

Labour Party Leader and Prime Minister

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It is a great pleasure for me to be given the opportunity to address this Annual Conference and to bring you ^{the warm} greetings of the Norwegian Labour Party.

Party Comrades all over Europe are following this Annual Conference with the keenest interest. The question everyone is asking, is whether this Conference will manage to marshal the British Labour Movement to regain power - against

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the forces of the right, and for the cause of democratic socialism.

British people want work and social security. They seek new answers - a new policy. Great tasks are facing this Annual Conference: To gain renewed confidence in the labour movement and its ability to lead the way.

Against us we have strong conservative waves. Our industrial societies are undergoing a grave economic crisis. The arms race continues. The gap between the poor and the rich countries is steadily widening.

Face to face with these problems many feel powerless. But we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the problems. The situation confronting us has been brought about by human action -or rather lack of action. It is also within the power of human beings to create a different and new course of development. To define the constructive solutions to the pressing problems of our time is the great challenge to democratic socialism facing the turn of our century.

There is a strong need for common ideas in our world - a need which is not diminishing in the period we are entering. The gap between the rich and the poor increases. At the same time there is an ever growing mass of

about how to cope with the problems. 4.
knowledge. But there is a widening gap
It between what we know is possible to achieve and these
conditions under which people actually live.

There is a lack of common responsibilities, common attitudes, goals, and means. We lack the political will and the political basis for creating solidarity, responsibility and social justice. The tasks ahead are staggering. They can not be solved through capitalistic philosophy.

As socialists it is our first duty to direct and control developments - and not to let ourselves be dominated by events. We cannot take the world as it is.

It is our duty and challenge actively to form our future. We must decide which values we want to give priority. We must mobilize the will to implement our ideas - and to influence future developments. We must create a society where the quality of life and human goals take precedence, a society in human growth.

The Labour Movement's fundamental principles of freedom and solidarity, of equality and justice bring us straight to the heart of the crucial issues of our time.

It was our social, human and economic philosophy which created the basis for the development of our welfare societies. But we are only on our way,

And we meet with new difficulties. But we must persevere with our aim of realizing these principles in our own societies. At the same time we must integrate them into the international scene.

We must introduce our main principle - solidarity - on to the international level. As democratic socialists we must fight for equality and for a just distribution. We are not going to accept hunger and destitution for others now any more than our pioneer forefathers accepted poverty for us as part of the natural order. And there can be no peace and stability in a world which tolerates mass poverty, mass unemployment, mass ignorance and an ever widening gap between its

"haves" and "have-nots". In this world of ours we are dependent on each other and we all have responsibilities towards each other.

We have just had a general election in Norway. We lost our Labour government, but we are ready to form a strong and clear opposition. We will face an economic policy inspired by the same philosophy as that of Reagan and Thatcher. In opposition as in government the Norwegian Labour Party will pursue our policy and program with full employment as the paramount objective.

The nuclear arms race gives rise to terrifying perspectives. We have only one choice: Our determined efforts must go

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to prevent nuclear war. We must actively support the negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union. But we must also try to find new avenues to combat the arms race. In the Norwegian Labour Party we have launched the proposal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Nordic region in a wider European arms control context. This part of our political program will be a major challenge in the years to come.

The last decade of Labour Government has brought considerable economic and social progress. The period between 1970 and 1980 was in fact one of the strongest growth periods in Norwegian history. The increase in jobs was extraordinarily strong and the rate of employment

exceptionally high. At the same time the total welfare has been expanded and is more equally distributed both geographically and among the social groups.

The labour government has formulated the important basis for Norwegian oil policy. In this essential field, a new government wants a change in oil policy and a weakening of the central position of the state oil company. We will defend the positions reached in securing national control of the oil activities. The petroleum resources belong to the people. National control has always been a key concern to the labour party.

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The British and the Norwegian Labour Parties now face common problems. You have had a conservative government for years. We are now on the threshold of a conservative regime. What are our goals and policies going to be? What are our solutions to the challenges of the 1980s? And how do we engage wide groups in reaching new goals?

First of all, we must find new ways to overcome the international economic crisis. This is only possible with national policies based on a just distribution of burdens and benefits and on a democratic control of the economy. Great disparities and concentration of power in our countries create political and social tensions which undermine economic and social stability.

The needs of people are incompletely satisfied by market forces. Economic growth must be planned. We must ensure that the nature of that growth is responsible and purposeful.

An active public policy is clearly necessary to correct market forces that do not provide satisfactory solutions or guarantee that decisions are made in accordance with longterm human interests.

We know that unemployment has serious consequences in society and for the individual. It leads to the loss of self-confidence and self respect - and to uncertainty and fear of the future.

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Youth and women are most strongly affected. I do not hesitate to say that such a development encompasses a reduction in the quality of life -and that it presents a socially indefensible situation that requires political determination and political action. The right to work is a basic human need which we cannot afford to set on the back burner.

However, we know that individual countries are unable to solve the economic crisis on their own. We must all pull together. Therefore democratic socialists, in cooperation with the trade unions must work, through international organizations, for a new and more constructive economic policy.

Secondly, we must reinforce and consolidate the democratic process. We must bring to realization a genuine economic democracy. But let us not resort to simplistic solutions. There are none. We must go forward step by step, clearly bearing in mind that we are dealing with human beings.

To conservatives I would say this: not a real democracy if we do not enjoy democracy in all aspects of life, also in the economic sphere. We have many examples of democracy being abolished because people have lost faith in democratic institutions.

It has become fashionable to scorn democratic socialism : The conservatives did it before they came to power with their monetarist philosophy. You know more than I do about what this policy means in practical life. People of the extreme left scorn democratic socialism. They have their own blueprint of what they call "socialism". But the extreme left has never been able to convince ordinary people about their merit. What they call "socialism" is in fact perversion of socialism. Their blueprints have always ended in disaster or dictatorship.

Democratic socialism is not perfect. But it has a record in Europe of pioneering welfare policies. It has redistributed wealth and power, and brought about the highest standard of living

ever experienced by ordinary men and women anytime anywhere in the world. This is the philosophy that has dominated the countries of Northern Europe the last thirty years or so. The democratic socialism of a whole line of leaders from Clement Attlee, Wilson to Michale Foot.

Democratic socialism is compassion. I think most will respect and prefer socialists who are socialists from a warm heart to socialists who are socialists only from a cold head. One of the best descriptions of democratic socialism is that of the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski:

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"The trouble with the social democratic idea is that it has no ultimate solution for all human misery and misfortunes. It has no prescription for the total salvation of mankind. It cannot promise the firework of the last revolution to settle all conflicts and struggles once and for all. It invents no miraculous devices to bring about the perfect unity of man and universal brotherhood. It believes in no final victory over evil. Social democracy is an obstinate will to erode inch by inch the conditions which produce avoidable suffering, oppression, hunger, wars, racial and national hatred, insatiable greed and vindictive envy".

Kolakowski's description of democratic socialism is a splendid one. But I would like to mention also this brief sentence of truth, before closing: Social democracy, or democratic socialism, has given a lot of freedom and equality to a lot of people - And in this process NOT ONE SINGLE LIFE HAS BEEN LOŠT!

This is the quiet revolution - and for democrat socialists the only revolution possible. This is socialism with a human face.