changed, we say: Study the discussions and decisions of this Congress. Go out to the district conferences, the labour communes and trade unions and listen to their debates. Go to the consultation groups and listen to the people. There you will find the answer.

Naturally, the Chairman of the Party has a great responsibility. No one — least of all myself — knows whether I personally am suitable for the task. But it is essential to emphasize that the policy of the Party is formed by a democratic process that is ultimately built on the active participation of the individual members. The first task of a Party Chairman is to listen to the movement.

The movement has many branches. Thus there are many to listen to. But probably no one will be surprised if I make special mention of the trade union movement. A right-wing politician declared at the time of Tage Erlander's resignation, that if the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions had not existed, we would probably have been able to have a conservative government in this country. A brilliant example of under-statement perhaps, but at least it reveals a certain realization of the enormous power of the trade union movement and of our opponents' inability, despite intensive efforts, to divide us. Our mutual connection cannot be expressed better than in the vote of thanks to Tage Erlander proposed

by Arne Geijer at the opening of this Congress. We are united by common goals and a common view of society. We work together both centrally and locally in day to day organizational and political business. Co-operation between the Party and the trade union movement remains the basis of the policy of the labour movement.

Let me say the following about the activity of the Party. Every big popular movement always runs the risk of becoming stagnant, isolated from the pulsating life of the community. What is the good of building beautiful cathedrals when they stand as monuments far away from life and people and the future?

We must constantly renew our methods of work in order to establish contacts, call forth a debate, stimulate thoughts and feelings. In the last few years we have also invited people from outside the movement to participate in our discussions. And many have come. We always have to work with an open mind so that we never risk closing our minds to new stimuli. Our duty is to combine firmness and consistency in the policy of the Party, clarity as to what the Party stands for in every particular situation, with openness of mind regarding the ideological debate within our own ranks. The Party should be an instrument of practical social reform and at the same time a meeting point for the free exchange of ideas. It is a difficult task that among other things demands consideration and solidarity. But that is the basis for the movement's vitality. The last few years have brought something of a new wave of activity and involvement within our organisation. May that wave carry on into the 70's.

At the same time, comrades, I am fully aware of the fact

that when it comes to the question of changing the Party leader, there is a perfectly natural undertone of anxiety. Changes of leadership have not been a very frequent occurrence in our Party.

To a lot of people in this country the Party stands for security. Sometimes maybe a bit greyish and ordinary. But there is a firmness in its basic values and its practical actions that has created confidence. This confidence and security are important parts of the lives of many people.

Social Democracy has been able to be radical because it represents stability. That is not a contradiction in terms. People always feel a certain anxiety for the unknown and untried. We are ready to accept innovation if it is anchored in today's experiences, if it means the fulfilment of a line of action. Naturally there are situations when despair is so great that one is ready to throw everything overboard in order to create something completely new immediately. In the old poverty-ridden Sweden there was such a despair, arising from distress and unemployment. But still Social Democracy chose the peaceful way — step by step transforming the society. We intend to continue in this way. We are not prepared to say that what has been built up over the decades is so completely worthless that it has to be demolished before real progress is achieved. Without being presumptuous we can say that, in spite of all its defects, the system and method that we have chosen, has brought better social conditions to ordinary people than any other system that exists or has existed.

The main points of the Party's policy must not be characterized by sudden changes. Respect for the people who have given us their support demands that. There must be conti-

nunity between the present and the future. We are going to continue on that road.

But stability does not mean stagnation. To stand still in the society of today, means stepping backwards in seven-league boots.

In his opening speech, Tage Erlander illustrated how the Party ideologically and practically has constantly been able to advance its position. I have nothing to add to that. But let me illustrate this by some very practical examples.

In the 1960's we reformed the educational system at all stages and levels, at the same time as the number of pupils increased almost explosively. In 1960 the budget for education amounted to 1 750 million Sw kr, today it stands at 7 700 million Sw kr.

In the 1960's we built almost 900 000 flats. That means that 2.5 to 3 million Swedes moved into modern flats during this period.

In 1960 there was no regional development policy. In 1963 we started to build industrial plants as joint Government and local relief work projects, as emergency public work. In 1965 we began to experiment in this field. Since then we have spent about 900 million Sw kr on regional aid. Now 24 billion Sw kr are spent on social security. That is 17 billions more than in 1960. This figure reflects a development which is nothing short of fantastic. Pensions have been practically doubled, the sickness insurance system has been reformed, the benefits are paid as of the first day and a 4th holiday-week has been introduced.

Tax equalization subsidies to local authorities in 1960 were negligible. Today they amount to 1 500 million Sw kr. This

has fundamentally transformed the survival prospects of poor rural districts.

These were some examples from the 60's. And in essential fields we have already determined the policy of the 70's. Even if we do not decide anything new, the process of social change will continue well into the 70's on the basis of the decisions already taken.

We have decided to further extend security for old people. This year's parliamentary session has decided on a ten-year programme for a further increase of pensioners' living standards. The number of pensioners is increasing at the rate of 25 000 annually. General service retirement pension payments are increasing rapidly.

Five years ago we decided to build 1 million dwellings in ten years. Now we have carried out half of the programme. Up to 1975 we will build an average of 100 000 flats a year. This represents an annual investment of about 9 000 million Sw kr.

By the middle of the 70's we have undertaken to increase our international aid to 1 per cent of our GNP (Gross National Product).

The great educational reforms will get into their stride during the early 70's. In a few years we will have 1 million pupils in comprehensive schools. But the greatest expansion will be in secondary education, colleges for further education and adult education.

These are four central political fields in which we have more or less decided our policy for the next 5—10 years. To this can be added all that we have decided to carry out in other fields and all that this Congress has commissioned us to carry out: regional policy and tax reforms, environment

conservation and adult education, cultural policy and the provision of electricity, health services and transport. Like every good Social Democratic conference this Congress has mainly been dealing with the deficiencies of society and with all that is still to be done. Our work is by no means finished.

This purposeful aim in our long term policy is built on the experiences of the 60's. Success has given us the courage to go ahead. But we know that what we want can only be fulfilled on certain vital conditions. Therefore it is, to a high degree, a question of very down to earth matters.

In the first place it presupposes an expanding economy. Social progress must come from this expansion. In some circles increase of production has become almost a dirty word. In the most surprising circles. The Liberal Party declares in large advertisements, that now they too have actually become more humane and that production is not everything; that there are other values in life as well. This is the same Liberal Party that has wasted every election campaign talking about increased production, and pestered the public with complicated calculations on where we stand in various leagues of production. We could never afford such a sudden change of policy. Social Democracy has never worshipped economic growth for its own sake. But we have learnt by down to earth experience that increased production is important for those who wish to create a just society. We have never degenerated to a one-sided view of profitability. But if, on the other hand, the argument is taken so far that practically no economic activity results in any profit, then one has not created a better society, the idyll one strives for.

Instead one has set foot on the downhill path towards dissatisfaction and social conflict.

The second condition is a strict economic policy. If we are going to realise the aims we already have, plus those whose outlines we have drawn up at this Congress, the all-decisive condition is that we are able to have a firm and consistent economic policy that maintains our outward and inward balance. That may sound depressing. But it is exciting. We have seen too many examples of countries that, because of difficulties with their economic policy, have been forced into short-sightedness and for a long time ahead have had to shelve all plans of reform. In this way expectation is replaced by discontent and dejection, the debate about the future disappears in daily worries. Change in our society has to be built upon economic strength.

We do not control the world economy which we are so dependent on. To govern often means saying no to pressing matters. Sometimes it means that we have to undertake unpopular measures. But comrades, governed we have and govern we shall.

We will always be the ones who have to make the money stretch. For decades we have had to fight a continuous struggle against the overbidding of the right-wing parties. There is every indication that we will have to continue that struggle. For those who like to overbid, politics offers countless bows to stretch. But, comrades, it is best to listen to the twang of a bow that hasn't snapped.

The third condition is concerned with our view of society and our ideology. The greatest victory we won in the 60's was on the battlefield of ideas. Because that gave us a basis for action.

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You remember the right-wing vision of the future. They warned us against an equalization of incomes and the oppression of freedom. They demanded considerable reductions in taxation. The state was the enemy of the individual. The man in the street should stand on his own feet. Socialism no longer had a role in a society where material standards had risen.

This right-wing vision has now fallen to pieces. They flee from it themselves. The Social Democratic vision of a society of solidarity and co-operation remains. We demanded a strong society that could protect the security of its inhabitants. We asked for sacrifices in the form of a considerable taxation pressure. We were prepared to intervene in the economy to realize essential interests of the citizenry. Of course, our policies have also had their deficiencies. But the success that we have still experienced is linked with the fact that our policy has been in accordance with our social outlook and that it has met with a positive response from the people. This did not primarily depend on just ourselves. Torsten Eliasson has rightly underlined that "every real and deep change in societies and living conditions begins in the mind of the people". And there something has happened.

Ten years ago it was said that "ideologies are dead". At that time I was travelling around to the Swedish colleges of higher education discussing their possible demise with Herbert Tingsten. The atmosphere was such that I had to whisper almost discreetly: "And yet they live". Conservative politicians were looking down their noses at wage-earners' efforts to increase their material standards. Satisfied and contented we should all sink down into the sofa in front of

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the TV set. — And indeed we watched TV. There we also saw Vietnam and Biafra and the ghettos and the seamier side of our own society. Young people were to hasten through the educational system with their eyes fixed on a high salary and a top post on the nearest board of directors. In his famous poem, Birger Norman wrote about Grandfather sitting in his rocking-chair, reading the works of Hjalmar Branting, and his grandson "tucking the future aims of young conservatism in his brief-case". What Grandfather does today I do not know, but his grandson definitely reads socialist literature. Young people have become conscious of deficiencies, use their knowledge to study how the big powers and big enterprises behave, make moral demands upon society and upon the economic system.

Increased awareness of the shortcomings of reality heightens the pace and intensity of social debate. Consequently more is demanded of parties and politicians. That makes politics more attractive but also more difficult.

For this new intensity is rooted in an experience of crisis and danger.

The rich industrial countries in the West have, from a certain point of view, been extremely successful. They have created an advanced technology and science, an efficient economy with an abundant increase of production, a rising standard of living and a parliamentary democracy that has been able to survive in spite of all difficulties. In many ways they are characterized by a unique vitality.

But in spite of this success and vitality, the people of most of these affluent countries have a feeling of crisis and imminent catastrophe.

It is not a crisis of the kind that followed after the golden age of classical liberalism and that led to the first great intervention in market economy. Then it was realized that when the quest for personal success and business profitability leads to large-scale failures and mass-unemployment, then society has to interfere to protect employment and the economic equilibrium.

In that way one could create reasonable guarantees for economic expansion and balance. Now interest is directed towards what is produced and how the result of production is used. It is not enough to create an efficient production apparatus. We are not satisfied with an organisation of society that produces the most fantastic advances in science. What is increasingly experienced as a failure of the rich industrial nations is the social tensions, the absurd gaps between classes, the concentration of power, the destruction of environment, the difficulty of meeting people's demands for participation in forming the future.

This inner tension is placed in sharp relief against the background of an international perspective. Concern grows globally over our inability to stop the arms race, over the increase of violence and our inability to meet the demands for social liberation and alleviate starvation and poverty that continuously become deeper.

The thought of catastrophe is not new. Karl Marx predicted a catastrophe. The ghost walked the length and breadth of Europe. But Marx' predictions still seem benign compared with today's description of our possible future.

Today the scientists talk about the annihilation of humanity, the destruction of nature and worldwide starvation. This was one of the leading themes at the Nobel Symposium in Stock-

holm recently. And their message is becoming common knowledge.

We know that the 70's will be **the decade of possible destruction**. The stock of nuclear weapons is big enough for the extermination of human life and everything that man has created on earth. And biological and chemical weapons are still cheaper to produce and still more efficient.

We know that the 70's can become **the decade of violence**, in many forms and for various reasons — between nations, within nations and between people. There are no signs of any sudden change of these tendencies.

We know that the 70's will be **the decade of starvation** for a lot of people. Today there are more hungry mouths to feed than ever before in history. In 1975 India will need 20 per cent more food than in 1965 to feed its population given the **present standard of living**, even if not a single child is born during this 10-year period. Those who have seen Louis Malle's film "Calcutta" know what the present standard of living is like.

We know that the 70's will be **the decade of destruction**. Exploitation of natural resources, pollution of air and water, destruction of the environment where we live is continuing all over the world at an increasing pace.

To Karl Marx the catastrophe was the prelude to a brighter era in the history of mankind. A new and better society was going to be constructed out of the fragments of the past. The catastrophe feared today is not described as a prelude to better times. Its meaning seems more like the end of history.

Marx described what he saw as a process determined by fate. But the catastrophe that threatens us today is not

inevitable. Armament can be turned into disarmament. Together the nations can stop the destruction of the environment. The decade of development that never came true in the 60's can become true in the next decade. The social causes of violence can be done away with. These problems can not be solved in 10 years. But the 70's are still **the decade of the possible turning-points.**

And yet so little happens! The path from insight to action is particularly long in international co-operation. The dreadful is becoming commonplace. We are liable to get dulled, our field of vision limited. Karl Marx was exiled by those who feared his prophecies. Those who today envisage destruction are made Honorary Doctors, addressing symposiums all over the world, welcome in most circles.

I do not criticize them. But the Judgement Day is not to be enjoyed over coffee, a sensation that entertains but does not disturb the digestion. And of course, even the most gloomy predictions are harmless as long as they do not lead to demands for changes aimed against established economic interests.

But knowledge spreads. People understand that development cannot be set to rights by scientists, experts, businessmen or some kind of elite. Nor can this be handed over to anonymous powers, technological development, the economic system or something similar. Catastrophe, if it comes, would in all essential parts be a result of misguided political decisions or failure to take political decisions at all. The knowledge that today's decisive problems are social and political and thus have to be solved by social and political methods is growing. Therefore developments can only be rectified by the people themselves, who by virtue of their longing for

peace and justice force through those profound changes of the structures of societies and international relations which are a condition for peace in the world and solidarity between and within nations.

I think that the 70's can become the decade in which mankind no longer acquiesces. In which people no longer ought to acquiesce.

This is also our problem. We are part of a greater community. We have to make a contribution even if it turns out to be small and limited.

I cannot today go into any great detail on the subject of foreign policy. I will soon have an opportunity to revert to this matter. But let me say the following.

The Swedish policy of neutrality, as drawn up by Östen Undén and Torsten Nilsson, is firmly anchored. It has stood its historical test. It is based on Sweden's actual position in international strategy and power-politics. We believe that this policy of ours has contributed to the calm and the stability which, on the whole, have characterized conditions in the North of Europe during the post-war period. When drawing up our policy, we pay particular consideration to the Nordic countries. We respect the lines of foreign policy which they themselves have chosen.

Social Democracy has had the main responsibility for the formation of the policy of neutrality. It has created respect in other countries and confidence among its own people. We shall firmly pursue the chosen line of action in our policy of security.

The policy of neutrality implies neither isolation nor passivity. On the contrary it implies a challenge, and an opportunity,

to work for peace and progress in the greater international context.

I emphasized last Wednesday that Nordic co-operation must be in the foreground of our policy. In the near future we have to take important decisions at Nordic level. The labour movement has a strong interest in the NORDEK negotiations leading to results. We have also a strong interest, within the framework of our policy of neutrality, in wider co-operation in Europe.

Our possibilities on a wider international level are always limited. Sweden is not a Great Power and is not in a position to affect in a decisive way the fate of the world. Our resources are modest. We must always carefully choose the time and form of our contribution if it is to be of importance in a given situation. First and foremost, we have chosen to work within the framework of the United Nations. The disarmament negotiations, the human environment problems, the peace-keeping actions, assistance to developing countries and the liberation of the suppressed peoples — these are problems which we have principally tried to influence and where our standpoints create a consistent line of action which is founded on our basic values. These efforts we shall continue to pursue. By doing so we can contribute to making the 1970's a decade of turning points.

We can and we should in the United Nations, and elsewhere, participate in the creation of international public opinion, which as a result of the modern mass media has become more of a real factor of power than before and to which even the Great Powers are susceptible. We shall not overestimate our role and believe that we are wiser than others. But neither shall we underestimate the importance

that a country, not aligned to any Great Power and without conflicts with other states, clearly and honestly expresses its opinion on international disputes. The fact that importance is attached to our standpoint will be seen, for example, by the reaction in the United States to our position in the Vietnam question and the reaction in the Soviet Union to our attitude to events in Czechoslovakia. Sometimes we are told, by one or the other side, that our opinions and our standpoints are contrary to the policy of neutrality. Such a criticism must be due to a misunderstanding of the content of our policy. The criticism would be justified if our actions and our statements were dictated by pressure from some Great Power or were the expression of fundamental discord with a given Great Power. Such assumptions, if they occur, are totally unfounded and we shall do what we can to ensure that they remain so. We desire good relations at all levels with the leading Great Powers. This is part and parcel of our endeavour to make a constructive contribution to the maintenance of peace and the liberation of peoples. For it is in this field that the Great Powers, by means of their enormous resources, hold the key to the future in a very high degree.

We shall continue to repeat simple but important truths. That the longing of peoples for freedom cannot be beaten down with force. That the aim of democracy can never be reached by means of oppression. That peoples have the right to decide their own destiny.

One basic condition must be absolutely clear. In the same way as we ourselves, and only we ourselves, determine the practical implications of our policy of neutrality, we ourselves, and we alone, decide what attitude we shall adopt

to events in the world which have a bearing on war and peace and now concern all humanity.

We ourselves determine the Swedish policy of neutrality. This is the basis of our foreign policy.

During the 1970's, Swedish society will become more and more internationalized — whether we want it to or not. Let us regard this development as a positive opportunity for a deeper understanding of other peoples' conditions, for solidarity with the struggle of peoples for liberty and national self-determination, for active work for peace and understanding between nations.

Compared to the rest of the world we might seem to be living in a quiet little corner of our own. Nothing could be further from the truth. Basically, we are faced with the same problems and the same risks as all the other industrial nations of the world.

Work for peace and understanding between nations begins at home, and it is here that we can start to influence developments. For many people, concern for others began with the civil war in Spain, the villages of Vietnam or the reservations of South Africa. This has been accompanied by involvement in our own problems: security, low wages, the educational gap.

Just now Sweden attracts considerable attention in the world. This is not primarily due to more exotic phenomena. It is in a very high degree our policy in which people are interested and in this connection the method as much as the results, the method of democratic reforms.

In some of the poor countries there will probably be revolutions — a revolt against foreign usurpers and native opp-

ressors. But this is not a romantic adventure. It is the last desperate resort when suppression is unsufferable and social conditions unbearable. And the aim of the revolution is to create the possibility of peaceful reconstruction work of the type which we have been able to carry out for decades as a result of favourable conditions, peaceful reconstruction work of the type for which President Nyerere of Tanzania is such a splendid example.

In the rich industrial countries, in East and West, a radicalization of this conscious opinion has been going on in recent years. But the communist bureaucrats have stiffened and demands for gradual reforms are met with police and tanks. And in the West the possibilities of social change are threatened, for example by internal strife. The sects grow like mushrooms and each one has its own ready-made solution. The American author Norman Mailer has spoken of "all these radical Admirals who each are separately in command of a fleet of dried-up and leaking rowing-boats". And after disintegration comes disappointment.

What one finds in Sweden is a movement with a sufficient unity and strength to carry through a meaningful transformation of society. Its policy is formed by thousands of people in the trade union and political labour movements and it is realized with the support of ordinary wage-earners with relatively low incomes and without a long formal education and training. In this way it has been possible to carry out a peaceful reform of society. This simple reason has to a great extent given an individuality and lasting value to Swedish society.

I do not say this to inspire complacency. Complacency invariably ends in a rude awakening. On the contrary my

intention is to underline our responsibility. Success leads above all to increased obligations and increasing demands. Swedish Social Democracy is adamant in its support of democracy and the method of reformism. We are proud of these things. At the same time we have to show that democracy can act, that it can get to grips with problems that are important to people. We have constantly to demonstrate the possibilities of social development.

From this starting point let me outline some of the main tasks in our policy for the 70's.

Our task is to prevent technological development from having absurd social consequences.

This does not imply a negative attitude towards the advancement of technology and science. We depend upon them. They give us an increased production and better wages. They create possibilities for social progress and more rewarding leisure. They give us new goods and technical machines that can make work in factories, offices and at home easier.

It is an important aim for our commercial and industrial policy to stimulate the development of technology and science. That is why we, among other things, invest so much in research and education and have founded a number of new institutions.

Most people have on the whole a positive attitude towards this development as they know the advantages. The Luddites of our time are few and far between. There are very few who lay themselves across the rails to stop development.

At the same time we should know that the individual can meet technological development in his daily life in a com-

pletely different way. There the risks and disadvantages come to the fore.

Every year thousands of people lose their jobs because of rationalization. Others are not unemployed but get a less satisfying job. This means a direct fall in living standards. To many of the trade union members who have been transferred within their firm, the transfer means deteriorations; lower wages, worse working places, increased psychological strain.

To a lot of people this development means strain and anxiety, increased risks of illness and injury. 80 per cent of trade union members encounter health risks in their work.

Some people live in areas where rationalization means depopulation. That means fewer working opportunities, splitting up of families, often worse services in many respects as well as meagre human contacts.

Others see the consequences of technology in polluted water, bad air, limited leisure opportunities.

Knowledge of the advantages of technology must not blind us to the fact that it can have a completely different meaning in the every-day life of individuals. Social Democratic economic policy starts in every-day life.

When an individual wants to correct injustices, he can in many cases turn to the local trade union that protects his interests. But its possibilities of action are limited. He can demand increased influence in the business where he is employed. That is something positive. But he soon finds that many of the things that he considers important are far beyond the framework of the individual business. And then the demands are placed on society. Demands for work,

security, protection against health risks and decent surroundings.

If society is to meet the demands, it has to have the power to act. But emergency measures are not enough, for example when a business fails. The individual contribution has to be a link in a systematically constructed labour market policy that draws on a wide repertoire of measures. This labour market policy in turn cannot be made to work unless it is integrated in a general picture and if society is not given the opportunity to influence in the general direction and distribution of production. In a word, what is needed is a strong society.

This is an undogmatic way of looking at economics. It is an application to today's conditions of the main idea in the great speech by Ernst Wigforss at the Party Congress in 1932.

Wigforss says: Democratic Socialism must be able to help people here and now. It is not a question of jam tomorrow, of something that can be shoved off into the long-distant future.

People have to feel that the proposals have some relevance to their own daily life. It is a question of providing work, and if private persons do not provide it, society is forced to create working opportunities. But then you can go one step further and say that it cannot be reasonable that these working opportunities which we have to create, have of necessity to be put into those nooks and corners where there is no private enterprise. Then you are forced to realize that the next step is to control such working opportunities as are offered by industrial and commercial life. This increases the demand for a planned economy.

In this way our policy has been built up. The demands have

continuously grown. The positions have advanced. The policy of the market has been succeeded by the general service retirement pension and the public sector. In the 60's, on the verge of the 70's, there are five sectors, closely related to each other, that stand in the foreground: commercial and industrial policy, labour market policy, regional policy, environment policy, consumer questions.

In the past few years things have begun to move in this field. The commercial and industrial programme formed the basis and step by step it is now translated into action. Krister Wickman (Industries Minister) has given an account of the results.

But of course this is only the beginning, as witness the debate on Norrland. What is important is that we have a society that is prepared to act. What is important is that we acquire the tools needed for advancing our positions. The Congress has clearly stated the aims we are to work for.

We intend to continue the programme that has grown out of the principles I have mentioned. We shall not hesitate when necessary to interfere in the economic system to cater for the everyday needs of the people.

Secondly it is our task to widen and deepen democracy in Sweden.

Some people seem to be surprised at the intensive debate on joint decision-making and more thorough-going democracy. In fact this is a perfectly consistent development.

In the old society a small elite decided. One had to have money to be entitled to vote. This idea was undermined at the same time as wise farmers introduced the elementary school and industrialization got underway. In the course of

time the workers refused to acquiesce to suppression. They started to organize, they demanded the right to negotiate wages and working conditions. Together with the liberals they demanded universal suffrage. And they got it. Was there really anybody who thought that developments would stop at this? There was no chaos when what was called "the parliament of the streets" came to power. A better society was the result. It gave self-confidence and now the demand for joint power of decision increases. At working places, schools, in residential areas, in the economy as a whole.

This tendency will increase. The tendency towards democracy. People will demand it. Young people who have had an opportunity to debate and have some influence in their homes and schools are not going to be content with an authoritarian system when they get out into working life. People want to know that what they say and think means something, that their opinions are considered, that they get a chance of influencing what happens.

It is important for democracy to be anchored in every-day life — in the class-room, in the workshop, in the housing area. This gives everyone a direct possibility of influencing his or her own surroundings. But even that framework is too restrictive. When discussing the immediate problems of every-day life one soon comes on to the subject of general changes and the distribution of power and influence in society.

It would be excellent if we could decentralize as many questions as possible to a local level. The communities are working close to the people and know their problems. But to be able to achieve something, the communities need the

support of a national policy that provides real opportunities for action regarding, say, the labour market, schools, housing or local government zonal reforms.

It would be excellent if the working methods of democracy could press in through the factory gates and gain ground everywhere in the individual firm. But it does not help if the really important decisions are made far away from the individual enterprise — without any possibility of insight and influence, without democratic control. Democracy here has to try to advance through the trade union movement, the political parties, the democratically elected bodies of society. Business democracy and economic democracy in general are therefore closely related.

Olle Gunnarsson has given an account of the decision of the trade union and political labour movement, to give priority to democracy on the shop floor and everywhere else in business life in the 70's. I should repeat that it was the state that, in co-operation with the political and trade union labour movement, took the lead and created the conditions for the changing viewpoints that are now starting to penetrate everywhere into the labour market.

Krister Wickman drew up the guiding principles for increased democratic influence in commercial and industrial life, a matter that will be brought very much into the centre of things when the consultation committee introduces its proposals. He also depicted the enterprise of the future with equal rights for all interest groups.

But democratization always has to be applied to politics as a whole. We do not have to become defenceless victims of technological development, the free market, anonymous powers that seek to direct our future. Politics are accessible,

open to judgement by everyone. They are ultimately determined by values and ideas. We ourselves have to see how democracy can be used to direct technological development as well. Together, on the basis of solidarity and co-operation, we, mankind, can shape our future.

Therefore we shall never hesitate to bring out the great political issues into every-day life, making politics into a meeting between people, a continuous dialogue.

This is how we intend to create a thorough democracy.

Thirdly our task is to work for equality.

The equality question has been in the center of the work of the movement for the last few years. Arne Geijer's great speech at the extraordinary Party Congress in 1967 was a direct result of reality. He interpreted the injustice felt by the low-wage groups.

We decided to meet the people and discuss equality. And this is exactly what happened. We have to be fully aware of the fact that the equality debate leads to an aggravation of the criticism of society, increased demands on practical politics. And, as Tage Erlander pointed out last Sunday, our chief foe is not the reactionary bourgeois politicians but an obstinate reality.

It might seem rather striking that Sweden was first among the industrialized countries to take up the equality debate. All available facts indicate that equalization in Sweden has progressed further than in other industrialized countries. But because we invest so much in equalization we have, more than others, been conscious of the strong forces that tend to increase the inequalities of modern society. And I am convinced that we are not going to be alone. We are just

a few years ahead. I am quite convinced that in the 70's the equality problems will be in the foreground of debate and politics in all the European countries.

After the introduction by Alva Myrdal and the debate yesterday, I am not going to take up the whole equality complex. Let me just point out some aspects.

It is a matter of course that an equality policy has especially to support those who have difficulties in various respects, and protect those who encounter special risks.

It is easy to give examples of such people and groups: the unemployed, low-wage groups, those who are suffering from illness or handicaps, old people who need care. And many others.

A condition for concrete measures for their support is a feeling of solidarity among other members of the society and a willingness to make sacrifices in order to change words into action.

One child in elementary school costs the tax payers an average of 3 000 Sw kr a year. Children in special schools for the visually handicapped and hard of hearing cost on an average 41 000 Sw kr a year. We invest far more in children who have special difficulties than in other children. As far as children with severe handicaps are concerned, the principle is self-evident to everyone. But it can be put into practice in many fields.

Usually the demand for equalization concerns considerably wider groups.

If there were no equalization of taxes, the district rates in certain sparsely populated areas would amount to 40—45 Sw kr. Or services would be drastically cut down. But people

should not be treated worse because they happen to grow old in a poor municipality.

In this year's negotiations, the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), has been concentrating on the low-wage groups. The Confederation of Trade Unions succeeded thanks to its members' solidarity. But the problem of low-wage earners is not solved by negotiations alone.

Last Monday Gunnar Sträng informed us about the guiding principles for a radical tax reform. This will give relief to low-wage earners and otherwise as well will mean a further step towards equality.

At the same time we know that taxation reforms do not master the problems of equality. We have to continue extending the institutions of society, the public sector, to support equality.

Thus all these questions are inter-related.

There are those who try to give the impression that equality is only for a limited group, a minority, that at best can become an object of benevolent political measures by the affluent majority. The underlying risk here is one of dissociation, of moralization by those who live in the light, to quote the Threepenny Opera.

This opens up an opportunity for those who want to sow dissension. This has often been a strategy of conservatism. This kind of argument has been used to set up the poor whites in the South against the blacks. The racial thinking of the poor whites is due in the ultimate analysis to a fear of being pulled down to the same level as the blacks and to their inability to view their own situation in a wider social perspective. Whether race or, as in other places, religion

is used as an argument, the background is invariably economic. In the same way attempts have been made to split the various workers' groups or draw sharp boundaries between workers and salaried employees in order to hide the central fact that, in all important respects, their interests as employees are identical.

Equality is for everyone.

In modern society most citizens can find themselves facing risks, in most cases through no fault of their own. It is then that the individual discovers the value of a solidarity that he has perhaps been inveigled into renouncing.

For example, we cannot anticipate for certain now which places, which branches, which occupations and which businesses will be affected by unemployment. This will depend on the technological development that is continuously bringing forth new products to replace old ones. It will also depend on changes in foreign trade that we have small possibilities of influencing.

It is never possible to say: You and you will have security of employment for ever, but you will not.

Illness is no respecter of persons. Road accidents take more than one thousand lives every year and 5 000 are seriously injured. This means that the destinies of thousands of individuals are suddenly and brutally changed.

Peoples' perspectives vary, depending on their environment and conditions of life. The difficulties they meet differ according to age, profession, domicile.

There is an enormous difference between a pensioner who grew up before the First World War, when there were hardly any cars in the streets and absolutely no satellites in space, and the little boy who started school this autumn. It is not

really a matter of age. There is something in what Margaret Mead says, that all those who are older, enter as strangers into the world in which only those who were born after the Second World War are really at home. Maybe so. But they belong to the same culture and society.

To live and survive, society has to be characterized by an all-embracing solidarity, a power of entering into the conditions of others, a feeling of joint responsibility and participation. Otherwise it will sooner or later fall apart into petty egoism. There exists no "they and we", only "we". Solidarity is and has to be indivisible.

Several times I have said that equality is not a condition but a direction of politics. But the direction is important, and we must keep to it. Tawney, the British socialist, said once that what matters for the well-being of a society is the goal towards which its face is turned.

Comrades, the face of Swedish Social Democracy shall be turned towards a future, characterized by equality and a free communion between people.

Thus we enter the 70's. Hjalmar Branting taught us that "it is not enough for the renewal of society to enter into it and feel at home". The transformation of society is a long business. Of course it is. But whenever this Party has met at a Congress, we have always been able to show practical results. And at every Congress we have drawn up concrete directions for social renewal. The same has applied to the present Congress. It has been characterized by an outstanding vitality. On concrete matters it has been eventful. It has shown the unity of the labour movement and its determination

to deal with the tasks of the 70's. The result of the Congress could be summed up in the following points.

- 1) A foreign and defence policy that combines a firm and consistent neutrality with a readiness to assume international responsibility. 200 million Sw kr as loans and subsidies for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction in North Vietnam. A demand for the expulsion of Greece from the Council of Europe.
- 2) A radical tax reform with relief for those who are worst off, justice for those who are single, individual taxation and stricter measures to combat tax evasion.
- 3) A commercial and industrial policy that will resolutely fulfil the programme to secure full employment and stable economic growth. The Norrland counties shall remain on an equal footing with other regions in the future as well.
- 4) A continuous democratization of economic life. Insight and influence in management. Democracy in working-life. Removal of hindrances to the democratization of businesses. Government representatives on the boards of commercial banks.
- 5) A policy that fulfils the great educational reforms with adult education and nursery schools in the foreground. A cultural policy characterized by the principles of equality.
- 6) Legislation for a 40-hour working week. The reduction of working hours will be carried out in two stages, 1st January 1971 and 1st January 1973. Increased industrial safety. New legislation on worker protection. Better working-environment.
- 7) Increased possibilities of pension before the age of 67 already next year. Increased insurance protection for pensioners when in hospital. A radically simplified and improved system of National Health Insurance.

- 8) The social care of handicapped and aged people will be extended. The future aims of public welfare assistance will be more closely defined.
- 9) A reform of family legislation that aims at equality between men and women. Marriage and family legislation will be reviewed and reformed.
- 10) Vigorous efforts for national and international environment protection.
- 11) An active, wide-ranging consumer policy. Proposals for the introduction of a Consumers' Ombudsman and Market Council.
- 12) A continued high rate of housing production. A co-ordination of the financing of communal projects is aimed at. A residential environment that promotes equality and communion.

Ideas live in a vacuum if they are not anchored in people. Political suggestions get dusty if they are not translated into action.

The Congress is over.

Now to work.

We have the ideas.

We have the programme.

Now we are going to try to put the decisions of the Congress into practice.

Now we are going out to win people for our ideas and our policy.

This is where the 1970 election campaign begins.

Comrades, be seeing you.