

**Olof Palme:
Democratic
socialism
means
solidarity**

Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden and chairman of the Social Democratic Party, delivered two main speeches at the Party Congress in October 1972. These speeches — the inaugural address and the closing address — are reprinted in this booklet, which is published by the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

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Inaugural address

The Social Democratic party has assembled to fix the guidelines for future policy.

We have had three years of hard work since our last congress.

Economically speaking, they have been years of austerity. In 1969—70 there was a violent boom resulting in price rises, a labour shortage and a strain on our balance of payments. This was followed in 1971 by a more serious recession than anybody had expected. Unemployment rose and the pace of development slackened. We experienced the discouragement and the apprehensions which are always associated with less prosperous periods.

Politically speaking, Social Democracy has suffered from this. But we must remember that this reflects worries which people have encountered in their everyday lives.

Our parliamentary situation has not been an easy one since the 1970 elections. We are in a minority there and it is from this vantage point we have had to endeavour to realize the policies outlined by the 1969 party congress.

At the same time the role of opposition has to an increasing extent been taken over by extra-parliamentary campaigns of various kinds. We have a so-called housewives' campaign, a confidence campaign, campaigns against the trade union movement, against democracy, against an equitable wages policy.

The party has had to devote both time and strength to counteracting these campaigns. This has been a necessary task.

The opposition have sought shelter and have tried to evade responsibility for the most infamous exaggerations.

The temptation was almost too much for the Centre, who tried to take the lead in a campaign against food prices. But this sent a shudder through the ranks of the farmers, who are in the habit of abiding by the agreements they enter into.

In many ways, then, they have been difficult years. But the party has stood the test. This, as one of the right-wing papers intimated, reflects

the moral fibre of the many grassroots workers in the party — for it is they who make up the party: they have not thrown in the towel once things have turned difficult. This resilience and loyalty at a worrying time are one of the finest things about our party.

The 1969 congress adopted a comprehensive programme covering the whole gamut of politics. Our opponents said: "The programme is impossible. Sweden must not be governed from the People's Palace".

The programme gave strength and stability to the party. We committed ourselves to the realization of the resolutions adopted by the congress.

Most of the People's Palace programme so disdainfully regarded by the bourgeois has now been put into effect — in the Swedish Riksdag. We are busy putting the remainder into effect as well. Item by item.

The bourgeois failed to realize that the strength of democracy is also reflected by a large popular movement democratically defining its aims and exerting itself to achieve them.

Safeguarding our neutrality

— the common market

We Social Democrats always begin our programmes of action with an affirmation of our uncompromising adherence to the policy of non-alignment. The Swedish policy of non-alignment and neutrality means security for our nation. It suits our geographical and strategic position. It has stood the test of experience.

The most important political question we have had to consider since the last congress has concerned negotiations with the common market. In these negotiations we endeavoured to reconcile two of the fundamental aims of the labour movement: a firm policy of non-alignment and free trade across the frontiers.

These negotiations have now been concluded. The policy of non-alignment remains unimpaired. At the same time our agreement with the common market is the most comprehensive trade settlement that Sweden has ever concluded, giving us access to a European market of 300 million people.

During the negotiations we were subjected to violent attacks and campaigns at home. But throughout this period there was absolute unity within the party and the big wage earning

groups, which in turn goes a long way towards explaining why the negotiations were successful. It is my hope that this unity and solidarity concerning our common market policy will now come to be shared by the entire nation.

The relationship between our neighbouring countries and the common market has yet to be decided. Our attitude has at all times been perfectly clear; it is up to the individual countries to decide for themselves. We support one another but we do not admonish one another.

Whatever their relationship to the common market, the Scandinavian countries must stick together. This is particularly important during the present period of rapid change in Europe. Our neighbours can count on the willingness of the Swedish labour movement to strengthen and broaden the pattern of Nordic co-operation.

Vietnam

At the last congress we presented an extensive programme of aid to North Vietnam. It is now clear that this programme will not merely be fulfilled but exceeded.

During the past three years, however, the war has continued and has been constantly extended both in Vietnam and throughout Indo China.

The destruction of environment has been worse and the loss of human life greater than ever before. This abominable war, the bombings, the mutilation of people, the destruction are an abnegation of human dignity.

Our attitude stands firm:

We want peace in Vietnam and national independence for the people of Vietnam. The future of the Vietnamese people is not to be decided by alien masters.

The negotiations now in progress must also lead to a settlement on the future of South Vietnam until such time as democratic elections can be held. For this reason a coalition government must be formed in Saigon. Then there will be peace.

Work for social equality

The extra party congress held in 1967 was addressed by Arne Geijer on the subject of social equality. This was a period of decline for the Social Democratic Party. The opinion polls were unfavourable and the bourgeois parties were discussing candidates for a ministry. Everywhere we read that Social Democracy had shot its ideological bolt. Social equality was an outmoded theme and a pointless one too, so we were

told. Greater equality was not a feasible proposition.

But the party responded to Arne Geijer's appeal. Alva Myrdal took the lead in the work of the equality group. Throughout the country there grew up a host of discussion groups, study circles, weekend conferences all on the subject of social equality. Motions setting out detailed proposals began to come in to the district congresses, the party and the unions, women's movements, youth movements and the Christian Social Democrats.

People began to look around them in society. And they found many relics of a class society. The debate aroused expectations. It also aroused fear on the part of those who thought that they stood to lose their privileges.

Work began in the party and the unions.

Five years have passed since then.

Let me sum up.

1) There have been two collective bargaining periods. On no previous occasion have low wage-earners gained so much in both relative and absolute terms. This has fundamentally affected the status of women. In the public sector we have at last done away with the age-old cleavage between workers and salaried staff.

Is there anybody who believes that this could have been accomplished if the movement had not demanded social equality?

2) Working hours have been reduced: by the turn of the year they will be down to 40 hours a week.

3) Agreements have been concluded on a reduction of retirement age to 65 for LO members.

Extended rights to early retirement have been secured for those with arduous jobs. Special support has been introduced for elderly employees.

Large numbers of people have benefited from these reforms.

4) A taxation reform implying a radical redistribution on favour of low wage groups was put into effect in 1970, at the same time as individual assessment was introduced in fairness to women and single persons. The Riksdag this year adopted the reform in favour of the large wage earning groups.

5) The number of persons in employment has risen by 165,000. It is above all women who have tended more and more to obtain gainful employment.

6) 35,000 day care centre places have been provided.

7) 400,000 people have undergone labour market training.

8) The comprehensive school and integrated upper secondary school have been introduced. During these years we have spent Skr 1,500 million on adult education.

9) 500,000 apartments have been built and 1½ million people have moved into new homes.

10) Family allowance has been raised from Skr 900 to 1,320 and a family housing grant system has been introduced. That will give a total of more than Skr 1,000 million to all families with children.

11) All medical services have been made available at a standard rate and the cost of medicine to the individual has been limited to Skr 15.

12) Aid to the handicapped has risen by almost Skr 2,000 million in five years.

Anybody claiming in 1967, when the extra party congress was held, that we would accomplish all this in five years would have been dismissed as an unempirical dreamer.

But we have accomplished it. And the list could be made still longer.

We have been able to do all this because we have deliberately concentrated on social equality.

Economic policy creates employment

The extra congress of 1967 also marked the beginning of our economic policy. The signal was given by Krister Wickman.

Then came all the discussions, the circles in the Work-Security-Development congresses and the proposals, expectations and apprehensions.

People who felt insecure began to ask: Can we together assume responsibility for work and security, can we together build up the economic strength of our community?

Then began the everyday work of creating the instruments of economic policy and beginning to use them.

Rune Johansson and Ingvar Svanberg will be talking about the results during this congress.

But let me now say this.

The bourgeois contribution to economic policy has for the most part consisted of enumerating examples of what they consider to be unsuccessful state enterprises. And of course there are examples to be found of misguided ventures and difficulties. But we are not in the habit of returning the complement by enumerating the failures of private enterprise. That is not the way to create employment.

But: public economic policy has created employment for tens of thousands of people. This is a fact.

Our commitment to the large base industries of northern Sweden, to Götaverken, Ådalen, Oskarshamn, Algots, regional development policy — all this is concerned with people's security.

For this reason we shall continue to develop our economic policy.

Lessons from the past three years

There are important lessons to be learned from the political efforts of the past three years.

FIRSTLY: Ideologically and practically, our policy has evolved through a constant interaction within the movement.

Thousands of people throughout the country have devoted their leisure, their allegiance and their intelligence to the common definition of a course of action. This is the way a popular movement must work.

SECONDLY: One is bound to meet with resistance when changing society. All this talk of a crisis of confidence, of the perils of equality, of escapism and outmoded slogans of class warfare derives in the ultimate analysis from an

ideological aversion to the ideas of equality, not only in terms of social conditions but also regarding power and influence, the ideas of equitable partnership and co-operation between individuals which are the very life blood of the labour movement. To the defenders of the status quo the demand for change comes as a confrontation. They would be better advised to see it as an appeal for solidarity. Contrary to what the conservatives would have us believe, the welfare state of Per Albin Hansson did not imply any perpetuation of the existing state of things. The idea of the People's Home was then and remains to this day a bid for a wider form of social partnership.

THIRDLY: It pays to work for equality and security. Of course realities are often more difficult to change than one had hoped, they often take longer to change. We cannot expect to fulfil all of our expectations. A critical appraisal of our policies is always called for. But we must always go forward. This is the task of Social Democracy. Society is not transformed by dreams of bringing about the downfall of the system by violence. Instead change is a matter of hard work on an every day basis, thus ensuring the victory of the idea of democratic reformism.

These people have influenced the existence of hundreds of thousands of people. That after all is the most important thing. For most people to-day life is still an arduous business. They are confronted by financial problems and other difficulties. We do not promise to create a heaven on earth. But results have shown that the ideas of security and solidarity can be put into practice.

FOURTHLY: How many of these things would have been done if we had had a bourgeois government?

The bourgeois parties have been deeply divided on the subject of the common market, the most important political issue to arise since the last congress. They would certainly never have been able to agree on a policy for negotiation!

Do you think the Moderates would have favoured the low wage earners, the adjustment of the taxation system for the benefit of those with low incomes, the measures taken for the benefit of the sick and the handicapped?

Do you suppose the parties that voted against the Investment Bank, who referred to labour market policy as a menace to the liberty of the individual, who fought against the influence of the community on industrial and economic po-

licity, do you suppose that those parties would have supported employment and security?

Problems of industrial society

The period following the last congress has been dominated by current difficulties and by hard work in the realization of our programme. This has been the experience of people in the rank and file of the party.

Nonetheless the movement has been strong enough to engage in an ideological debate which has been fundamentally concerned with the role of democratic socialism in a modern industrial community.

Social criticism must not be allowed to degenerate into a general moaning and censure of the kind practised e. g. by the Moderates and the Marxist-Leninists (KFML). On any reasonable basis of comparison, this is a decent society to live in.

But there are problems and people do have worries and apprehensions.

The destruction of environment is a fact. So is the wastage of natural resources. We know that there are great inequalities in people's earnings and we are aware of the effects of structural change on the lives of individuals. Many

people have had first-hand experience of the feeling of alienation in a new home and of the everyday problems of making ends meet. Technical developments are moving progressively faster, but human conditions change slowly.

For this reason there is talk of social unrest in all industrial countries.

Some people react by wishing that they were back in the past, back in what they imagine to have been a pre-industrial, pre-technological idyll.

Some people say that they would gladly sacrifice an improvement in their living standards if they could live in the countryside. Presumably this would not be a difficult sacrifice to make if it were limited to colour TV, foreign travel and the latest fashions. But how many people are prepared to go without free medical services, the right to a pension, sewerage and running water and electricity? Not many, of that we can be sure.

One should think twice before pronouncing a general condemnation of industrial society. Industrialization has given us opportunities for an improvement in economic standards and social welfare which earlier generations never dreamed of. Industrialization is a form of advanced co-

operation and division of labour which still has great possibilities.

Industrial society must still form the economic basis of our community. But a rise in production in return for the ruin of people and the natural environment is not a rise in the standard of living. This is not to call in question the desirability of economic growth and development, only to firm that they must be guided by social and humane objectives, and combined with social equality and with increased democracy.

Democratic socialism starts with the social situation of the individual. The liberty of the individual will benefit most if he is able to find paths to a sense of community with others, to co-operation and solidarity. The individual must be able together with others to control his own situation and to influence his own surroundings.

But in order to realize our ideas we must find practical ways to social equality, solidarity and democracy.

This is what our party congress is all about.

Renewal in working life

The process of renewal must begin at work. Work will retain its central position in human life. Many hours of the day are spent at work.

Working conditions leave their mark on the rest of our lives. If the work we do seems pointless, injurious to health and insecure, this is bound to affect our family life and our leisure. The financial return and the social status given by work influence the whole fabric of our lives.

Democratic socialism must safeguard the value and dignity of work, not least of practical skilled labour. Otherwise there will be no renewal of Swedish society. It is on these terms that we must set about reframing the conditions of working life.

Hitherto reform policies have been mostly concerned with conditions outside working life.

In school we have prepared young people for working life. By means of roads, housing, medical services and a great deal more besides we have provided an economic basis for production.

Society has tried to provide security for those who have left the production process or who have been eliminated from it — because they have grown old, ill or redundant, suffered accidents, become worn out. We have passed legislation regulating working hours to give leisure and by means of our cultural and environmental policies we have tried to enrich people's lives outside of working hours.

Now however we must make our social objectives more of a palpable reality in working life. This implies an expansion of the traditional concept of social welfare, an expansion which will have far-reaching consequences for the development of our society.

What we are going to do

The renewal of working life must be accomplished by the interaction of legislation to promote the security of wage earners and a greater element of democracy in the work places themselves.

This can only be done by unions and politicians working together. So the union movement and the political labour movement will have to stick together.

Now is the time to act.

What then are our most immediate tasks?

- 1) We are going to draw up a new Act on the working environment, one result of which will be to give safety officers a position enabling them to exert direct influence on the safety of their fellow workers on the spot.
- 2) We shall draw up a new Act concerning security of employment. The legislation concerning elderly employees was a first step in this direc-

tion, and the results have been encouraging. Adjustment teams and partnership groups in which people from the labour market and the union movement are represented are becoming more and more important. We shall go further in order to provide still greater security of employment.

3) We shall increase the influence and partnership rights of employees in the public sector. Experimental activities are already in progress in collaboration with the employees' representative organizations.

4) We shall give wage earners the right to sit on the boards of their companies.

5) We shall build up industrial democracy step by step and with reference to matters which are of real importance to the everyday working lives of employees.

This calls for a detailed review of labour legislation, including clause 32. This review has already begun under the leadership of Kurt Nordgren.

These proposals have been discussed and drafted at union congresses, at committee meetings and in the basic organizations of the party.

Now it is up to the congress to decide. We will then try to put its decisions into practice.

At a time like the present, when we are perturbed by the problem of unemployment, it may seem rash to raise our standards on the subject by imitating the working party on social equality and affirming the right of every man and woman to work.

The explanation is simple. Two years ago, in 1970, the economy was seriously overheated and there was a grave shortage of labour. Accordingly everybody predicted that the major problem of the 1970s would lie in the insufficiency of our labour resources.

Now, two years later, there are not enough jobs to go round. And yet there are more people seeking employment now than in 1970. The most important explanation is that women have tended more than ever before to find their way into the labour market and assert their right to gainful employment. Most of them have obtained work. It is above all for this reason that there has been a rise in registered unemployment.

The proportion of the adult population in employment has risen throughout the post-war period. To a very great extent this is due to a deliberate policy — labour market policy in all its various forms: regional development policy, fiscal reforms, adult education, family policy.

In simple terms, the result has been as follows: the level of employment is about 5 per cent higher now than it was a decade or so ago and it is also 5 per cent higher than in the other industrial nations of western Europe. This 5 per cent means about 200,000 more people in work.

This is all very well but it is small comfort to those who today seek employment but are unable to obtain any. If we are to cater for the rising demand for employment among women, if we are to make room for the younger generation in the labour market, if we are to prevent a rise in the number of people worn out by the labour market and eliminated from it, if we are to equalize incomes, we must increase the number of job opportunities.

The present difficulties existing in the labour market are being used by the bourgeois as a pretext for the resurrection of ancient bourgeois demands.

They are against equitable wage policies.

They are against labour market policy — relief work projects and educational measures for the unemployed.

They wish to increase the share of capital in the total result of production and reduce the share of the wage earners.

We have seen this bourgeois agitation before.

The same demands were made in 1932. They were repeated in the 1940s, the 1950s and the 1960s.

We have never given way to them. Hundreds of thousands of people have found jobs because we succeeded in repulsing the bourgeois onslaught and carrying out the demands of the labour movement.

It is the same now. We must not falter. We will defend labour market policy, our economic policy, regional policy and the efforts made by the public sector to safeguard the security of the individual.

Solidarity between groups

Socialism is about solidarity. It is about solidarity between people who often live in different conditions.

It is easy to appeal to animosities — animosities between different generations, different parts of the country.

We have seen many examples of this in political debate. The danger is that one can create gaps instead of bridging them.

This is what happens when people try to create antipathies between town and country.

To the labour movement it is self-evident that the different parts of the country must be united, and this requires an overriding solidarity.

This solidarity applies to the countryside. Last spring it looked as though the Social Democrats would be left alone to settle the food price agreement with the farmers.

An agreement is an agreement, and we stood by ours.

Many people have had first hand experience of the misery of the Swedish countryside, which has most recently been described by Tage Erlander in his memoirs. The rural population must also be assured of decent living conditions in return for their labour: this is a question of solidarity.

Some local authorities are poor. One of the greatest reforms in the context of equality is the municipal taxation reform whereby the poorest municipalities are given grants corresponding to up to half their local income tax.

This is connected with the even distribution of living standards and welfare amenities throughout the country: this is a question of solidarity.

Regional policy makes demands on the urban population. The task is to create employment and incomes in those parts of the country where

rationalization and depopulation have left their mark. This is a matter of solidarity.

There are people in the urban areas too, many of them in large conurbations. They moved there because the countryside could not support them. They starved, they emigrated or they made their way into the towns and cities in search of work.

People living in urban areas also have to contend with a multitude of problems — noise, overcrowding, bad working conditions, congestion and stress.

There is a tendency in political debate to portray the urban population as lost and doomed.

But we will not improve urban living conditions by constantly repeating that the air is cleaner and the trees greener somewhere else and that people should go to live there.

People live in urban communities. Most of them will continue to do so. Every morning they have to get up and set off to work in factories, offices and shops and on building sites. This is the foundation of our affluence. If people did not do these things there would not be much left for us to share. And that is why we have to make our towns and cities better — create better housing conditions, clean up bad working envi-

ronments, build better communications, provide play spaces for children and open air and recreation facilities.

All this is in the best interests of the entire country and the people who live in it. It is a matter of solidarity which concerns the entire population.

Instead of antithesizing town and country we must improve conditions for both of them. If a nation is to develop there must be an overriding solidarity.

The major problems of society cannot be solved through the agency of the market. They must be solved on a democratic basis.

We in the labour movement have discussed in detail the sectors where public action is needed as an expression of this solidarity. This has been done within the basic party organizations, at committee meetings and at conferences throughout the country.

Now it is up to the congress to decide.

- 1) We shall draw up a programme of regional policy.
- 2) We shall draw up guidelines for the overall planning of our country's land and water resources with a view to the protection of our national environment.

- 3) We are presenting a new programme for an active policy on environment.
- 4) We shall put the money deposited by wage earners in the National Pension Insurance Fund to constructive use in the economy.
- 5) We shall pursue an active economic policy designed to provide employment and security for all.

Problems which we can only solve together

Faced with these demands, our opponents raise the bogey of communal power and centralization.

There are certain matters for which the great collective, the members of society acting in concert, must assume responsibility. If out of fear of society one is not prepared to do this, there will be no regional policy and no economic policy, no equalization of local taxation, no aid to thinly populated areas, no security of employment and no industrial democracy.

The security at which we aim can never be achieved unless we are prepared to join forces in accomplishing tasks which are too great for the individual to tackle alone.

If the object of all this talk of centralization is to force people into greater dependence on the

forces of the market, into less solidarity with those who need our combined support, into deepening insecurity, those concerned can count on the uncompromising opposition of the labour movement.

If wage earners are given a successively increasing influence on the economy as a whole, this will provide a way to greater democracy. Let there be no misunderstanding on this point. If society is equipped with better means of steering technical development so as to protect individuals and improve their living conditions, this will lead to greater security. Let there be no misunderstanding on that point either.

At the same time society must be based on the combination of individuals in popular movements and organizations for the assertion of their interests and demands.

Clearly the bourgeois have still failed to realize that last year's LO congress and probably this congress too mark the beginnings of the greatest move towards decentralization that our society has ever seen, in that ordinary wage earners will be given a bigger say concerning their places of work and their working environment, their security of employment and their working conditions. The aim is to change the

power structure of Swedish society by means of democracy and solidarity. This is true decentralization.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The way ahead is long and arduous.

But shall we let this deter us from trying to solve the problems?

These problems concern every wage earner and every household in the country and must therefore be solved on democratic lines.

There was a time when the labour movement demanded universal suffrage in the conviction that ordinary workers and salaried employees were capable of deciding for themselves on major and vital social questions. We are equally convinced that workers and salaried staff are capable of comprehending matters concerning their immediate livelihood. This is why we have committed ourselves to democracy and solidarity.

We have to choose between Social Democracy and a bourgeois bloc

Fellow party members!

I would now like to turn your attention to the opposition, above all to the fact that the Centre has now become something different.

There is in Swedish politics a forty-year-old tradition of co-operation between the Social Democrats and the Agrarian Party, now known as the Centre.

This co-operation has not precluded considerable differences of opinion on certain points, as in the case of supplementary retirement pensions (ATP), and, on certain occasions, the bank rate. Nor on the other hand has it implied that either party has tried to force its ideology on the other. Certainly Bramstorp never tried to make an Agrarian of Wigforss any more than Wigforss tried to convert Bramstorp to socialism.

Co-operation between the parties has been based on certain fundamental political facts. The Centre Party has long been concerned to safeguard its independent position in Swedish politics. They have not been prepared to join in a bourgeois coalition with the overriding aim of bringing about a change of régime. Contact between the two parties was made still easier by the fact that they were both founded on popular movements and represented groups with social and economic problems which to a very great extent were of a similar nature.

On this basis it was possible to co-operate in the solution of particular practical problems,

each party showing due consideration and respect for the other. These problems could be concerned with foreign policy, taxation, economic policy or other topics. In the days of the old Centre Party this co-operation was referred to, not without a certain element of pride, as a policy of results.

This co-operation has had its advantages for the Social Democrats. It has been possible to create stable Riksdag majorities on a number of highly controversial issues. At the same time, this co-operation has been a thorn in the flesh of the bourgeois, unable as they have been to harness the Centre to their own bandwagon.

This participation has benefited the entire country. The ability of two popularly based parties to conduct a rational discussion of policy has provided an element of security in the evolution of Swedish society, particularly at critical junctures and in inflamed political situations.

All this has now changed. The Centre Party has established close relations not only with the Liberals but also with the Moderates. The bourgeois press now speaks in terms of a bourgeois bloc, rejoicing in the fact that the Centre Party cannot with impunity break free from this partnership with the Liberal and Moderate parties.

This at the same time as virulent attacks are being made by the Moderates on the labour movement. There has been nothing like it since the Cossack election of 1928.

Meantime the Centre Party has now come out in open hostility to the Social Democratic Party and is endeavouring to divide the trade union movement. In a book published recently, the Centre party secretary writes that the Social Democrats are the Centre's main adversary. This has never been said before. On major issues where in the traditional way we have sounded out the Centre party on the possibility of an agreement, they have instead clubbed together with the Moderates and the Liberals.

There may be one or two members of the Centre Party who in their heart of hearts are wondering what they have brought upon themselves.

The bourgeois approach in this situation, with the new Centre, is almost embarrassingly frank.

The main task of the Centre is to win votes from the Social Democrats and so pave the way for a change of régime. Its exact proposals should not be unduly exposed to a light which they may not be able to stand up to. The political chronicler in Svenska Dagbladet described

the Centre party as a mood. He did not believe the mood would last, but it might survive until after the 1973 election. The task of the Moderates is to keep irascible rightwingers in a good mood by their graphic descriptions of the misery of the country and the malice of the Social Democrats. Bohman is urged by the entire middle-of-the-road press not to propound more than a limited number of proposals on the basis of his ideology, since he might otherwise cause a large number of voters to have second thoughts. Before the Moderate congress in Västerås a unanimous sigh ran through the ranks of the entire middle-of-the-road press: Let's hope he doesn't let the side down by saying too much. He must be content with appearing in joint photographs — "picture show", as a well-known member of the Centre Party put it — and with meeting or not meeting Fälldin. May he rejoice in this good fortune to the last Conservative. And so it emerges, this extraordinary coalition of aggression and a mood.

There has not yet been any news of the Liberals at all.

The political cards are on the table. The electorate have to choose between Social Democracy and a bourgeois bloc. We are formulating our

policy. We shall demand to know their alternatives. We shall debate the practical issues involved so as to elicit the differences between their various alternatives. The question will be not only that of the policy of the Centre Party but also of the policy of the Centre Party together with the Liberals and the oldtime Conservatives. It will then be up to the electorate to decide in due course.

Our responsibility for the nation

Fellow party members!

After reading the bourgeois papers one has the impression that the election is already cut and dried. The bourgeois have already started to count their chickens.

Some say that the Centre Party is riding on the green wave. Others say that a Conservative wind is blowing.

Social Democracy is not a wave. Nor is it a wind. Social Democracy stands for a party that wishes to transform society. That is the difference.

There will be heavy attacks made on our party, our ideas and our policy. The bourgeois parties and the circles that favour them are looking forward with eager anticipation to the

day when they hope to assume power and implement a bourgeois policy.

They want the labour movement to be weak and divided. They hope that the people who gather in the People's Palace will be defeated before they start.

But there are other expectations which are also being entertained with regard to our congress, namely the expectations of people in the country at large. They know that a Social Democratic congress is concerned with their security, their progress, the problems they themselves encounter. They expect a great deal of Social Democracy. This means that we have a heavy and important task to perform. We have an enormous amount of work to get through this week. The object of this work will be to draw up a programme for the renewal of Swedish society. We approach this work with a sense of responsibility for the nation.